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# THE SYNERGY OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND AGRICULTURE AS A FACTOR OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IN CROATIA

## ABSTRACT

Adequate validation of regional areas is imperative for Croatian economy. The aim of this paper is to show that there is a strong interdependence and the potential for achieving synergistic effect between tourism and the agriculture and food industry. It is possible, through systematic marketing research and investment in operationalization of this synergy, along with an adequate evaluation of specificity and characteristics of individual regions, to exploit their strengths and even their flaws as a competitive advantage and achieve qualitatively and quantitatively stronger development of all regions in Croatia.

Authors discuss tourism and the agriculture and food industry in light of symbiotic and synergistic factors in global conditions of growing environmental awareness and the prevailing concept of sustainable development as well as the role (green) marketing can and should play in the function of regional development and increasing competitiveness of regions. The conclusions are based on the analysis of the key indicators from secondary research, insights from scientific literature and available strategic documents which were confronted with the relevant trends in the global market.

The paper shows that the focus on tourism and the agriculture and food industry as the fundamental pillars of development and commitment to sustainable development based on the preservation of the environment, rich natural diversity and heritage has a stronghold in objective resources and opportunities arising from internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as relevant trends in the global market.

**Keywords:** sustainable tourism, eco-agriculture, regional development management, green marketing.

## 1. Introduction

From various national strategies and action plans which refer to the long-term, general and regional development of Croatia a focus on tourism, and the agriculture and food industry as the fundamental pillars of development as well as commitment to sustainable development based on the preservation of environment, rich natural diversity and heritage may be noted. It should be pointed out that it is not about declarative choice, but of a stronghold in objective resources and opportunities arising from internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as relevant trends in the global market.

The priority strategic lines of economic development of the Republic of Croatia must undoubtedly be tourism and agriculture, because, apart from potential assumptions, there are other assumptions which could transform those two branches of the economy into those, which would significantly contribute to economic revitalization which is very much significant in the economy at first devastated by war and post-war privatization challenges (and then lately also by the economic crisis – author’s comment). The primary reason for this lies in the fact that these two branches of the economy are very closely connected, and through their integration and through the sale of their outputs – tourist products, far greater effects are achieved as it is the case in the classical expression of industrial products. However, success requires strong marketing efforts in tourist activities as the first necessary step towards making the tourist product of the Republic of Croatia as a whole a recognizable, more competitive, and stronger and clearer positioned product on the increasingly demanding international tourist market. (Meler and Ružić 1999, 636)

It should be pointed out that food production and food processing in the Republic of Croatia may achieve a (sustainable) competitive advantage because it fulfils almost all prerequisites needed for making its export product highly wanted healthy food. Similarly, tourism in the Republic of Croatia may achieve (sustainable) competitive advantage as it fulfils almost all prerequisites for eco-healthy tourism. In the synergy of these two competitive advantages we see an extremely bright perspective for the Republic of Croatia in the future. (Meler 2004, 8)

Equal attention in social, political and scientific circles draws the issue of regional development and regional imbalance which not only Croatia, but also every country faces. Increasingly present and more complicated regional issues and the presence of disproportions point to the need of finding new generators of regional development. Undeveloped and poorer regions inadequately participate in the allocation of income and national social frameworks. Achieving adequate valorisation of a certain regional area is an unquestionable imperative of the Croatian economy. On the road to achieving that imperative is regionalization, the process of forming a regional system within national areas, where the regions are profiled according to certain distinctive marks which dominate their area and which make the areas recognizable.

In the past few years in the context of regional development management in the Republic of Croatia, we have often heard about the concept of linking the „blue and green“ Croatia as the basis for achieving successful and even regional development, competitiveness and recognition of Croatia on the global market. On the trail of this is also the starting assumption of this paper i.e. the claim that by means of systematic marketing analysis, research and investment into achieving and improvement of synergy between tourism and agriculture it is possible through adequate valorisation of specific qualities and characteristics of individual regions to make use of their advantages as well as their disadvantages (e.g. underdevelopment of industry) as competitive advantage and to achieve more even and qualitatively and quantitatively stronger development of all regions in the Republic of Croatia. This is possible to achieve through a strategic commitment to green marketing on the national level which can provide a relevant frame of knowledge, tools and models of action focused on achieving the above mentioned goals.

