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**IMPLIKIMI EKONOMIK I TURIZMIT RURAL NË ZHVILLIMIN E
EKONOMISË RURALE ME THEKS TË VEÇANTË NË “STANET E
SHIPKOVICËS”**

**ЕКОНОМСКАТА ИМПЛИКАЦИЈА НА РУРАЛНИОТ ТУРИЗАМ
ВРЗ РАЗВОЈ НА РУРАЛНАТА ЕКОНОМИЈА СО ПОСЕБЕН
АКЦЕНТ НА „ШИПКОВИЧКИ БАЧИЛА“**

**THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATION OF RURAL TOURISM ON
DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ECONOMY WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIZES ON “STANET E SHIPKOVICËS”**

Abstract

The development of rural tourism has been determined as one of the key factors for local economic development and especially for the rural economy. Small and in developing process countries, one of the main benefits that can and should be used is the natural resources. The accent is set on less developed countries as well as those in developing process, since the nature and the natural resources are still “saved” from pollution and uncontrolled exploitation. In North Macedonia such wonderful segment is located in the north-west part of the country. Based in the heart of the National Park “Sharr Mountain”, last years verry popular among the tourists as “Stanet e Shipkovicës”. The aim of this research is to identify the possible organization of these natural resources and the wonderful biodiversity combined with the local product and services of the rural population and its impact of local economy.

Keywords: *Rural tourism, natural resources, local economy, Stanet e Shipkovicës.*

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Aim of the research

The main aim of this research is to Identify the natural potential of Sharr Mountain with a special emphasizes in the area of “Stanet e Shipkovicës” and converting as added value in agrotourism. Also determination of the development routes of this zone with the possibilities of organizing a structure which will identify the rural tourist potential and the ways of offering the services.

Sources used for the research

For implementing this research are used Historical datas dhe descriptive informations as basic information for the research. Also we have used recorded materials from the NGO “EKO Natyra” as one of the main NGO dealing with the promotion of the oportunities for tourism and rural development in Sharr Mountan. Also a crucial rule in this research has played my personal experience as one of the peoples that have grow and stil is activ on the area. For confirming the perceptation of the inhabitants and how they see the possibilities of development of this area, we have condusted on field interwievs with the owners/residents of stane².

The importance of rural economy for a better economic development

Rural areas are defined in a number of ways according to the economic or social outcome of interest. Rural economic and demographic changes are closely linked; both are essential to understanding whether diverse rural areas are prospering or in distress, and how underlying factors such as education affect the well-being of rural communities. These trends vary widely across rural America. (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Base on the International labor organization (ILO), rural economy holds significant potential for creating decent and productive jobs, eradicating poverty, ensuring food security, and achieving social

² Stane - is used to describe the temporary summer houses that were used from the elder peoples for cultivation of sheep's in the past period. For this reason the area is still called as Stanet e Shipkovicës, even that there are only 7 families that still have sheep's and cows, the rest are more likely weekend houses rather than stane.

justice. Yet, decent work deficits persist, with many rural workers living in poverty and working informally. As underlined during the United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021, many of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved unless we take action to make decent work a reality for all women and men working in agri-food systems and rural economies, thus ensuring that we leave no one behind (ILO).

A 'Rural Economy' refers to the economic activities and financial systems that exist in rural areas, including factors such as rural wages, job availability, and housing access, all of which are interconnected and impact the overall economic development of rural regions.³ On the other hand IG Global as rural economy describes the economic activities through which persons living in rural areas obtain incomes and the well being generated with those incomes. The rural economy comprises the totality of agricultural and non-agricultural activities conducted in rural areas. "Rural areas" are defined at the national level according to criteria such as population size and/or density, whether a locality constitutes an administrative area, predominance of agricultural/non-agricultural activities and/or availability of infrastructure and services such as schools, hospitals, etc. The rural economy, which is an important source of employment and livelihoods, both formal and informal, produces goods and services for own consumption (subsistence) and for the market; it depends largely on natural resources and is heavily influenced by the cultural and social environment. The rural economy is often challenged by significant decent work deficits (Area of critical importance: Decent work in rural economy; ILO). On the other hand, as per the Oxford English dictionary, the earliest known use of the noun *rural economy* is in the mid 1600s. OED's earliest evidence for *rural economy* is from before 1667, in the writing of Abraham Cowley, poet. On the other side: "the role of tourism in the national economy of various countries is particularly important because of the complexity of this phenomenon. The powerful economic and social transformations in the contemporary period created and developed tourism which in turn stimulated the development of other branches of the national economy through the subject of its activity such as industry and agriculture, construction, transport, trade, etc⁴.

