

Integrations as a tool of destination management – case of rural and rural fringe areas

Emil Juvan

University of Primorska, Turistica, Obala 11a, 6320 Portorož, Slovenia, emil.juvan@turistica.edu

Rok Ovsenik

University of Primorska, Turistica, Obala 11a, 6320 Portorož, Slovenia, rok.ovsenik@turistica.si

Povzetek

Opazamo, da se organizacijska struktura slovenskega turističnega gospodarstva počasi spreminja. Gospodarski subjekti se povezujejo, a na način, ki krepí le nekaj korporacij in tako se na nek način ustvarja oligopol. To prepočasí rešuje problematiko nerazvitih in tudi že ogroženih podeželskih in obrobnih okolij, v katerih pa ravno turizem lahko predstavlja najprimernejšo dopolnilno gospodarsko panogo. Integracije predstavljajo preverjeno in učinkovito metodo krepitve poslovnih in organizacijskih odnosov med posameznimi gospodarskimi subjekti, ki lahko nastajajo kapitalsko ali interesno. Koncepti integrativnega destinacijskega managementa, ki predstavlja orodje razvoja turističnih destinacij, težijo k trajnostno naravnemu turističnemu gospodarstvu, kjer povezani turistični subjekti skupaj razvijajo in vodijo turizem. V članku preučujemo možnosti integriranja turističnega gospodarstva kot osnove za uspešno delovanje destinacijskega managementa v Mislinjski dolini. Z raziskavo med 52 poslovnimi turističnimi subjekti na območju Mislinjske doline, smo iskali možnosti za razvoj integracij, kot vzpodbudne in v svetu priznane metode krepitve gospodarstva. Analiza je pokazala, da poslovno okolje sprejema idejo o integriranju, pri čemer se izpostavlja predvsem ideja o interesnem povezovanju.

Ključne besede: podeželski turizem, integracije, turistične destinacije, destinacijski management

Abstract: It is well noticed that the organizational structure of Slovenian tourism industry is changing. Tourist companies are merging, unfortunately only a few companies empowered their capital structure and market position, so in a way we can talk about oligopoly. The situation is not in favor of rural and rural fringe areas, where underdeveloped tourism economy can not represent a solid source of income for many

tourist farms and other tourist companies. Integrations are scientifically and professionally proven methods of empowering businesses. Integrative destination management, which presents the tool for tourist destinations development, aims at sustainable tourism where community collectively develops and runs tourism economy. Paper examines the possibilities for development of business integrations as a basis for successful implementation of destination management in Mislinja Valley. A survey has been conducted, where two thirds of the tourist companies in the area were investigated in a relation to the destination management and tourism opportunities in the area. Analysis shows that business environment accepts the idea of integrations as a tool of empowering regional tourism industry, however only interest integrations appeared to be acceptable at the given moment.

Key words: rural tourism, integrations, tourist destination, destination management

1 Introduction

Due to the increased competition and low personal income on the demand side of the industry, integrations became a way of stabilizing or even boosting tourism consumption through competitive tourism supply. Numerous takeovers, particularly capital integrations on a production level¹ of the travel industry (touroperators) aim at subjugating the entire travel industry. Tourism suppliers at the destination must integrate and increase their negotiating power against touroperators. Beside solid negotiation power, integrated networks of suppliers help to design more attractive tourist products and services. Integrations can appear on capital or interests base, whereat capital integrations demand fresh investments, which rural areas and suburbs lack of. On the other hand interest integrations and networks have no particular demand for financial capital; however they do demand high level of interests for solving problems and achieving goals of the integrated tourism development. Beside abovementioned managerial and organizational aspects of integrations we must refer to very important aspect of the purpose of the new integrated tourism body or structure. In most cases rural and rural fringe areas are severely demographically and economically deprived. Their large dependence on the traditional rural branches (e.g. agriculture, stockbreeding, fruit growing etc.) often hinders the vision of expanding or supplementing existing activities with tourism. Integrated tourism development approach means a new way of managing tourism destination which faces and solves not only economical problems of the area but also problems of insufficient tourism infrastructure (e.g. accommodations, food outlets, human resources, marketing tools etc.). Destination management does that in an integrated way which empowers and intercedes for sustainable tourism. Mislinja Valley is in the initial stage of tourism development. Municipality Slovenj Gradec (MOSG) is developing the idea of sophisticated and high quality spa and wellness resort, which could be understood yet as another attempt of developing tourism whilst numerous sources, ready to be used as tourism products (nature, woods, Kope ski resort, culinary, historical sites etc.) but stay unutilized.

¹ Production level includes touroperators, who merge in order to increase their business volume which increases their negotiating power with suppliers. They tend to buy individual travel services (travel components) in advance and in large volumes, whereat the volume and continuity of demand promise lower prices.

Tourism companies have not yet developed capital or interest business networks, so we were trying to determine the opinion towards integrated tourism development within the influential area of Mislinja Valley. We were investigating the attitude of the local tourism companies towards integrated destination management as a tool for successful and accelerated tourism development. Paper examines scientific and empirical findings in the area of integrated tourism development in rural and rural fringe areas, whereat these findings are applied to our research. Special attention is given to the analysis of the earlier empirical studies in the area of the integrations as a tool of tourism development according to the principals of the destination management.

