

Promising Regional Models in the Context of Marketing Strategies for Tourism Development

Teodora Rizova

Department of Administration and Management
New Bulgarian University
Sofia, Bulgaria
trizova@nbu.bg

Nadezhda Dimova

Department of Economics
New Bulgarian University
Sofia, Bulgaria
n.dimova@nbu.bg

Abstract- Developing a marketing strategy in the tourism business is a special kind of challenge, especially in the context of digitalization, the implementation of artificial intelligence and the accelerated use of social networks. A key and strategic approach to tourism development and a successful marketing strategy is the use of promising regional models. Tourism managers can very successfully use these models to build effective competitive advantages in the tourism business.

The emergence of the need to implement successful marketing strategies in tourism is caused by the constantly increasing level of service in the tourism sector, which is caused by changes in both the environment and changes in the behavior of tourists in their role as consumers. On the other hand, forms of communication are changing, newer means of transport are appearing, natural landscapes and ecosystems are changing, which also remodel tourist behavior. This is precisely where the prerequisites and challenges lie to formulate and describe promising regional models in the context of marketing strategies for tourism development.

Keywords- *tourism, regional models, marketing strategy, consumer behavior, development, natural resources*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, tourism has focused on limiting its uncontrolled growth, which has been taking place since the middle of the last century, and has begun to pay significantly more attention to the main resource of any type of tourism activity, namely - to the natural resources that are used for its implementation. Starting from the first protected areas and ending with the formulation and practical application of the concept of sustainable tourism, in recent years a lot has been done to preserve the natural environment. [10]

The aim of this article is to present promising regional models in the context of marketing strategies for tourism development.

Mass tourism in recent decades has created conditions in which, even with the highest environmental requirements, tourism activity continues to have a negative impact on the natural environment, with the most vulnerable natural systems suffering most from mass forms of tourism activity, a significant part of which either cannot be restored in the foreseeable future, or their restoration will be too difficult and too resource-intensive [9].

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main reason for this is the need to constantly increase the level of service in the tourism sector, the emergence of increasingly modern means of transport and communication, as well as the need to adapt natural landscapes and ecosystems to the needs of tourism activity. Despite following the most precise norms of ecological compatibility, these factors continue to have a negative impact.

Changes in land use lead to fragmentation of the environment and, accordingly, to the death of a number of ecosystems. Pollution and the carbon footprint that tourism cannot help but leave (no matter how high the standards, transport, energy production and a number of other elements still leave their mark on nature), as well as the risk of introducing atypical biological forms that threaten existing ecosystems and under certain conditions can lead to their extinction. It should be noted that such processes do not only affect exotic destinations in the equatorial belt, but also apply to all regions, including the Balkan region.

It is precisely for this reason that there is a need to move to a new stage in the protection of natural complexes and systems, with the path of unlimited prohibitions being one of the most unproductive, both because of the need for

Online ISSN 2256-070X

<https://doi.org/10.17770/etr2025vol1.8628>

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by RTU PRESS.

This is an open-access article under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

appropriate control over its observance and because this approach will disrupt the production processes of a number of tourist companies, a significant part of which strictly comply with environmental requirements. Such a new stage is positive tourism towards nature - a model in which the natural environment is not only the object of protection, but also of active restoration of already caused damage, and not on an incidental, but on a permanent basis. The concepts of sustainable tourism and positive tourism do not contradict each other. They complement each other, with the concept of positive tourism complementing and expanding the general concept of sustainable tourism. It is to a greater extent adapted to new and promising technologies in tourism management, transport, energy, construction and environmental protection.

Sustainable marketing in tourism can explore two fundamental approaches, that of market development using market segmentation and that of sustainable product development. It is realistic to investigate the implementation of sustainable marketing, presenting evidence of the motivations, mechanisms and barriers that businesses encounter, and of the successes in changing consumer behaviour and pursuing sustainability goals.

