

Strategic Management of Tourism in the National Parks (Case: National Park Skadar Lake)

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Abstract

In this paper we will try to prepare strategic analysis in order to give right guidelines for national park's management. We are going to analyze National Park Skadar Lake as a tourist destination. We will use different strategic tools for proper analysis such as Life Cycle Concept, Boston Consulting Group Matrix, Ansoff Matrix, and McKinsey matrix. A strategy that involves penetration of the market would be desirable in the case of developing excursion, cultural – religious tourism, event tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, and wine tourism. Furthermore, market diversification is essential when it comes to new tourist products such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, scientific research, MICE tourism, golf and camping tourism, while the transformation of existing and introduction of new tourist products is expected within the sport - recreational, health, culture, excursions, wine tourism, etc. The paper will provide a framework for future research in the field of strategic management of tourism development in national parks. This topic has not yet been thoroughly analyzed and it is expected to serve as the basis of a strategic plan for managing tourism in the National Park Skadar Lake and / or as an incentive for researchers to enter more deeply into the issue.

Key words: Strategic Management, National Parks, Sustainable Development, NP Skadar Lake

Introduction

Having in mind constant positive rates of international tourism growth as well as share of tourism in GDP, international as well as national bodies are asking themselves which are main motives for tourism and travel? The reasons for travel are numerous and quite diversified. However, one of the most common reasons for tourist travelling is natural beauty of destination (Tisdell, Wilson, 2012). Tourists are looking for unspoiled nature where they want to relax there and escape from everyday routine. Although this motive has been one of the oldest, today due to global urbanization, spending time in nature is even more popular. Therefore, natural

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resources represent a competitive advantage of one destination and predetermine its tourist offer. Decision makers at almost all levels in the organization pay special attention to the safety and preservation of environment (Ritchie, Crooch, 2005). Studies have shown that the nature and history of one destination can attract tourists continuously and up to 100 years. Today protected areas take 18.8 million square kilometers, or 14.3% of the total area of Earth (Naughton-Treves et al., 2005). Twenty five years ago, protected areas had been in the focus of ecology and spatial planning, while issues related to the protected area are one of the Millennium Goals, and their mission is substantially improved (UNEP,WCM, 2012) .

At the Summit in Rio (Rio + 20) 2012, world leaders again reaffirmed the importance of protected areas and set a vision which says that protected areas comprise at least 17 % of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 % of coastal and marine areas – areas of special biodiversity by 2020. IUCN’s definition says that protected areas are land and / or sea area especially dedicated to the environment protection, protection of biological diversity of natural and cultural resources that are managed in legal or other effective ways (Črnjar, 2002). Today protected areas present only hope for preserving flora’s and fauna’s endemics (Phillips, 2004) .

IUCN defined six different categories (Stojanović, 2011) of protected areas and for this paper the most interesting is the second category – National Park.

According to the last census of protected areas, which is implemented by IUCN in 2003 in the world was 102 102 protected natural resources, which covered an area of 18.8 million km². It was 12.65% of the Earth’s land surface and that area was larger than the common area of China, South and Southeast Asia. Of the total number of protected areas, more than half, or more precisely, 68 066 were recognized as one of six protected areas’ categories established by the IUCN (Chape etc., 2003).

Table 1. Protected areas in the world

Category	Number of protected natural resources	Share (%) in total number of protected areas	Area (km ²)	Share (%) in total area
Ia Strict Nature Reserve	4.731	4,6	1.033.888	5,5
Ib Wilderness Area	1.302	1,3	1.015.512	5,4
II National Park	3.881	3,8	4.413.142	23,6
III Natural Monument or Feature	19.833	19,4	275.432	1,5
IV Habitat/Species Management Area	27.641	27,1	3.022.515	16,1
V Protected Landscape/ Seascape	6.555	6,4	1.056.008	5,6
VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	4.123	4,0	4.377.091	23,3
Without IUCN Category	34.036	33,4	3.569.820	19,0
Total	102.102	100	18.763.407	100

Source: Chape etc., 2003.

In the table above we see that in the world was the most protected goods of category II or of national parks.

IUCN defines national park as “Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities” (IUCN, www.iucn.org/pa_categories/).

The place which pretend to be national park should have key determinants such as quality of natural resources and their protection. National parks are declared by a special law of the state or its member states, depending on the complexity of the country. It is important to note that national parks are not a single tourist motive because there is a complex spatial unit with lots of sites, centers and tourist motives such as recreational and cultural (Jovičić, Ivanović, 2006). Research conducted in China and UK shows that anthropocentric or ecocentric values have significant influence on people's attitudes to tourism and sustainable development (Xu, Fox, 2014).