2 Rural and rural fringe areas tourism

According to Roberts and Hall (2001) rural tourism presents about 20 % of the overall global tourism activities. Scottish rural areas are especially attracted to seniors and middle class tourist, who happened to spend less than other tourist segments (Frochot, 2005). Rural tourism encompasses all types of activities, which are being designed in order to attract tourist and whose consumption will participate to the rural economy and in most cases also supplement agriculture economy. In most cases it does not differentiate significantly from other forms or types of tourism (Kloeze, 1994; Slee et al., 1997; Lobo et al., 1999; Doyle & McGehee, 2002; Thomson, 2004). Numerous professionals and scientists understand rural tourism in high interaction with agriculture, and some even as an alternative to agriculture (Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005). The fact is that tourism in rural areas is not necessarily related to primary rural economical activities (e.g. agriculture, stock breeding, fruit production, etc.) but it can only be a type of tourism being set up in rural or rural fringe area (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997; Getz & Page, 1997; Slee et al., 1997; Thomson, 2004). Mislinjska Valley has many small settlements (called 'celek'), where only a minority of population practices agriculture activities. However there is a huge natural environment offering many opportunities for tourism activities. Nature offers the basis for products that could satisfy needs for inner peace, fresh air, tranquility, relaxation and recreation; all presenting the elements that today's society seeks for. Tourist farm can only be a starting point for many untypical farm holiday activities, which could be merged with

surrounding environment (Getz & Page, 1997; Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005). On the other hand others say that farmers and agriculture activities present important element of tourism products within such environment, which is undoubtedly affected by the local culture (Slee et al., 1997; Walford's, 2001; Nillson, 2002).

Sharpley & Sharpley (1997) name most typical types of tourism which could be referred to as rural tourism or tourism of rural fringe area. Several other terms are in use, for instance agritourism, farm tourism, wilderness tourism, green tourism and ecotourism. Rural area tourism is a reflection of the local culture and has significant impact on a local life, local economy, local physical and social environment, and the overall pace of life (Rátz & Puczko, 1998; Roberts & Hall, 2001; Thomson, 2004). Roberts and Hall (2001) argue that tourism can be an important contributor to the progress of the local economy; however it is not convenient for all types of areas.

Sustainable tourism advocates preservation of the local resources in their original shape and form and it enables their renovation and functional serviceableness for tourism purposes (Roberts & Hall, 2001; Howie, 2003; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Hunter & Shaw, 2007). The latter is particularly important for areas that are less or even undamaged in terms of natural and cultural recourses and whose resources are being primarily used for agricultural activities. Unfortunately global scientific and professional publics did not reach a consensus on elements or indicators for measuring sustainable tourism yet (Twining & Butler, 2002).

Choy & Sirakaya (2006) argue the concept of sustainable community tourism (SCT), which is being composed of ecological, social, economical, political, cultural and technological dimension of the influential communities. Integrated local community will reach the level of sustainable tourism at the point and only if all affected subjects will reach a consensus on sharing input and output. It is essential that the entire local community is treated as partner within the process of the tourism development. Initiators must seek that all partners understand tourism objects and goals (Getz & Jamal, 1994; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). Fundamental positive effects of tourism are related to infrastructure preservation and renovation, demographic and economical problems of the rural and rural fringe areas.

Rural tourism is being interpreted as soft, alternative, green and responsible tourism (Slee et al., 1997). Slovenian tourism strategists, who wrote the Slovenian short-term tourism strategy, define rural tourism and ecotourism as one of the three fundamental areas of the future tourism development (Uran & Ovsenik, 2006: 32) in Slovenia.

2.1 Integrated development of the rural tourism

The fact that environment which has primarily been used for agriculture economical activities (e.g. rural and rural fringe areas) is facing economical and demographical problems. Beside the latter, elements and means of rebuilding economy of rural and rural fringe areas are insufficient, which is why we understand integrations as a mean of empowering weak economy and as a source of fresh innovative ideas that could benefit discussed areas.

In the early 80's many authors foresaw and warned of necessity for integrated tourism economy. Murphy was talking about communal voice, a concept that was to illustrate how important it is for the local community to be involved in the process of tourism development. In his opinion tourism must become part of the local social integrity (Taylor & Davis, 1997). Cohesion of the local host community is one of the leading reasons and elements which influence the basic tourism development processes within the specific tourist destination. That cohesiveness must be supported by the government who represent important integrated joint responsible for legal elements, licensing, subsidization, education, fiscal policies, marketing, promotion etc. Namely these are the very rife areas that businesses in the rural and rural fringe areas lack in (Butler et al., 1998; Hall, 2000; Evans et. all, 2003).