Important attention should be paid to the methodologies of sustainable tourism marketing, the breadth and complexity of the topic, as well as the numerous innovations. For the research to be realistic and truly broader, it is necessary to fully understand what contextual aspects influence these pro-sustainable interventions to achieve what results in other settings, to validate some of the exploratory studies and to establish the feasibility of scaling up pilot studies for more general use. [5]

On the other hand, as one of the private concepts of sustainable tourism, the concept of nature-positive tourism has its regional forms, each of which is the basis for finding organizational-economic, social and technical solutions, thanks to which this concept finds its expression in a particular region. Therefore, speaking of positive tourism, its regional forms should be sought that are adapted both to the natural conditions of the respective region and to the socio-economic and technological opportunities. [4]

A "roadmap" has been developed by specialists in the tourism industry, which includes general principles of nature-positive tourism, and at the same time, in each of the regions, decisions must be made based on the specifics of the respective countries and the level of development of tourism activity. [9]

According to this "map", the implementation of the positive tourism model consists of four main phases, each of which distinguishes separate steps that must be taken. The phases are as follows:

a) the first phase is defined by the document as the assessment and determination phase. It is about determining those activities that, by their nature, cause the greatest damage to biodiversity, as well as individual natural species. At the same time, within the first phase, the roadmap does not rely solely on a normative approach, implying the prohibitions of certain activities.

In one of the stages, it is envisaged to prepare the necessary analysis relating to the essence of the actions of tourism companies and, accordingly, an analysis of the business processes and technological opportunities that exist for changing business processes, which would integrate them to a greater extent into the system for the protection of individual species. Moreover, the roadmap does not provide for a unified model for action. It assumes that in each of the regions, depending on the specific natural and climatic conditions and economic situation, adequate and sufficiently individualized actions should be taken.

As one of the first steps, the "roadmap" implies the preparation of a list of protected and endangered species, as well as species that are threatened by the impact of other biological species incompatible with them. [1]

To a significant extent, the first phase can be implemented in most countries in the Balkans. In particular, it can be fully implemented in Bulgaria. It is enough to create the relevant administrative bodies (and they can be fully built on the basis of the existing structures of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Tourism). In this regard, achieving compliance between the costs and benefits that certain actions will have on the natural complexes of the respective region is of great importance.

For now, however, serious problems arise from the need to accurately estimate the losses that the tourism business would suffer as a result of the implementation of positive tourism measures. In many cases, such calculations can only be made with the help of local authorities, since a significant part of the tourism business both in Bulgaria and in the Balkans as a whole is built on the basis of already developed tourist centers, where the damage to natural complexes occurred too long ago and cannot be described and properly valued. [3] In order to achieve an accurate analysis of the damage and especially with a view to valuing the already destroyed natural environment, biological-mathematical algorithms for the restoration of destroyed natural complexes must be compiled and then the financial expression of this process must be presented.

Solving this extremely complex task requires the presence of two conditions: on the one hand, the development of accessible new technologies that will enable the effective restoration of destroyed and maximally endangered ecosystems, and on the other - the creation of such organizational conditions that will allow the implementation of such technologies.

It is extremely clear that the tourism business (which in most cases is medium or small) will not be able to cope with such tasks on its own. That is why it is extremely important to attract the bodies of both state and local government. Thus, the state government could fully provide the necessary financial conditions, both in the form of a targeted fiscal policy and in the form of active investment in the development of fundamental and applied sciences. Local government bodies should actively

cooperate with tourism business structures by building public-private partnerships, thus increasing the likelihood of attracting additional investments in activities positive for nature.;

b) the second phase of the “road map” is defined as a reduction phase. It provides for the gradual release of those activities that most threaten biological species and can be eliminated from the practice of tourism companies.