Consequently, after defining the basic terms related to regional development the paper addresses, foremost, the issue of the agriculture and food industry, following tourism as supporting and synergic factors in the conditions of growing environmental awareness and prevailing concept of sustainable development, as well as the role (green) marketing can and should play. Overall this represents an important factor in regional development management since it enables achievement of the full potential and multiplication effect on the development of all regions.

## 2. Regional development

In order for regional balance and faster growth of underdeveloped areas to be achieved, there is a stronger need for regionalization. Division of the state territory into a larger number of regional units gives way to the possibility for establishing a different kind of and more effective administrative and planned organization and planning as the efficient state instrument for the application of a global national development policy. (Šimunović 1996, 147)

It should be noted that there are a number of laws important for the adjustment and conduction of a regional development policy in the Republic of Croatia. However, the current legal framework does not entail a unique, clearly legally defined institutionalized framework for conducting regional development on the entire state territory.

According to the National Council for Competitiveness, the goals of successful regional policy are as follows:

uniform and long-term sustainable development of local areas, counties and regional communities, inhabitants and economic activity should remain in a certain area for a consistent period of time, which opens up the perspectives for work and employment, validation, preservation, optimum use and development of both urban and rural space, social and developmental cohesion on the national level. (Krajcar)

Grading and classification of counties according to development shown in Table 1 indicates large discrepancies between individual regions-counties. For example, Osječko-Baranjska County, as well as most of the counties in Eastern Croatia, is significantly lagging behind the city of Zagreb, Istria and Primorsko-Goranska County.

In accordance with the above stated, the importance of regional development management should be additionally emphasized. Management of regional development or regional management denotes making decisions about target, well-conceived and controlled changing of the existing economic and social condition, about aims of regional development and means, ways and manner of achieving those aims in cases when the market with its mechanism does not ensure the maximum economic efficiency and social well-being. (Šverko 1995, 16)

Table 1. Grading and classification of counties according to development

County	Development index
<b>&lt;75% I Group</b>	
Virovitičko-Podravska	20.51%
Vukovarsko-Srijemska	20.57%
Brodsko-Posavska	33.36%
Bjelovarsko-Bilogorska	35.17%
Požeško-Slavonska	43.95%
Sisačko-Moslavačka	48.50%
Osječko-Baranjska	52.88%
Karlovačka	54.52%
Ličko-Senjska	55.48%
Šibensko-Kninska	63.30%
Koprivničko-Križevačka	63.30%
<b>75-100% II group</b>	
Međimurska	75.11%
Zadarska	75.59%
Krapinsko-Zagorska	87.72%
Splitsko-Dalmatinska	89.09%
Varaždinska	96.30%
<b>100-125% III group</b>	
Dubrovačko-Neretvanska	107.93%
Zagrebačka	123.22%
<b>&gt;125% IV group</b>	
Primorsko-Goranska	142.32%
Istarska	156.13%
City of Zagreb	187.54%

Source: Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds, available at: <http://www.mrrfeu.hr/UserDocsImages/Regionalni%20razvoj/Vrijednosti%20indeksa%20razvijenosti%20i%20popkazelja%20za%20izračun%20indeksa%20razvijenosti%20na%20županijskoj%20razini.pdf> (access: 14.02.2013)

Regional economy management system comprises the following three levels:

1. determining a relevant concept and strategy regarding the management of regional development and realization of individual programs,
2. preparation of particular branch programs and determining development policy,
3. creation of guidelines and individual plans which make the fruition of programs easier. (Šverko 1995, 17)

In order to achieve the greater success of the region it is crucial to achieve competitive advantage of the region itself. The term competitive advantage unlike comparative advantages implies that the position of a certain region with respect to the other region is not just the result of its comparative advantages acquired by means of the quality and quantity of available basic development factors<sup>1</sup>, but it is also the capability of the company, institutions and individuals operating in the region. (Baletić et al. 1999, 113)

It is important to emphasize that in regional development management, one must by means of the holistic approach, consider all characteristics of not just one, but every region as well as their existing and potential interinfluence, and make use of those which are supporting i.e. represent the potential for generating the synergistic multiplicative effect. Thereby, the starting point and stronghold should be the sustainable development of the entire national economy and society as a whole. Exactly for that reason, the focus of this paper is realization of synergy between sustainable development and agriculture as a strategic goal and an underlying factor of regional development management in Croatia. Key factors, fundamental characteristics and trends relevant for the development of eco-agriculture in the Republic of Croatia are discussed first.