Gunjan (2005) says that networking or integrations are based upon search for knowledge, empowerment and motivation. But objectives and interests of tourist companies entering business network, may be diverse and therefore the very obstacles for project realization. Tourism companies do integrate on different foundations, whereat the main objective should be to meet tourists needs (Crotts et al., 2000). Inevitably it is to understand that rural areas mainly depend on agriculture and

stockbreeding or rural fringe areas mainly represent housing areas for urban labor force. Tourism is always a second activity or so called economical alternative, however a promising one. Discussing the justification of the tourism evolution in these areas should therefore convert into the process of identification of the main sources that could meet the needs of the contemporary tourist market (Weaver & Lawton, 2001; Williams & Lawson, 2001), which could unfortunately aggravate the development processes (Evans et. all, 2003). Some tourist companies will immediately identify promising opportunities with the tourism whereat others will not. Individual companies are inclined towards integrations whilst others are not, so it is important to understand the main reasons for business retention of individual companies. Ovsenik & Ambrož (2002) talk about auto-poetic and syspoetic business systems, whereat syspoetic are inclined to integrations. Namely auto-poetical organizations have difficulties to open to the external business environment in therefore scarcely enter any business networks. Some of the reasons for hesitations with integrating can be related to organizational structure of individual company, so they basically face the lack of resources for creative networking². Waddock (1989) has been arguing some opportunities and benefits of organizational integrations. He warned that independence, profits and position are major terms that must be discussed so that the company could effectively and prosperously participate within the new organizational structure of the tourism economy. Crotts et al. (2000) have been arguing so called ‘ready- aim – fire’ alliances that rise and downfall over the night. The main reasons for such an end are lack of initiative development plans.

According to many researchers (Cohen, 1993; Getz & Jamal, 1994; Madrigal, 1994; Pearce, 1995; Weaver & Lawton, 2001; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003) local community consists of several sub communities. The existence of sub communities heavily depends on the relationship that individual is having towards tourism. Prentice, (1993), King et al. (1993), Madrigal (1994), Jurowski et al. (1997), Bramwell & Lane, (2000) found out that in a long term local population changes its relation towards tourism or some of the

² Rural economy is full of small family owned businesses with limited cadre and simple organizational structure. Due to that many of them have difficulties to satisfy organizational and operational specifics of new integrated tourism developing body. Secondly they are also more confident with their own sources and knowledge that the ones of the integrated body, which is reason enough to decline entering wider business network.

elements of it, which is why it is important when the initiative for the integrated tourism development is introduced. Integrated approach towards negotiating the pros and cons of tourism and some of its elements promise greater success than the individualism. Integrated body must therefore recognize and promote the future of the tourism and its dependence of the local host environment, essentially in the areas where the majority of the economy are family owned businesses. In such businesses one person has a multi-personal role; namely ‘landlord’ is the owner / manager / father of the company as well as the individual member of the local community. The situation entitles him of the two votes when developmental plans are put to the vote on a local community meeting.

Table 1: Local community grouping as per attitudes towards tourism

AUTHOR	FACTORS	GROUPS
Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003	Educational structure Employment	Advocates Socially and Environmentally concerned Economic skeptics
Weaver in Lawton, 2001	Time of living in the community Life standard Environmental factors	Supporters Neutrals Opponents
Madrigal, 1994	Socio-economical factors	Haters Lovers Realists

Due to the fact that economy of rural and rural fringe areas mostly consists of small family owned companies social roles of people involved are unavoidable. Such interweaving social roles demand the local economical and civil environment to be understood as integrated and interrelated. The attitude towards tourism namely depends on the benefits that tourism brings to the individual. As a manager individual is representing the local tourism company, seeking for profits, which demands development and products diversification. At the same time the same manager represents a local citizen seeking for peace and quality of life, if necessary without any tourism. Such conflicts of interests most likely prolong and aggravate development process.

Long-term tourism success is conditioned with appropriate integration process including all major parties (e.g. local economy, local population, government and tourists). In case any ‘silent groups’ (pasivist’s) appear they must be immediately invited to participate otherwise there is a threat they might convert into tourism opponents (Taylor & Davis,

1997). In short entire local community must be involved in tourism development and none of the individuals should stay indifferent.

Williams & Lawson (2001) discovered that personal beliefs and characteristics have greater impact on an individual's attitude towards tourism development than demographical elements. Benefits of the integrated local community, involving all levels of the community (legislative³, supportive⁴ and production⁵) are diversified. Most of the benefits are related to the finances, competition, sustainable development, tourism supply, preservation and development of the living environment, equality and democratization of the economy etc (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Timothy, 1999; Burroughs, 2000; McCool & Moisey, 2001; Payne et al., 2001).

Rural areas will benefit from the tourism only where the needs for alternative income sources will overgrow current local capacities. At the alarming stage, phase where there is an obvious need for alternative source for economical stability and prosperity, local community will start critically assess the opinion and attitude towards tourism. In such situation tourism will most likely be fully supported, nevertheless critical debating over possible negative impacts on the environment will be reviewed (Andereck & Vogt, 2000).

Factors related to quality of life due to tourism in rural areas have no major impact on the attitude towards tourism, because people in these areas have no need for amusement parks, adrenalin parks, fun parks, golf courses, promenades, wellness centers etc; all important elements of developed tourism. Newcomers to the environment on the other hand have escaped from the urban areas where tourism infrastructure is more common. They appreciate pure nature environment which is another dispute factor against tourism development.

Many researchers focused their research interests in the area of attitudes of the local community towards tourism (Mitchel & Reid, 2001; Weaver & Lawton, 2001; Williams

³ Organizations and subjects inclined to the interests of the municipality and government.