An important element is the determination of priorities, and those of them that are related to the specifics of the region. Unfortunately, such an analysis in the conditions of Bulgaria is carried out extremely difficult and affects only those regions in which the problems have reached a high degree of severity. In order to implement such an approach, active activity is necessary both from local authorities involved in environmental protection and from business. Several stages can be outlined that must be implemented in this direction:

-first of all, the systemic environmental problems in a specific region must be determined, and they must be classified and systematized, along with indicating the main reasons for the emergence of the relevant problems. Based on this systematization, the most risky factors must be determined, indicating those tourism activities that most provoke the manifestation of the relevant factors. Of course, this process should be implemented with the help of state institutions that can support the conduct of relevant research. It is important that the assessment of these factors is as objective as possible, as the tourism business has a high degree of trust in the relevant activities;

-next, tourism companies should analyze their business systems, the main goal of which is to exclude from them those elements that most threaten natural complexes, both in a specific period of time and those that may threaten natural complexes in the future. Of course, this does not mean that the tourism business should simply reduce its activities. Companies should develop such approaches that, on the one hand, reduce the harmful effects on natural complexes, and on the other hand, maintain and even improve their competitiveness. At first glance, this process is very difficult, if not impossible. In fact, however, this is not the case.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The solution can be found in the implementation of three main processes: the introduction of new technologies, the use of optimized tourism products and processes, and the creation of a new type of information space for tourism activities.

In turn, the implementation of digital technologies affects the tourism system in numerous and complex ways, with mixed results for sustainability: while most changes would currently seem ambiguous – and some downright negative – there is significant potential for IT to support more sustainable tourism. However, this would require significant changes in the tourism system at global, national

and individual business levels and requires tourism scholars to explore many new issues.

The main goal is still to enable tourists and tourism businesses to play an active role in overcoming environmental problems, since they are global environmental problems (climate change, pollution, ozone depletion, etc.) and the adverse impact of these problems on nature is increased. In addition, tourists and tourism businesses need to be informed about environmental specificities. At the same time, tourism businesses need to offer environmentally friendly products and services to green tourists in order to be sustainable. The importance of environmentally friendly performance of accommodation businesses in terms of the sustainability of the destination source should be realistically considered and assessed.

A number of studies in theory and practice show that tourists are extremely informed about green hotels. In this way, these hotels have sustainable competitive advantages. These hotels also have a positive impact on the sustainability of the destination.

New technologies that should find a place in tourism should not only be within the framework of environmental standards, but also be able to be included in the process of restoring natural complexes, by being integrated into the relevant business processes of tourism companies. With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, tourism enterprises must orient themselves in acquiring such equipment that best meets their individualized needs, as the leading guideline in this regard should be precisely the protection and restoration of natural complexes. [6]

Optimization of tourism products, in the context of the restoration of natural complexes in the region, does not at all mean their banal reduction. Moreover: today's tourism products already need a certain improvement, thus they must correspond to the new requirements that tourists have.

Accordingly, optimization of tourism products will make it possible, on the one hand, to eliminate those elements that both tourists and management are trying to modernize, and on the other - the protection of natural complexes can be considered as an independent factor around which relevant tourism products can be formed, or to modify those that exist today. [11] In this way, the optimization process leads not to the reduction, but to the development of tourist products, which can have a very high degree of individualization. [2]

In practice, such optimization can be implemented in any type of tourism. As an example, culinary tourism can be cited, in which, within the framework of the offer of certain products, a number of elements related to the protection of natural complexes are included, as this process is closely related to culinary art.

In this sense, the soil for such tourist products is particularly favorable on the Balkan Peninsula, since most of the national dishes and drinks have a direct connection with the products of a certain natural system. Tourists can be offered the opportunity to gain experience not only in

preparing dishes, but also to actively participate in the restoration of the natural system that produces the products for them.

The third element, namely the information environment of tourism, is perhaps, in today's conditions, the most significant for the active development of nature-positive tourism. A well-modeled and purposeful information environment can be the basis for the needs of this type of tourism. Of course, in this regard, a number of activities are already being carried out that promote the ecological behavior of tourism.