### 3. Eco-agriculture

Due to its preserved nature and environment, Croatia has an advantage over other developed countries and can produce diverse consumer safe high-quality food.

1 The term comparative factors of development comprises the following most important production factors: the land, human labour, and natural resources.

Agriculture is followed by the diverse and developed food and processing industry with capacities that not only satisfy domestic needs, but also the market needs of neighbouring countries. (Croatian Chamber of Economy 2010, 1-3)

Given the characteristics of Croatian agriculture marked foremost by small capacities compared to competitive countries, and the aforementioned comparative advantage reflected in the protection of the environment, but also foreign influences (opportunities) arising from being a tourism-oriented country and the previously stated changes on the tourist market in the sense of growing ecological awareness of the tourists, the logical way of developing the agriculture and food industry which should be focused on is eco-agriculture and organic food production.

Global demand for organic food has been growing at 13 to 25 % every year, and Croatia does not lag behind this trend. Buyers are mostly pregnant women and young mothers. (Trajković 2011) It can be said that there are undoubtedly strong positive trends on a demand side both on the domestic and global market which are expected to be even stronger in the future due to the influence of consumer education, strengthening of trust based on certification, but also on improvements concerning the availability of those products by means of their growing penetration into standard distribution channels.

For the purpose of depicting the trend some other data from the global statistics are taken out. In 2008 global organic products market value reached 50.9 billion US dollars, more than triple the 15.2 billion recorded in 1999. Most organic food is sold on the markets of Europe and North America. (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development 2011, 8)

Domestic organic agricultural production is growing year after year. According to official statistics in the Republic of Croatia there were only two registered eco-producers in 2002, whereas only a year later there were up to 130 producers registered in the Register of eco-producers. In 2005 this number amounted to 269, and according to the latest available data, in 2010 there were more than 1000 registered eco-producers.

At the same time the number of hectares under eco-agriculture is rising. According to the data provided by the Croatian Chamber of Economy as of July 2010, this number amounts to 14,000 ha i.e. 1.2 %

of the total arable land. If we take into consideration that the European Union demands that the share be a minimum of 10 %, this means that Croatia is supposed to have 130,000 hectares. Hence, it is obvious that it will take a lot of time to reach European standards in that sense.

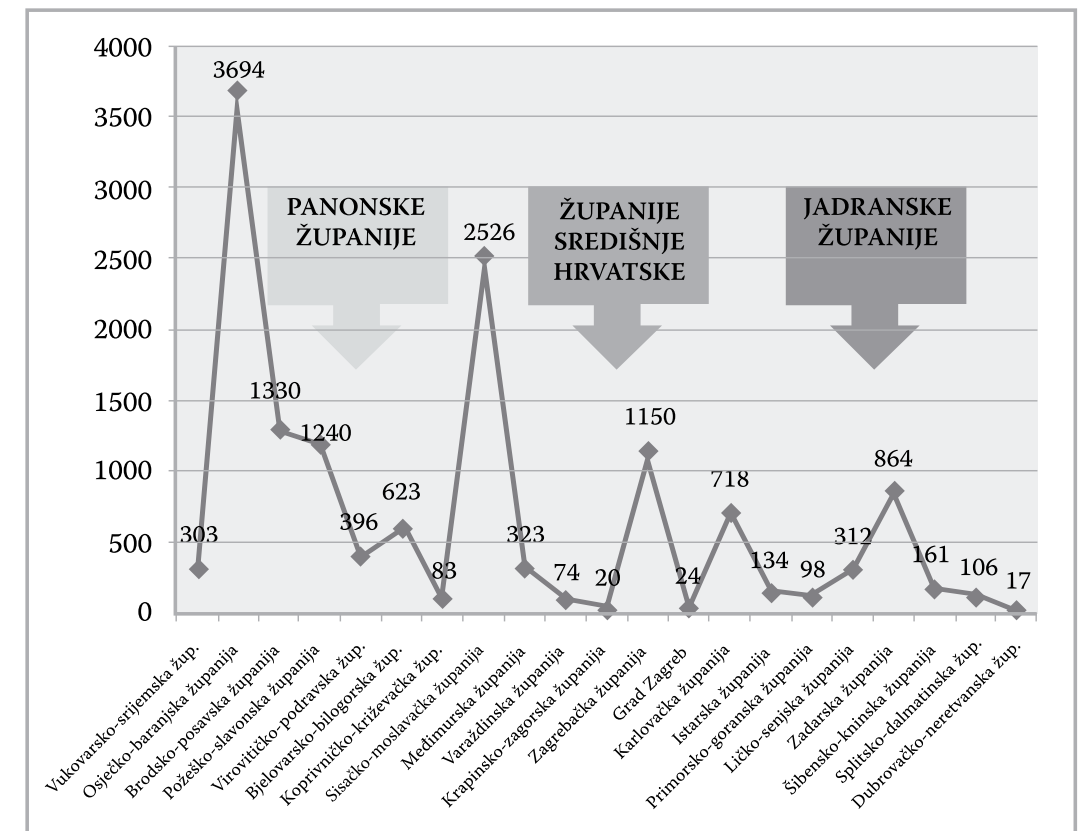
Despite the aforementioned encouraging growth trend concerning the share of eco-agriculture, Croatia still belongs to the group of rare European countries which have insufficiently developed this type of agricultural production. This is even more surprising having in mind the extraordinary natural conditions and high agro-ecological diversity of regions.