⁴ Different NGO's and civil associations which advocate the interests of the local community including the ones in favor of tourism development.

⁵ Tourism entities and enterprises which primarily advocate economical benefits of tourism.

& Lawson, 2001; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Their conclusions are all related to the so called *input vs. output* effect which has a crucial impact on the community attitudes towards tourism. If local residents will be profitably (financially) involved in tourism they will be in favor of tourism (Berno, 1999; Mitchel & Reid, 2001; Andriotis, 2002). In case of discernible negative environmental and economical impact of tourism (foreign labor import, rise of living goods prices, parking availability, air pollution, traffic regime etc.) a negative attitude will appear.

2.2 Tourist destination management and integrations

Management of a tourist destination is universal strategic approach for achieving the competitiveness of the tourist destination on a global tourist market, where the leading role is given to the tourists. In this relationship we understand destination management as a process of stimulating the development of quality integrated tourist products. Tourist destination management actuates the process of planning, organizing, performing and realizing the tourism development (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001: 64; Evans & et. al., 2003; Uran & Ovsenik 2006: 42). Additionally it is important to emphasize that destination management presents one of the major elements of the strategic tourism development document, which was imposed by the Slovenian government and will be a guiding document for the period 2007 – 2011. This precise document (RNUST) plans to increase activities in a direction of developing tourism on the principles of the integrated destination management which makes this topic even more interesting. Juvan et. al. (2005) argue that the existing literature on destination management ascribe following functions of it:

- Organization,
- Development and
- Operation,

all in relation to tourism development.

Among impacts on successful implication of the destination management one can identify attitudes of the local population, organization and use of available tourist resources, communication of the image of the destination and organization of the destination in a sense of integrating tourism (directly and indirectly) related entities. Networking or integrating becomes a vital part of tourism development, whereat it is

not only solving organizational issues but also issues related to the content of tourism offer. O'Roidan (in Hall & Page, 2005: 109) talks about so called resource management and interpret it as a process of deciding how to allocate available resources in relation to space and time, which all corresponds the needs of the local population. Ovsenik (2003) interpret destination management through four major pillars and says that tourism environment is formed by people, legislation, tourism economy and environment. Destination management here presents the tool for successful integration of the interest of the individual pillar with the interest of the others, thus successfully manage the tourism economy. Additionally destination management also recognizes and meets the needs of the tourists; hence it merges the interests of the fourth party with the particular tourism environment. For the purpose of bold and sustainable tourism development it is necessary to establish an integrated body (destination management company, destination organization, destination bureau or other), which will take over destination management and meet the interests of above mentioned pillars of the destination management. One of the similar approaches has been developed by Newson et.al. (2004) who interpret joint management as a method of an effective and sustainable management of a tourist destination. This type of managing sensitive or protected environments is in most cases trusted to the public agency.

3 Methodology

Tourist companies' attitudes towards tourism development in Mislinja Valley were measured with questionnaire, founded on preliminary survey by Ovsenik (2003), whereat his focused on area of Slovene Alps. We were particularly interested in attitudes of the tourist companies towards tourism development on the principles of integrated destination management. Attitudes were measured through independent variables using 5 point Lycart's scale. Collected data were processed with Microsoft Excel program and SPSS, ver. 14.10, using descriptive and frequency analysis. Following hypotheses were tested:

H₀: local tourism economy consider tourism as a perspective branch,

H₁: local tourism economy is inclined towards integrated tourism development,

H₂: local tourism economy is inclined integrations on an interest basis,

H₃: local tourism economy supports the idea of establishing a modern integrated tourism body – Destination Management Organization.

To set up the population sample we consider service variegation, company's business development stage, company's primary business orientation etc. With regards to the fact that this was first of a kind survey within this area and that the companies were not included in many surveys, we decided to personally distribute the questionnaires. We supported the instrument with in depth explanation of the survey and the questionnaire, so we were hoping to get more realistic output. We were not participating in the process of the questionnaire completion. Using a phone call we preliminary informed the companies of the survey and invite them to participate, by setting up a meeting time. Sample investigated presents 44 % of all tourist companies within the Mislinja Valley.

4 Analyses

4.1 Sample description

52 tourist companies participated in the survey, which presents a lower half of all tourism related companies at the time of the survey. Companies were selected randomly using standard classification of economical branches (SKD) to include only tourism directly and indirectly related businesses. Non profit organizations (NGOs) and civil associations (e.g. tourism association, association for cultural activities etc.) related to tourism development were also included. The survey was conducted in municipality Slovenj Gradec and Mislinja, both forming Mislinja Valley. A full third of the sample are businesses within catering industry (e.g. restaurants, inns, taverns etc.), followed by accommodation establishments (hotels, lodging houses). Minority of the sample consists of travel agencies, event management companies and tourist farms. Nonprofit organizations present a lesser share than profit ones (e.g. tourist associations). A full tenth of the entire sample has a history of 15 years within the tourism sector; almost a third would fit between six to ten years of operation. As per analysis almost two thirds of the companies uses some form of integrated development process, whereat they also market tourist products in an integrated manner.