On the other hand, national parks can be considered as "tools for regional development" (Puhakka, Saarinen, 2013) and national parks can ensure development of rural areas (Mayer et.al., 2010). What is more, "tourism could be a major source of revenue, especially in developing countries, for self-financing of protected areas, through the recovery of use and nonuse values" (Dharmaratne et.al., 2015). Developing tourism in the national park have both positive and negative effects.

First of all, tourism can be an important generator of growth and development of the economy in the national parks. The development of tourism provides an increase in revenue, stimulates the development of new tourism enterprises, encourages the development of various activities, encourages local producers and service providers, opens new markets, improves the life standards, allows an employee to acquire new knowledge and skills, increases funds that will be offered for environmental protection and decoration and maintenance space. Tourism in National Parks supports the research and development of good practice, affects the behavior of visitors and locals, improves the entire infrastructure, but also helps the development of mechanisms for self-financing a number of operations in the area of the national park (Eagles et al., 2002).

As the number of visits increases, the need for environment and people protection becomes more visible. Number of interventions by the police, utilities, fire stations, health organizations etc. rises too. Increased demand for these services means bigger costs for the local community. In some cases, costs may rise to such an extent that local people can no longer live there. It usually happens to destinations / national parks whose visitors have a much higher income than the local population. Tourism development can lead to increased foreign investment and to the growth of real estate prices. A large number of uncontrolled number of visitors can lead to park's distortion, on the other hand, local residents and all stakeholders can commercialize their culture and lose authenticity (Eagles et al., 2002). On the other hand climate changes may have negative effect on tourism development in national parks (Fisichelli et al., 2015).

As Plummer and Fennel stated (2009) key of successful tourism management in protected areas such as national parks is adaptive co-management that "bridges governance and complex systems by bringing together cooperative and adaptive approaches to management. It is systematically directed to conceptual, technical, ethical and practical dimensions". Partnership between local people, the service industry, and tourism professionals is also crucial (Nepal, 2000; Jamal, Stronza, 2009).

The National Park Skadar Lake

In 1983 Parliament of Montenegro declared Skadar Lake as national park, because of its natural value and beauty, and especially biological, scientific, historical, cultural, health, tourism and recreational importance. This National park belongs to municipalities of Podgorica, Cetinje and Bar. According to the provision of Ramsar Convention part of Skadar Lake, which belongs to Monte-

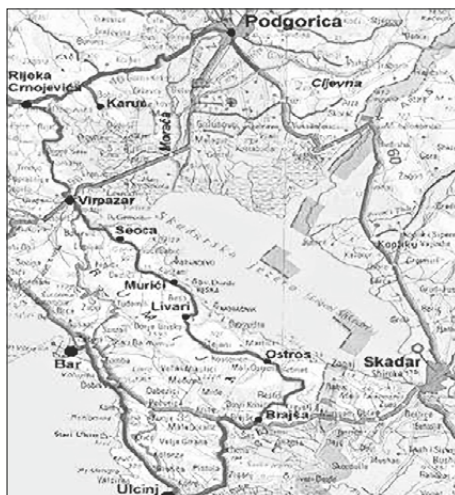


Figure 1. The borders of the National Park Skadar Lake

Source: Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro, 2010.

negro, is entered in the List of Wetlands of International importance, especially as a waterfowl habitat. Later, the part that belongs to Albania was also added to this list. (Radović, 2013).

The total length of the lake and the coastline is 168 km, of which 110.5 km belongs to Montenegro, and 57.5 km belongs to Albania (Radović, 2013).

We can say that the National Park Skadar Lake has a favorable geographic, traffic and tourist position. The area where the Skadar Lake is located represents a link between the Montenegrin coast and northern/continental part of the country. Port of Bar is link to the Adriatic and Mediterranean Sea, and this part is also linked to the spacious area of Danube Region and Central Region via the northern part. The geographical position of the Lake with its environment has a special place in the history of Montenegro, because there are formed Duklja and Zeta, first Montenegrin states (Radović, 2013).

Also, Skadar Lake has a very favorable traffic position for water, land and air transportation. In this area there is a Mediterranean type of climate which is significantly modified certain subtypes climate that come to the fore in certain parts of the year. The temperature regime of the park has the following characteristics: mean annual temperature is around 15° C; the average temperature for December ranges from 6 to 8 degrees, the average temperature in July is around 32° C, while the mean annual number of summer days is between 120-130 (Radović, 2013).