Regionally, Pannonian counties have the highest number of areas registered for eco-agriculture. In Figure 1, we can see that eco-agriculture is unevenly dispersed i.e. it could be argued that eco-agriculture is one of the dominant features of Pannonian Croatia, whereas this is most certainly not the case in the Adriatic region.

Croatia disposes of several undoubted and important comparative advantages concerning the production of organic food consisting primarily of relatively well preserved environment (soil, water and air quality). Hence, it is possible for Croatian agriculture to take advantage of its former deficiency and weakness (lagging behind in using mineral fertilizers, additives and agricultural mechanization) as the basic advantage i.e. the opportunity. The existence of long-time neglected agricultural areas was formerly often regarded as a weakness due to high arrangement costs of such land. This also refers to huge surfaces which have for more than ten years been inaccessible because they were marked as suspected landmine areas. After demining and clearing

**Picture 1. Areas under eco-agriculture according to Counties**

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (2011), "Action plan for development of eco-agriculture in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2011-2016", pp. 10.



ring, those pieces of land represent an extraordinary potential for eco-agriculture application. In addition, among comparative advantages the existence of native, quality agricultural crops, tourism orientation, and a great number of protected areas (11.43% of terrestrial area) should be emphasized.

A market for these types of products exists in Croatia, which is confirmed by the amount of imported goods sold in our country. However, although we could be one of the more important exporters of organic goods, rather than importers, this is not the case. Croatia's annual import value of organic products amounts to 200 million Kuna despite the fact that 90 % of those products could easily be produced in Croatia. (Prca 2011) Hence, it is clear that next to the aforementioned comparative advantages and supporting factors there are also problems, which to a certain extent overlap with the problems present in conventional agriculture and food industry and which represent structural problems.

Some of the basic problems related to organic food products comprise the following: the domestic eco-agricultural supply is mostly related to the domestic market, there are no diverse products, and the quantities are too low for a serious appearance on the export market. The very issue of quantities is the biggest problem regarding a more significant development of both eco-agriculture and conventional agriculture. Small surfaces of individual producers make their appearance on the market and better competitiveness harder. (Krpeljević 2011) Participants in the eco-agricultural system in the Republic of Croatia also consider that the weaknesses of the entire eco-agricultural development are frequent changes of law and development strategies, and the nonexistence of institutional cooperation between state and county bodies. (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development 2011, 14)

Having export in mind, the growing problem lies in the double certification. Namely, the products bearing the Croatian eco-certificate are not recognized as such on the international market. Hence, in order to export goods one should additionally obtain international certificates and eco-labels.

Initially, the biggest role in the distribution of organic agricultural and food products had markets and organized delivery per order or sale at the eco-estate itself. However, recently there has been a certain progress related to distribution and reaching the consumers. An important role in that process was played by the specialized organic food stores.

By strengthening consumer environmental awareness and the trend of organic product consumption, especially of food products, the interest of chain stores for this product category has grown. For example, the biggest Croatian retail chain Konzum developed the first Croatian eco-trademark called Ekozona. (Jatrgovac 2011)

Apart from chain stores, the increased interest for eco-agricultural and food products can also be seen by drugstores and restaurants. Motivated by the demand side requirements and also the need for differentiation on the increasingly demanding gastro market, a certain number of caterers introduced their menus with dishes prepared from organically grown groceries. So far those have been isolated cases rather than the trend in the catering industry of the Republic of Croatia.