Prevailing share of the sample are accommodation establishments, food establishments and event management companies (fig. 1). A third of the companies are engaged in food and beverage business (e.g. pub, pizzeria, restaurant, fast food, sweetshops etc.). A fifth of the companies are involved in events (e.g. association for cultural activities, association for promotion of arts). A minority of sample are sports associations, craftsmen, restorers etc.

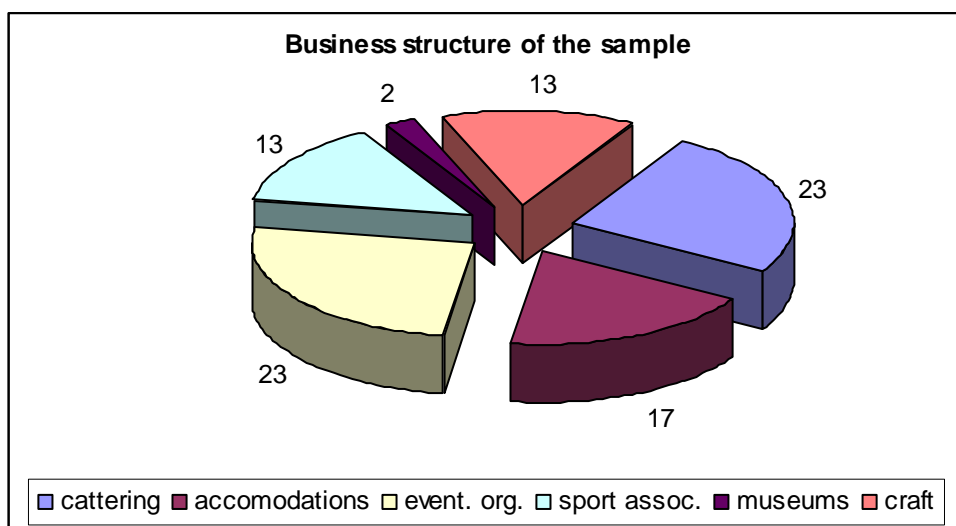


Fig 1: Business structure of the sample

4.2 Perception of the tourism economy

Respondents were evaluating the current situation within the tourism sector. Individual statements were to be evaluated on a Lycart's scale, whereat 1 means 'I don't agree at all' and 5 'I completely agree'. Respondents supported the idea of integrated tourism region Koroška, which is far beyond geographical borders of Mislinja Valley (table 2). Such extension would certainly increase the variety of tourist products and resources for new ones. The threat of negative seasonality within Mislinja Valley would decrease and integrated destination Koroška would definitely be able to cater wider tourist market and more diverse tourist segments. Current business was evaluated as successful yet there are still many opportunities to improve the situation⁶. Respondents are convinced that they can improve business results what implies a high level of positive self-criticism. As per table 1 respondents criticized available professional cadre. Under these

⁶ Average occupancy rate within accommodation sector in 1994 – 2004 was 10 %.

circumstances Mislinja Valley has no significant position within the national tourism industry and the existing tourism demand is stagnating. Due to the insufficient integrations and cooperation within the tourism sector, destination is somewhat disunited and inhomogeneous.

Table 1: perception of the tourism industry

Evaluate the following statements on your destination	Mean	Standard deviation
There are possibilities of extending the destination into wider Koroška region.	4,09	1,11
We can be satisfied with the current business outcome, yet we could do a lot better.	3,24	1,08
Development goals for integrated destination Mislinja Valley are precise and determined.	2,62	1,05
Level of professionalism of cadre is satisfactory.	2,49	0,95
The destination has a sufficient number of tourist products.	2,26	1,02
Growth of domestic and foreign visitors is satisfactory.	2,20	0,98
Destination is well branded within the country.	1,85	0,92
Destination is organized and homogeneous.	1,81	0,97

Table 2 presents the results on the opinion on the importance on business integrations within the destination. Respondents used a Lycart's scale (1 to 5) to evaluate statement about the importance of the integrations for their company. The mean is a rather high (4.46) and confirms the positive attitude towards integrated business development. Based on the standard deviation (.85) we see a high level of opinion unity. Such understanding of the necessity for integrating and merging with other companies, promises that there could come to certain forms of integrated business networks in a near future. The basic purposes of such networks should be development of attractive tourism offer with a sense for sustainable tourism. Almost all of the companies (89 %) either totally agree or agree with the idea that integrating with other is vital for future success.

Table 2: Necessity of integrating

Do you agree that integrating with other companies is urgent for successful operation of your and other tourism companies within the Mislinja Valley?				
value	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
frequency	3,00	2,00	13,00	30,00
percentage	6,12	4,08	26,53	61,22
mean	4,46			
Standard deviation	0,85			

Respondents were asked to define the most acceptable type of integrations that would best fit their organizational and business structure. Two types of integrations were offered, whereat capital integrations demand mutual investments and most likely a promotion of new integrated tourism body. Other type of integrating were interest integrations as a type of *think-tanks* for tourism development, based on some sort of membership alliance. Almost two thirds of respondents are in favor of interest, and a low fifth was for capital integrations (see table 3). The point here is that almost two fifths of the sample consists of non-profit organizations which have limited or no possibilities for capital integrations (associations, clubs, unions etc.) at all. On the other hand a low fifth supported the idea of capital integrations, which could lead to establishment of a new integrated tourism body (e.g. destination management organization). Newly passed law on Private Public Partnership enables public, private and civil entities to become partners in newly established DMO.