However, it must be said that these elements of the information environment are rather informative in nature, detached from specific tourist products and destinations. This, to a significant extent, also determines their relatively weak impact on both tourists and tourist operators.

Creating an information environment for the positive towards nature implies a different approach. The creation of messages in this environment must relate to a specific object, territory, specific natural species or system. The possibilities for the restoration of natural systems must be clearly demonstrated, demonstrating the specific steps that must be implemented for this.

It is also important to demonstrate how positive tourism will achieve a certain result for the environment. The more detailed presentation of the process is as possible, significantly increases the level of trust, generates an element of empathy on the part of tourists. In the process of creating an information environment, it is important to create feedback between the source of information and its recipients. It is precisely for this reason that social networks and other electronic media have an important contribution to the process. In them, feedback is significantly easier, and its mass nature allows for reducing tension in its implementation.

When modeling the information environment, one of the main accents should be placed on the active position for the restoration of natural complexes and, above all, on the activity of tourism enterprises in this direction. [7]

Today, the creation of such a full-fledged information environment in the Balkan countries is lacking. Obviously, much needs to be done in this direction, and here competition between countries is a counterproductive approach. Joint efforts are needed to implement the relevant information strategy;

-Creating a unified strategy for nature-positive tourism. Isolated positive actions related to the implementation of nature-positive tourism cannot produce the expected effect if this activity is not planned in advance and systematically implemented over a significant period of time.

This requires the creation of a unified strategy in this direction, and the strategy should have not so much a recommendatory as an imperative character. Otherwise, environmental protection authorities will continue to observe a decrease in biodiversity and, accordingly, a decrease in the opportunities for competitive advantages over the tourism industry in the Balkans.

It is essential for the implementation of the strategy that it covers a sufficiently long time horizon, the most suitable in this regard may be the period of 20-30 years. This is the time needed to begin the process of restoring biological species and safely preserving existing ones. [8] During this period, conditions are also created for the operation of economic mechanisms that allow the implementation of the approach.

The strategy should be based on the systematic nature of the process, and all aspects of the introduction of this model of tourism activity should be reflected in it - from technical solutions to the activation of local communities in the implementation of the strategy. In addition, it would be appropriate for the strategy to consider more than one option for addressing problems related to biodiversity and especially models of action related to the restoration of biological species.

c) The third phase is related to the implementation of monitoring and reporting on the activities carried out.

The set goals of positive tourism are achievable only and exclusively when the changes affect both the practice of tourism itself, and all economic and non-economic structures, as well as the management bodies of the public sector. It follows that monitoring and reporting are of essential importance for the implementation of the concept, since they are the basis for the coordination of actions in the individual elements of the implementation of the concept.

The implementation of monitoring and documentation of the activity require the development of specific methodologies for this purpose, which, on the one hand, correspond to the specifics of the sites, and on the other hand, enable management to receive information that is suitable for the implementation of management functions.

It should be noted that the developed methodologies must reflect the processes in the positive concept of tourism not only in its static state, but also in dynamics. This in turn implies that within the framework of documentation, constantly operating indicators should be used, which should be unified over a long period of time.

d) The fourth phase of introducing nature-positive tourism is defined as cooperation and communication.

As in any new area, in the field of nature-positive tourism, achieving results cannot be based solely on administrative measures. Obviously, for real effectiveness, there should be an internal understanding of the essence of the process and the presence of both individual and group interest in achieving results.

Accordingly, the effectiveness of the model can be realized in the process of cooperation, and this process has two main forms: cooperation between public administration and private tourism business and cooperation between states in the field of positive tourism.

Quite naturally, one of the most appropriate forms of cooperation between tourism business and public administration is the creation of public-private

partnerships, which could, if legislators so wish, receive a more special status, consistent with the specifics of the goals they set themselves. This form of cooperation has a different degree of development in the individual countries of the Balkans. Therefore, it would be appropriate to adopt the experience of such countries as Greece, as well as Serbia, where such forms have proven their effectiveness.