Nowadays, a frequent question in scientific, economic, political and public discussions is: what is missing in order for the domestic organic production, especially that of agricultural and live-stock products, to become alive? In order to achieve that aim consumer habits need to be created and developed. Of the same importance is continuously supplying stores with organic products, determining the most appropriate areas for such production, creation of *brand*, consumer education and small individual producers should, in order to survive on the market, join clusters. In order for organic products to reach the buyers, they need better marketing and better connection with tourism where one can place, especially in hotels, diverse organic food and other products. (Šupraha 2011)

Based on the described characteristics, problems and trends, the most efficient way of distributing eco-agricultural food products and consequently creating a sustainable competitive advantage on the domestic and foreign market is distribution by means of tourism i.e. especially ecotourism, since there is a case of mutual targeted consumer segment.

#### 4. Sustainable tourism

Getting back to nature, a healthy diet and natural materials usage is a global movement which is also reflected in tourism. Preservation of the environment is already a prerequisite for tourism development since a significant number of tourists want and expect an eco-component in the tourism offer.

These two aspects create a market-environmental balance. Ecology is becoming both the trend and the need. This way not only the preservation of existing, traditionally exploited natural attractions, but also more intensive tourist valorisation of protected natural areas and environmentally acceptable agricultural production as additional enrichment of tourism offer is enabled. (Ministry of Tourism 2003, 24-25)

Regarding the global environmental, social and economic challenges, the international community in Rio de Janeiro (Agenda 21), set up the framework for reaching sustainable development in general, which the World Tourism Organization defines as: taking the needs of modern tourists and tourist destinations into account and at the same time protecting and improving the development potential for the future. All resources may be used only to the extent to which economic, social and environmental demands of all participants on the tourist market are satisfied.

Based on Agenda 21, numerous guidelines for sustainable tourism development which were formed and published on national and local levels were created. These guidelines contain respective mutual key words or imperatives - among them the following stand out: long term sustainability and the quality of natural and human resources, taking into account the needs and quality of life of the host population, and preservation of cultural integrity. (Chhabra 2010, 21)

The "sun and sand" recreational tourism has reached its mature market phase and the projections show a horizontal curve of growth. By contrast, "experimental" tourism that includes eco-tourism, tourism based on nature, heritage, culture and adventurism as well as sub-sectors like rural tourism and community based tourism, are among sectors which could expect the fastest growth in the next few decades. (The International Ecotourism Society 2005, 2)

Following those changes on the global tourist market, many of the most relevant tourist destinations try to diversify and adapt their offer in order to attract environmentally friendly tourist segments that record growth both in the sense of the size of the segment and in the share of consumption on the global tourist market. It is estimated that the demand for eco-tourism on an international level is growing at a rate of roughly 20% a year.

Two terms which often provoke practical disagreements and difficulties should be noted. Rural tourism and eco-tourism are two distinct concepts which overlap. Although eco-tourism is often an important part of rural tourism, rural tourism is not restricted only to eco-tourism, and eco-tourism is likewise not restricted only to rural surroundings, although it always includes interaction with natural contents. (Collins-Kreiner and Wall 2007, 51)

Likewise, eco-tourism and sustainable tourism are not synonymous. It is important to emphasize that eco-tourism is not automatically sustainable. However, if it is to be sustained and if it is to contribute to sustainable development, it must be economically viable, environmentally appropriate, and socio-culturally acceptable. (Meler and Ham 2009, 90) It could be said that eco-tourism represents a type of tourist industry achieved in collaboration with nature. Marketing approach presupposes a triple satisfaction of needs: the need of a guest in a temporarily changed environment, the need for preservation of the environment and the need of subjects providing tourist offer.

An undeniable fact is that sustainable tourism development is of great importance for the Croatian economy, thus making strategic decisions and plans implies joint strategic marketing efforts made at both the eco-tourism destination level and the national level. It is important to emphasize that those decisions have to be based on a detailed analysis and valorisation of the characteristics of individual regions i.e. regional diversity which should be recognized as the opportunity in the sense of achieving sustainable tourism development. At the same time, of great importance is recognition and anticipation of relevant trends on the global market.

It should also be emphasized that Croatia undoubtedly occupies a privileged position in relation to its competitors thanks to numerous factors, but also environmental awareness of its tourism policy to keep what can be considered the most valuable asset of the country: preserved and picturesque natural environment, unspoiled coast and the authenticity of its villages.