Bird population is certainly what makes the Skadar Lake distinctive. Skadar Lake National Park has 280 species of birds, many of which are threatened and endangered (Radović, 2013).

The most important cultural and historical heritages of Skadar Lake are the archaeological sites, forts, medieval monasteries, churches, traditional rural architecture, as well as a significant spiritual creativity which indicates that the National Park Skadar Lake was an important historical, economic and cultural centre (National Parks of Montenegro, <http://www.nparkovi.me/sajt/np-skadarsko-jezero/kultura>).

Population of the municipality of Bar is 42368, in the municipality of Cetinje 16757, in the municipality of Podgorica 187,085¹. Therefore it can be said that in the area of Skadar Lake lives

¹ Data from 2011 census, www.monstat.org



Figure 2. Karuč Village, National Park Skadar Lake

Source: Luminalis DMC, http://www.luminalis-montenegro.com/skadarско-jezero_21333460798249.php

246 210 people which represents 39.37% of the total population of Montenegro. However, just 17 settlements are included in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake which means that the total number of people who live there is 1210 residents (MONSTAT, www.monstat.org). The main activities of the local people are tourism, agriculture and fishing.

Methodology

For the purpose of strategic analysis three different surveys (among local people, tourists and stakeholders and experts) were conducted in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake. We should note that the surveys were conducted under National project that is financed by Government of Montenegro. It was quite difficult to present all results so we decided to prepare sublimated results and present it using techniques of strategic management.

Results of this survey represent what local people think about actual development of tourism in the area of the National Park. Some of the questions were: Is tourism in the area of Skadar Lake developed enough? What types of tourism in this region are the most developed, what are the least? Does the local population interested in tourism and to what extent? What is the attitude of the local population towards the tourists? Is environmental awareness of domicile sufficiently developed? Does the local population sufficiently involve in the development of tourism in this area? What are the main shortcomings and obstacles for the development of tourism in the area of Skadar Lake National Park?

Results of research conducted among the local population give a clear picture of the current state of tourism development in this area. Also, results allow drawing up conclusions about the general economic development of the area.

Furthermore, special questionnaire was created for visitors and tourists to found out more about advantages and disadvantages of National Park Skadar Lake's tourist offer. On the other hand we investigate attitudes of representatives of state and local management. Results of these three surveys (two polls and an interview) help us to make SWOT analysis and to use BCG, McKinsey, Ansoff matrixes and the concept of destination lifecycle.

Results

Using techniques of strategic management we are going to analyze the National Park Skadar Lake as tourist destination.

Using SWOT analyze we succeed to identify main advantages and disadvantages of park and the main opportunities and threats from park's external environment.

Categories within the SWOT analysis are evaluated from 1 to 10 where 10 is in the case of advantages and opportunities the best score, and in the case of disadvantages and threats is the worst score. These evaluations can illustrate well enough current situations in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake and ease the process of creating strategic polygons.

Overview of the most important advantages and disadvantages of this area and a review of external determinants such as chances and risks are given in the table below.

Table 2. Strengths of the National Park Skadar Lake

Strengths	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vicinity of major tourist markets										
Closeness of the airport Podgorica										
The unique features of the region										
One of the largest wetlands and birds' wintering places										
Preserved nature										
Large number of endemic plants' and animals' species										
Rich cultural and historical heritage										
Interest of the local population in tourism										
Kind people										
Events										
Nice decorated visitor centers										
Labeled and marked trails for hiking and biking										
Defined "wine" paths										
Existence of potential for the development of more sustainable forms of tourism										
Entrepreneurial spirit										
Defined Spatial plan and management plans										

Source: Authors

Table 3. Weaknesses of the National Park Skadar Lake

Weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The problem of waste, particularly from the Albanian side										
The lack of adequate tourist infrastructure										
Insufficient number of accommodation facilities										
Poor quality of existing tourist infrastructure										
Poor tourist offer										
The cultural and historical heritage is mostly ignored										
The general poverty of the local population										
The lack of interest of local and state authorities in this area										
The lack of adequate control mechanisms for monitoring the number of tourists and their satisfaction in NP										
Poaching										
Migration of population										
The lack of interest of local people to become involved in agriculture										
Lack of trained personnel										
Insufficient protection of the environment										
Unfamiliarity with the concept of sustainable tourism										
Unfamiliarity with the concept of ecotourism										
Insufficient promotion of the entire region in terms of tourism										
Insufficient promotion of important events										
Profit is the most important										
Lack of strategic documents concerning exclusively the development of tourism and / or agriculture in this area										