Of course, public-private partnerships are not the only form of cooperation important for the development of positive tourism. No less important is the active cooperation between the scientific community and the tourism business. The essence of positive tourism requires such a form, thus ensuring a high degree of scientific validity of the decisions made. In this form, different forms could also be considered, and each of the countries of the region could choose the appropriate model, depending on the historical characteristics of such a type of cooperation. In Bulgaria, this type of interaction is currently relatively poorly represented, and in this regard, the practical experience of neighboring countries could be used.

These two forms of cooperation in the introduction of positive tourism towards nature do not exhaust all possibilities. Of great importance is the participation in the implementation of this concept of local communities, which can be defined as the main "recipient" of the benefits of positive tourism. Accordingly, they have sufficiently broad opportunities to support this business model. For the Balkans and in particular for Bulgaria, one of the serious and still unused opportunities is the creation of tourist cooperatives, which can, on the one hand, implement part of the individualized tourist services, and on the other - carry out a number of activities related to monitoring the natural environment in the respective destination.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

It is an indisputable fact that promising regional models in the context of marketing strategies for tourism development play a key role. The emphasis in marketing strategies is precisely sustainability, in parallel with the implementation of digital technologies. The future development of tourist destinations will show how well these regional models are implemented and how much applied marketing will lead to an increase in tourists in a regional aspect.

The implementation of promising regional models in the context of marketing strategies for tourism development has a number of theoretical and practical applications, that provide the implementation of digital technologies affects the tourism system in numerous and complex ways, with mixed results for sustainability: while most changes would currently seem ambiguous – and some

completely negative – there is significant potential for IT to support more sustainable tourism. And for this would require significant changes in the tourism system at the global, national and individual business levels and requires tourism scholars to explore many new issues.

In addition, the opportunity for tourists and tourism enterprises to play an active role in overcoming environmental problems is important, since they are global environmental problems (climate change, pollution, ozone depletion, etc.) and the adverse impact of these problems on nature is increased. And tourists and tourism enterprises need to be informed about the natural specificities. Very important is that tourism enterprises must offer environmentally friendly products and services to green tourists in order to be sustainable. The importance of environmentally friendly performance of accommodation companies in terms of the sustainability of the source of the destination must be realistically considered and assessed.

These effects can be achieved precisely through the implementation of promising regional models in the context of marketing strategies for tourism development

REFERENCES:

- [1] IPBES, Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control, 2023
- [2] V. Braga and A. Duarte, Economics and Management of Geotourism. Springer, 2022
- [3] B. Buszewski and I. Baranowska, Handbook of Bioanalytics. New York: Springer, 2022
- [4] UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-being, 2016
- [5] D. Iliev and D. Ilieva, The Impact of cultural heterogeneity of the European integration Process, Economic Archive/Narodnostopanski Arhiv, No 3, 2014, pp. 44-59
- [6] A. Majumder and J. Sarkar and A. Majumder, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science in Recommendation System: Current Trends, Technologies and Applications. Bentham Books, 2023
- [7] E. Manca, Persuasion in Tourism Discourse. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2016
- [8] F. Nakamura, Biodiversity Conservation Using Umbrella Species: Blakiston's Fish Owl and the Red-crowned Crane. Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd., 2018
- [9] Nature Positive Travel & Tourism Report (WTTC, 2022)
- [10] World Economic Forum, Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy, 2020
- [11] J. Page, Stephen, Tourism Management. 6th edition. Routledge, 2019
- [12] T. Rizova and N. Dimova, The Goa Protocol as a Tool for Implementing a Marketing Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Tourism. Journal of Law and Sustainable Development, 2024, 12(11)
- [13] World Tourism Organization, The Integration of Biodiversity in National Tourism Policies (UNWTO, 2024)