Table 3: Type of integration

What type of integration is most acceptable to your company?	Frequency	Percentage
Capital (investing in a new tourism development body)	8,00	16,33
Non-capital interest integration	39,00	79,59
Total	47,00	95,92

Does the tourism economy of the Mislinja Valley support the idea of founding an integrated tourism body which would be responsible for integrated tourism development? The question was passed onto respondents and yes, they were quite united in their support towards such tourism organization. Ranked means (see table 4) show that the main stream of such tourism organization should be integrated tourism destination marketing. With an average mean of 4.46 (std. deviation .81) they share opinion that such organization should be responsible for tourism products diversity and quality. Organization should also be responsible for all short and long-term developmental planning as well as for new markets penetration strategies. One of the approaches towards better and more successful integrated tourism development is integrated tourism brand for the entire region and this should also be one of the tasks of the integrated tourism body (e.g. destination organization, destination management company etc.).

Table 4: Advanced tourism development organization (Destination Management Company)

What benefits for your organization and the destination do you expect from the integrated tourism body such as Destination Management Company?	Mean	Standard deviation
Increased quality and diversity of tourist services and products of the destination.	4,46	0,81
Accurate and unified tourism development strategy.	4,39	0,87
Formation and marketing of the integrated tourism brand.	4,37	0,83
Penetration of new tourist markets.	4,29	1,01
Decreasing the costs of integrated marketing and destination promotion under new integrated tourism brand.	4,20	1,07

4.3 Key findings

The analysis of the tourism economy of Mislinja Valley revealed that tourism is perceived as a perspective brand and attitudes towards business integrations show reasonable positive incline, which is supported by expectations that integrated tourism body should improve current tourism image of the region. Such ascertainments show that the near future should bring some sort of integrated tourism development, though only on an interest basis. Nevertheless there is no guarantee that such integration will definitely emerge. New integrated tourism body should primarily operate as an integrated marketing organization responsible for tourism development strategy and its implication. Tourism business sphere recognizes the government as being passive in the process of tourism development or even inactive, so the civil organizations will have to take over the initiative for integrated tourism development policy. At long last they do represent the strongest interest based civil body in region. Solutions for successful integrated development policy are to be found as soon as possible, for they are the grounds for successful integrated and sustainable tourism development.

In the period when the national tourism structure is being reorganized we find these findings positive. Tourism economy is in favor of interest networking, which is less risky than capital one hence less effective or at least rather rigid with reaching developmental objectives. Lower fifth of the population was in favor of capital networking what could be understood as a beginning of new and fresh investments period, being especially needed for the accommodation sector. Given the fact that respondents positively accepted the idea of the incoming tourism as a promising economical branch for the region, and that the accommodation sector urgently needs some capital influx, it is rather urgent that interest towards capital integrations increases.

Respondents recognize the need for new integrated tourism body (e.g. Destination Management Company, Destination Organization, Destination Bureau etc.). They believe that the body should be responsible for tourism products development, tourism promotion; introduction and marketing of new integrated tourism brand; new tourist markets penetration and deregulation of mutual marketing expenditures for the entire region. Respondents supported new special local tourism tax, which should cover financing of such integrated tourism body. The support for this idea can be interpreted as a positive foundation for newly passed law on public-private-partnership, where civil, private and public subjects can cooperatively join in private business projects (e.g. tourism development). In regards to the above we can accept or confirm hypotheses, however many new questions related to the successful sustainable tourism development strategy are to be investigated.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In its evolutionary phase, when society seeks for opportunities for economical welfare, a variety of opportunities for empowering small economies are welcome. If development plans ignore sustainable directives, the society will soon be incapable of servicing increased demand (labor, sources) and the outcome will soon be inadequate to the society. At that point we can talk of the double negative tourism effect. In the case of tourism this process is even more explicit, because the economy is driven by the culture of the investors, consumers and the host culture. If only all parties are willing to listen and respond appropriately the reciprocal cohesion will be achieved. Undoubtedly the unquestionable following to the market demand will satisfy the needs of the consumers, but under such strategy tourism sources will be at stake. Tourism runs under pressure of tourists, managers, economists, capitalists and the local community that rarely share common ideas and expectations. Tourism economy of the Mislinja Valley shows some signs of development, however supply and the demand side show signs of spontaneous tourism. Respondents vote in favor of interest integrations, networking with no obligatory elements. Obviously there are undefined conflicts that hold back further development processes, which raise the question why there is no integrated tourism development yet? We assume that the small companies share distrust towards big

companies that might gain with the tourism development on the account of all parties involved in the process. Another problem for apathy probably lies in the size and the organizational structure of companies. Majority of the companies are small budget companies and they prefer interest based networking. They lack basic elements for capital integrations.

The main objective of the integrated destination management lies in achieving a positive and creative business climate, which can help empowering small family owned tourism companies and develop Mislinja Valley as either autonomous tourist destination or integrated tourism destination Koroška region. Such creative business climate would enable sustainable development of the local community so in a sense of quality leisure opportunities for locals and tourists as well as in the economical sense.