Source: Authors

Table 4. Opportunities of the National Park Skadar Lake

Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
The positive rate of growth in the number of tourists globally										
The increase in the number of tourists visiting the unique natural areas										
Travel and Tourism Trends - ecotourism and cultural tourism										
The trend of environmental protection										
The ongoing integration into the EU										
The interest of the international community for protected areas										
Internet and IT										
Cooperation with Albania										
Private and public partnerships										

Source: Authors

Table 5. Threats of the National Park Skadar Lake

Threats	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Socio-economic recession										
The construction of the motorway Bar-Boljari										
Unplanned construction										
Global warming										
Regulations on the Albanian side										
Insufficient interest of the state for ecotourism development, lack of regulations, standards										
Domestic and foreign investment in grandiose projects and the risk of harm to the natural and cultural resources of the park										

Source: Authors

In order to accurately create strategic polygons we gathered all marks in all categories, summed it and get the total intensities of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The total intensity of the strengths of the park is 103, weaknesses 169, opportunities 83, threats 59.

Intensity of weaknesses is much higher than its advantages / strengths and therefore we can conclude that it is necessary to minimize the park's disadvantages and to maximize the strengths of the National Park Skadar Lake. On the other hand, the intensity of the opportunities provided to the park is considerably higher than the intensity of threats what is quite positive.

Using the concept of destination lifecycle the complete tourist product of the National Park Skadar Lake can be positioned at the transition between phases of introduction and growth. In fact, the National Park Skadar Lake is rich in potential for tourism development, but this potential is not at all used. Therefore, based on available statistics we conclude that the sale of tourist products is increasing but the park still has not turned into a real tourist destination.

Also, existing tourist product positioning does not apply to individual tourist products. Sightseeing tourism has a better position, as well as lake cruises, hike & bike tourism - sports and recreational tourism, wine tourism. On the other hand rural tourism and ecotourism in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake could position itself in the first phase of the life cycle in the phase of product development, as well as MICE tourism and religious tourism, golf tourism, scientific research tourism.

Using Ansoff's matrix we conclude that the strategy that involves penetration of the market would be desirable in the case of developing excursion, cultural - religious, event tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, and wine. Existing offer should be presented to the new market segments which includes investments in market development. Furthermore, market diversification is essential when it comes to new tourism products such as eco-tourism, rural tourism, scientific research, MICE tourism, golf and camping tourism, while the transformation of existing and introduction of new tourist products is expected within the sport - recreational, health, cultural, excursions, wine tourism, etc.

Using BCG matrix we position National Park Skadar Lake in the field "Star" and it is in transit from the field "questionnaires" to the "Star". Thus, compared to other national parks in Montenegro, NP Skadar Lake has the best position, but we should always keep in mind the fact that the national parks in Montenegro are not valorized as it is for instance the case with national parks in Croatia; excluding national parks in much more developed tourist destinations.

To summarize, the National Park Skadar Lake is compared to other national parks in Montenegro is Star, but if we compare park's tourist offer to tourist offer of other destinations in Montenegro it must be positioned into the "Questionnaires". In fact, tourism is an economic activity with a high growth rate and the share of the National Park Skadar Lake in tourist traffic in Montenegro is very small, and therefore the market share of the park is very small.

At the end of this section using McKinsey matrix we can position the National Park Skadar Lake in the field "selectivity" which means that the attractiveness of the tourists industry is a quite high, but Park with its tourist offer is not too "strong", and it is necessary to define precisely which products are the most important and the most attractive for future tourism development. For example development of fishing and hunting tourism must be avoided, but ecotourism and rural tourism must be development priority. We emphasize that only sustainable tourism can be developed in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake.