Thereby, green marketing plays a key role with the help of the following: methodical consideration and usage of synergistic effects of natural capital that Croatia has, adequate valorisation of specificities and characteristics of individual regions, and complementarity of the burgeoning phenomenon of ecotourism with the strong impetus of the market

of ecologically produced food and green product market in general.

It is very important to include local communities, which have up to now in that context been in the background, in international organizations which deal with issues related to the usage of natural and social resources. The application of various measures of economic policy cannot be surpassed. This implies an urgent passing of adequate tax and other measures by means of which environmentally quality forms of tourism development should be encouraged. In an ideal case, mass uniformed tourist offer should be abandoned where possible. (Pavlič 2007, 232-233)

The described processes have to be implemented with respect to cultural values and differences among localities and regions, especially residents because their attitude towards tourism and tourists is crucial for the entire level of guest contentment (which is the required prerequisite for achieving the positive effect of “word-of-mouth” marketing) and making an impression that a country leaves as a whole.

It is not possible to appropriately see, define and grasp all of the above without a systematic marketing approach. In this case with regard to specific goals, strategies and targeted segments we aim at green marketing.

The role of marketing in (sustainable) tourism is of specific importance for at least two reasons: it identifies the targeted consumer, i.e. groups of users, and it strategically determines the ways of satisfying the needs and wishes of identified targeted groups in the marketing domain. Thereby, green marketing represents its subdiscipline which disposes of the most comprehensive knowledge on environmentally responsible consumers as the main targeted group, as well as the knowledge on how to operationalize this environmental awareness in the form of a certain environmentally directed behaviour. In tourism, this environmentally directed behaviour refers to the choice of the destination itself and the type of tourism, but also to the behaviour during one’s stay and the journey towards the tourist destination.

The role of green marketing lies, foremost, in researching the needs, wants and perceptions of consumers, and in securing information, tools and models for decision makers at a national, regional and local level, as well as at the level of individual eco-tourism service providers. Green marketing

also has a role in shaping the national strategy of sustainable tourism and regional development management strategy.

### **5. Agriculture and tourism –synergy**

The connection between eco-tourism and eco-agriculture is visible from the definition given by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) itself. FAO sees eco-tourism as an opportunity for farmers to generate additional profit, and at the same time as one of the most effective ways of preserving biodiversity. This organization distinguishes eco-tourism from agro-tourism (i.e. holidays on farmland) by pointing to the symbiotic relationship between tourism and agriculture as a key element of an environmentally and socially responsible tourism. In addition, FAO also mentions two more important terms. The first one is agrotourism which represents the combination of nature-based eco-tourism and farm-based agro-tourism. The second term is eco-organic tourism which represents the previously mentioned agrotourism evolving around an organic farm. (Pelikan-Matetić and Pelikan 2008, 163-164)

The mentioned forms of tourism represent an excellent platform for the placement of organic food products, since this kind of food often represents one of the key attractive factors for tourists who generally choose this kind of tourism. For them the food is no longer a mere satisfaction of the need, but an important part of experiencing the destination and host community. In addition, health awareness, which is often the motive for choosing those journeys, is also a factor which points towards the importance of differentiated food products offer which do not cause damage but significantly contribute to the consumer’s health.

Food marketing in that sense has more than enough space for its operationalization, especially in the field of developing partial tourist products. Thereby, under food marketing we refer to the bridge between specialized producers and consumers. It is at the same time a physical distribution and economic bridge formed to enable movement and exchange of products “from the farm to the fork”. (Kohls and Uhl 1985, 5)

The basic idea of food products marketing, seeing them as partial tourist products, lies in the idea that

the guest i.e. tourist product consumer does not only get food and drink as partial tourist product, but also gets satisfied in quantitative, qualitative, aesthetic, ethnologic, gastronomic and any other sense, and he should be pleased with additional partial tourist products in immaterial form i.e. services which will eventually be manifested in increase of accommodation, and especially non-accommodation consumption. (Meler 2002, 8)

The above stated could be, foremost, achieved by doing research on the demands, needs and expectations of tourist consumers, analysis of modern trends and their careful fitting into traditional and autochthonous elements of gastro-offer of individual regions. This simultaneously increases the attractiveness of specific tourist destinations or regions and contributes to the image of a country as the producer of quality food, which may lead to the improvement of chances for direct export of food products abroad.