Tourism is economical branch which can make the area attractive to live in so it can be understood as a tool of improving critical demographic situation of the rural areas. Therefore it is necessary to develop homogeneous living communities, where local population and tourism economy can, side by side, with a sense for environmental issues, develop better living conditions. The government must use any instruments to recover the impression of being apathetic in terms of tourism development, nevertheless local interests must be over the national ones. Development must follow the needs of the local community which must preserve pure nature; however there are also needs for economical improvements. On the other hand government could use quality of cadre as one of the stipulation for developmental subventions. Such approach would definitely improve the quality of tourism services as well increase the chances that governmental subvention would be used properly.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andereck, K.L. & Vogt, C.A. (2000). The relationship between Residents Attitudes toward Tourism and Tourism Development Options, *Journal of tourism research*, **39** (89): 27-36.
- Andriotis, K. (2002). Local Authorities in Crete and the development of tourism, *Journal of Travel studies*, **13** (2): 53-62.
- Andriotis, K. & Vaughan, D.R. (2003). Urban residents' attitudes toward tourism development: the case of Crete, *Journal of travel research*, **42**(2):127-186.
- Berno, T. (1999). When Guest is a Guest: Cook Islanders view of tourism, *Annals of tourism research*, **26**(3): 656-675.
- Bramwell, B. & Lane, B. (2001). *Tourism, collaboration, and partnership: politics, practice, and sustainability*, Channel View Publications: Clevedon.
- Burroughs, R. (1999). When Stakeholders choose: process, knowledge and motivation in water quality decisions. *Society and Natural Resources*, **12**: 797–809.
- Butler, R., Hall, C.M. & Jenkins, J. (1998). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*. John Wiley&Sons: UK.
- Choi, H.S.C. & Sirakaya, E. (2005). Measuring Residents Attitude toward Sustainable Tourism: Development of sustainable tourism attitude scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, **43** (59): 380-394.
- Choi, H.C. & Sirakaya, E. (2006). Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism, *Tourism Management*, **27**:1274–1289.
- Crotts, J.C., Buhalis, D & March, R. (2000). *Global Alliances in Tourism and Hospitality Management*. Haworth Press: New York.
- Doyle, A.B. & McGehee, N.G. (2002). *Case Statement for the development of Agri-Tourism in the Commonwealth of Virginia*. Virginia Tech: Blacksburg.
- Evans, N., Campbell, D. & Stonehouse, G. (2003). *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford.
- Fleischer, A & Tchetchik, A. (2005). Does rural tourism benefit from agriculture?, *Tourism Management*, **26** (4): 493-501.
- Frochot, I. (2005). A benefit segmentation of tourists in rural areas: A Scottish perspective, *Tourism Management*, **26** (3): 335-345.
- Getz, D. & Jamal, T.B. (1994). The environment-community symbiosis: a case for collaborative tourism planning, *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, **3** (3):152-173.

- Getz, D. & Page, S.J. (1997). Conclusions and implications for rural business development. *The business of rural tourism: International perspectives*. Uredila: Page, S.J. & Getz, D. International Thomson Business Press: London.
- Gunjan, S. (2005). Relationships, networks and the learning regions: case evidence from the Peak District National Park. *Tourism Management*, **26** (2): 277-289.
- Hall, C. (2000). *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*. Prentice Hall: Harlow.
- Hall, C.M. & Page, S.J. (2006). *The Geography of Tourism & Recreation: Environment, place and space* (3rd. ed). Rutledge: London.
- Howie, F. (2003). *Managing the Tourist Destination*. London: YHT Ltd.
- Hunter, C. & Shaw, J. (2007). The ecological footprint as a key indicator of sustainable tourism, *Tourism Management*, **28**: 46–57.
- Jamal, T.B., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration Theory and community tourism planning, *Annals of Tourism Research*, **22** (1):186–1204.
- Jurowski, C., Uysal, M. & Williams, D.R. (1997). A Theoretical Analysis of host community resident reactions to tourism, *Journal of Travel Research*, **34** (2): 3-11.
- Juvan, E., Ovsenik, R. & Vukovič, G. (2005). Feasibility of Tourism Destination Management and Its Development in Small Urban Areas – Case of the Mislinja Valley. *Destination Management*. Uredila: Ovsenik, R. & Kiereta, I. London: Peter Lang.
- King, B., Pizam, A. & Milman, A. (1993). Social impacts of tourism, host perceptions, *Annals of tourism Research*, **20** (49): 650 – 665.
- Kloeze, J.W. (1994). Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development in Hungary. *Rural Tourism Management: Sustainable Options International Conference, Conference Proceedings*. Uredila: Rátz, T, & Puczko, L. Scotland: Scottish.
- Lobo, R.E., Goldman, G.E., Jolly, D.A., Wallace, B.D., Schrader, W.L. & Parker, S.A., (1999). Agritourism Benefits: Agriculture in San Diego County, California *Agriculture*, **53** (6): 20-24.
- Madrigal, R. (1994). Residents perception and role of government, *Annals of tourism research*, **22** (1): 86 – 102.