Discussion

Summarizing all the above, basic guidelines for the future sustainable tourism development in the National Park Skadar Lake can be defined. As we can see from previous analysis adequate management system must be established as well as carrying capacity level and visitors management. The National Park Skadar Lake attracts its visitors thanks to unique flora and fauna so the protection of nature is essential for future tourism development. Cooperation and the establishment of good relations between administration - the local population - stakeholders are also required. Improvement of transportation and utility infrastructure is necessary. Reconstruction of local roads is desirable, better signage and marking of roads is also needful. The use of organic fuels and "green" vehicles, as vessels, and land is necessary. Air traffic must be carefully controlled. Then regulation of waste, in particular waste water in order to avoid spilled of the reservoirs must be done. Tourist infrastructure should be improved increasing

the number of accommodation facilities and renovation of existing according to the development and planning documents and mandatory compliance with environmental standards are necessary. Cultural monuments, monasteries and other abandoned sites that may be of interest for the development of sustainable tourism in the park should be reconstructed. Naturally, the reconstruction would be carried out with the permission and support of administrative bodies. Selective forms of tourism should be developed in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake. It is understood that all of them must be based on the principles of sustainability. We propose the development of excursion tourism, cultural, rural, MICE tourism, wellness, wine, sports and recreation, nautical, camping tourism and ecotourism. We emphasize that priority should be given to the development of ecotourism. The development of organic agriculture in areas of the park where it is permitted should be encouraged in accordance with environmental standards, and by the management system. Priority should be given to local products with a guarantee of quality. The development of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises must be one of strategic move in order to develop tourism there. Providing financial incentives, co-financing projects, support in the planning and implementation should be provided. Strategy and action steps for the development of ecotourism (same as with other products) must be defines urgently, and strive with all their might to ensure satisfactory implementation of the same. The satisfaction of visitors should be ensured. Particular attention should be paid to the local population, their motivation to get involved in tourism and related fields. It is important to prevent migration of the population and invest in education, training and development of existing and potential staff both in tourism and in related activities. The awakening of environmental awareness among the local population and the stakeholder and the adoption of the principles of sustainable business is essential.

By implementing these steps The National Park Skadar Lake could be as an example to other tourist similar destinations as tourist destination which is possible to ensure the satisfaction of local residents, stakeholders and visitors/tourists using the concept of sustainable development and strategic planning and management.

Conclusion

Tourism in National Park Skadar Lake is not sufficiently developed. By encouraging a more intensive development of tourism which is based on sustainability favorable conditions, development of activities that are directly and indirectly related to the tourism will be gained. To ensure the growth and development of economy and society in the National Park Skadar Lake, and thereby preserve the environment, it is necessary to apply the concepts of strategic management.

By applying the techniques of strategic management it is possible to perform an exhaustive analysis that will give a realistic picture of the current development of the park. Furthermore, market research, supply and demand, makes determination of a proper development guidelines and development strategy possible. The awakening of environmental awareness among domicile as well as entrepreneurs is the most difficult task that depends on the state of the entire system. Ongoing integration of Montenegro into the European Union is in our favor concerning the respect environmental standards and the concept of sustainability in nearly all, if not all, aspects of life and work.

All future development planning concerning the park must be in accordance with existing plans and strategies. Special attention must be given to vision creation that should be sublimated by the majority to perform it easily. Without a right vision there is no progress.

Establishing a strong system for managing the development of the park, especially the development of tourism has proven to be required and the need for destination management is constantly increasing.

Adaptive destination management is desirable because the market changes every day more intensively and more frequently. The strength of the control system is best illustrated in the tourism industry, and the establishment of management of visitors of the National Park Skadar Lake is more than needed.

Generally initiative of more intensive development of the National Park Skadar Lake should start from the top or from the administrative bodies, and it is necessary to prepare the ground and establish a favorable climate for the development of all the activities that are directly or indirectly connected with tourism and agriculture.

Strategic management in this area is an important factor in the tourism development of the park. On the other hand, without proper marketing strategy destinations such as national parks cannot expect success. With great care specialist teams must work to create each element of the marketing mix and good fitting, proper market segmentation is possible to achieve a satisfactory position Park on the tourist market.

The development of tourism in the National Park Skadar Lake would not only ensure the development of other industries, but would have a positive impact on the economy of Montenegro as a whole, as well as the development of society.

Development of sustainable tourism, especially ecotourism in the area of the National Park Skadar Lake would provide healthy growth and development of the region by relying on the principles of sustainability and taking care of the environment. In this way, ensuring rational use of resources would not jeopardize future generations.

It would be able to join forces to create a pleasant atmosphere in the National Park Skadar Lake for visitors and park could be became "must see" destination or a place that must be visited during the stay in Montenegro.

Also, the application of strategic management, quality management and appropriate marketing National Park would be a destination recognized for memorable experiences for visitors and, a place where visitors are coming back. Belief in the vision, enthusiasm, optimistic spirit, teamwork, knowledge and creativity can from the National Park Skadar Lake make a region that will be an example to all and of which Montenegro will be proud of.

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