### **6. Conclusion**

Without any doubt it could be said that ecologically produced food as well as Croatian traditional products of high and specific quality are becoming an important factor in defining the Croatian tourist product and its differentiation on the market. The prerequisites for production of organic food and its placement through gastronomic objects which provide services to tourists need to be systematically developed and exploited, because here it is the case of a tourist offer segment which will increasingly gain importance. One of the possible courses of action in that sense on a macro level is, in any case, the starting of various programs by the line ministries, tourism association, Croatian Chamber of Economy and other institutions, but also the civil sector which is directed towards efficient operative linking of eco-agricultural producers and tourist services providers. Also, it is possible to encourage the steps of tourist subjects towards the introduction of organic food into their offer directly in financial, logistic or educational sense. An example for one such program is the program of the Ministry of Tourism which co-financed the procurement of organic food by the small family hotels in 2010.

In that sense, there are plans for starting projects such as the creation and application of Croatian standards for organic supermarkets, organic restaurants, eco-agritourism and/or eco-hotels both in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural development and the Ministry of Tourism, based on which they will be monitored and certified with the right to use a unique national eco-tourism label.

It is clear that there is a strong dependence and potential for achieving the synergy effect between tourism and the agriculture and food industry. Thereby, it is important to emphasize that achieving that very synergy effect is at the moment not at a satisfactory level, and thus it is important to invest great effort in the sense of a marketing approach towards the research of the needs, and consequently forming of appropriate programs of market appearance which would in quantitative and qualitative sense be able to satisfy the needs of both tourist and domestic consumers.

In order to reach this, it is essential for economic operators, who deal with production and food processing, as well as gastronomic and hotel entities, to incorporate green marketing into their marketing policy as the set of knowledge and business philosophy. Through these efforts, more equal regional development would occur, as well as the important multiplicative effect which would reflect on all economic activities directly or indirectly related to the tourist product, and consequently to the entire economic and social system through an increase in employment and well-being. To sum up, in managing regional development it is necessary to bear in mind the achievement of the described synergy, which at the same time represents the key factor and one of the fundamental goals so as to turn comparative advantages into competitive ones, and finally contribute to achieving the long-term sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations. If the current regional diversity is seen in the context of described synergy and current market trends, then it is not considered a weakness, but an opportunity if the holistic approach in combination with strategic commitment for green marketing on the national level – which should represent the fundamental framework of thought and action of all relevant participants - is applied in regional development management.

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## **SINERGIJA ODRŽIVOG TURIZMA I POLJOPRIVREDE KAO FAKTOR UPRAVLJANJA REGIONALNIM RAZVOJEM U HRVATSKOJ**

### **SAŽETAK**

Odgovarajuće vrednovanje pojedinih regija imperativ je hrvatskog gospodarstva. Cilj je ovoga rada ukazati na snažnu međuovisnost, kao i na potencijal ostvarenja sinergijskih učinaka između turizma te poljoprivrede i prehrambene industrije s druge strane. Sustavnim marketinškim istraživanjem i investiranjem u operacionalizaciju ove sinergije, uz adekvatno vrednovanje specifičnosti pojedinih regija, moguće je iskoristiti njihove prednosti pa čak i nedostatke kao konkurentsku prednost te postići kvalitativno i kvantitativno snažniji razvoj svih regija u Hrvatskoj.

Autori razmatraju turizam, poljoprivredu i prehrambenu industriju s obzirom na simbiotske i sinergijske čimbenike u globalnim uvjetima rastuće ekološke svijesti i široko prihvaćenog koncepta održivog razvoja. Analizira se uloga koju (zeleni) marketing može i treba imati u funkciji regionalnog razvoja i povećanja konkurentnosti regija. Zaključci se temelje na analizi ključnih pokazatelja iz sekundarnih istraživanja, uvida u znanstvenu literaturu i dostupnim strateškim dokumentima koji su razmatrani u svjetlu relevantnih trendova na globalnom tržištu.

Rezultati pokazuju da su turizam, poljoprivreda i prehrambena industrija kameni temeljci održivog razvoja koji se zasniva na očuvanju okoliša, bogatstvu i raznolikosti prirode i kulturnog naslijeđa. Takav se razvoj oslanja na objektivne resurse i prilike koje proizlaze iz unutrašnjih snaga i slabosti, kao i iz relevantnih trendova na globalnom tržištu.

**Ključne riječi:** održivi turizam, ekološka poljoprivreda, upravljanje regionalnim razvojem, zeleni marketing.