- McCool, S.F. & Moisey, N. (2001). *Tourism, Recreation and Sustainability. Linking Culture and the Environment*. CABI Publishing: UK.
- Mitchell, R.E. & Reid, D.G. (2001). Community Integration: Island Tourism in Peru, *Annals of tourism research*, **28** (1): 113-139.
- Newsome, D., Moore, A.S. & Dowling, R.K. (2004). *Natural Area Tourism: Ecology, Impacts and Management*. Channel View Publications: Clevedon.
- Nilsson, P.A. (2002). Staying on farms: an ideological background, *Annals of tourism research*, **17** (3): 337-352.
- Ovsenik, R. (2003). Perspektive in protislovja razvoja turističnega področja, Model turističnega managementa na območju slovenskih Alp, doktorska naloga, Univerza v Mariboru, Fakulteta za organizacijske vede.
- Ovsenik, R. (2003). Opportunities and Contradictions Involved in the Development of a Tourist Destination: A Model of Tourism Management in the Area of the Slovene Alps, *Organizacija*, **36** (6): 392-399.
- Ovsenik, M., Ambrož, M. (2000). *Ustvarjalno vodenje poslovnih procesov*. Portorož: Turistica Visoka šola za turizem.
- Payne, R.J., Johnston, M.E. & Twynam, G.D. (2001). Tourism, Sustainability and the Social milieu in Lake Superior's North Shore and Islands. *Tourism, Recreation and Sustainability. Linking Culture and the Environment*. Uredila: McCool, S.F. & Moisey, N. R. Cabi Publishing:UK.
- Pearce, P.,L. (1995). From culture shock and culture arrogance to culture exchange: ideas towards socio-cultural tourism, *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, **3**:143-154.
- Prentice, R. (1993). Community driven tourism planning and resident's preferences, *Tourism Management*, **14** (3): 218 – 227.
- Rátz, T. & Puczko, L. (1998). Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development in Hungary. *Rural Tourism Management: Sustainable Options International Conference, Conference Proceedings*. Scotland: Scottish, dosegljivo na: <http://www.ratztamara.com/rural.pdf>
- Roberts, L. & Hall, D. (2001). *Rural Tourism and Recreation: Principles to practice*. CABI Publishing: New York.

- Sharpley, R., & Sharpley, J. (1997). Sustainability and the Consumption of Tourism. *Tourism Sustainability: Principles to Practice*. Uredil: Stabler, M.J. Wallingford: Cabi International.
- Slee, W., Farr, F. & Snowdon, P. (1997). Sustainable tourism and the local economy. *Tourism Sustainability: Principles to Practice*. Uredil: Stabler, M.J. Wallingford: Cabi International
- Swarbrooke, J. & Horner, S. (2001). *Business Travel and Tourism*. Butterworth-Heinemann: Oxford.
- Taylor, G. & Davis, D.(1997). The Community Show: A Mythology of Resident Responsive Tourism. *Tourism Sustainability: Principles to Practice*. Uredil: Stabler, M.J. Wallingford: Cabi International.
- Thomson, C.S. (2004). Host produced rural tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, **31** (3): 580–600.
- Timothy, D. J. (1999). Participatory Planning: A view of tourism in Indonesia, *Annals of Tourism Research*, **26** (2): 371–391.
- Twining, W.L. & Butler, R. (2002). Implementing STD on a small island: Development and use of sustainable tourism development indicators in Samoa, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, **10** (5): 363–387.
- Uran, M. & Ovsenik, R. (2006). Razvojni načrt in usmeritve in slovenskega turizma 2007-2011. Ministrstvo za Gospodarstvo: Ljubljana.
- Waddock, S.A. (1989). Understanding Social partnerships: An Evolutionary model of partnership organizations, *Administration and Society*, **21** (1): 78-100.
- Walford, N. (2001). Patterns in development in tourist accommodation enterprises on farms in England and Wales, *Applied Geography*, **21**: 331-345.
- Weaver, B.D. & Lawton, L.J. (2001). Resident perceptions of the Urban-Rural Fringe, *Annals of tourism research*, **28** (2): 439-458.
- Williams, J. & Lawson, R. (2001). Community Issues and Resident Opinions of Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, **28** (2): 269-290.

Emil Juvan holds a Master of tourism degree from Turistica-College of tourism at University of Primorska, before that he earned an undergraduate degree in business studies at St. Thomas University, US. He is currently a teaching assistant and researcher at Turistica – College of tourism at University of Primorska. His areas of interest are related to travel management, tourism destination management and leisure behavior. He published several scientific and professional papers with special attention to destination management and tourism development within rural and small urban areas. Plus he was involved in several research projects which Turistica-College of tourism at University of Primorska carried out for government of Slovenia and NTO.

Rok Ovsenik holds a PhD degree from the Faculty of Organizational Sciences University of Maribor. In his thesis he concentrated to the development of the destination management model for Slovenian Alps. He is an associate professor at Turistica – College of tourism University of Primorska, where his teaching and researching is devoted to travel agencies management, leisure theory and destination management. He published a number of scientific and professional papers in domestic and international journals. As co-author he wrote National strategic document for tourism development till 2011 (Development plans and directives of the Slovene tourism 2007 – 2011). In 2006 he co-edited international scientific monograph Destination management.