³ International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home - 2012, Pages 226-231

⁴ Bălana Mariana, Burghleab - Cristina Rural tourism and its implication in the development of the Fundata Village, 2015, Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Those living in rural communities can enjoy excellent lifestyles but they face unique challenges that must be reflected in Government policy. (Damien O'Connor). Compared with urban areas which enjoy proximity to customers and producers, rural areas may have comparative advantage only in primary activities based on immobile natural resources and closely related activities. (Steve Wiggins, Sharon Proctor, 2002)⁵ This may be further enhanced by economies of scope in more widespread investment in infrastructure in rural areas and by farmers, on the basis of suitable institutional arrangements, using equipment acquired or developed for cash crop production to enhance production for local markets.⁶

Among the groups or schools of rural economists, three may easily be distinguished. One group, following Professor Taylor of Wisconsin, includes in rural economics not only that body of economics which relates particularly to agriculture, but also farm management; it looks at the farmer's problems not merely from the social point of view, but also from the individual. A second group, following Professor Carver, would exclude farm management. A third group would hold that there is no such thing as rural economics, but that what is commonly called rural economics is merely a combination of ordinary economics on the one hand and agriculture on the other.⁷

United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) definition for rural tourism is 'a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle / culture, angling and sightseeing.'⁸

National park Sharr Mountain

Sharr Mountain is a large high-mountain massif that stretches along the border area between North Macedonia and Kosovo. The area of Sar Mountain is a European biodiversity hotspot with extraordinary

⁵ Wiggins Steve, Proctor Sharon - **How Special Are Rural Areas? The Economic Implications of Location for Rural Development, 2002**, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7679.00142>

⁶ The rule of agriculture in the development of least-developed countries and their integration into the world economy - Commodities and Trade Division Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 2002

⁷ John Ise - The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Feb., 1920), pp. 300-312 Published by: Oxford University Press, (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1882365>, Accessed: 03-11-2024 09:31 UTC)

⁸ <https://www.unwto.org/rural-tourism>

natural values. After several decades of waiting, on June 30 2021, the Assembly of RNM declared part of Sar Mountain a National Park. According to IUCN criteria, the park belongs to a category II protected area - National Park, with more than 75% of the territory under a high degree of protection. The primary objective of the park is preservation of the already established natural values, improving the well-being of the people living in the park, as well as providing economic benefits in multiple sectors. The park spans on more than 62,705 hectares, and it is rich in forests, grasslands, glacial lakes, watercourses and diverse geomorphology. The region is characterized by high mountains whose peaks easily exceed 2,500 meters, with Titov Vrv being the highest peak, located at 2,748 meters above sea level. Within the boundaries of the park there are 27 villages with about 17,000 inhabitants, divided into seven municipalities: Jegunovce, Tearce, Tetovo, Bogovinje, Vrapcishte, Gostivar, Mavrovo and Rostusha. As a part of the park is also Popova Shapka, the ski center which has 3 cable cars, several small and medium-sized ski lifts and 20 km of ski tracks. In the vicinity of the ski center there are several hotels, a large number of holiday homes for private accommodation and several restaurants. Mass tourism is mostly practiced in the winter period, while various types of alternative tourism are intensively developed year-round.⁹

Within The Nacional Park Sharr Mountain, are located “Stanet e Sipkovicës”

The Histori of “Stanet e Shipkovicës”

During the time of ex-system of Yugoslavia, around 60’ of previous centuries, has been require the migration of the habitants of Shipkovica, from their “stane” that they use to have in the location called “Stana Bara”, to go out into an unforested field that would be easily controlled.



⁹ <https://www.sarmountain.org.mk/en/park/general-information>

Current situation

There are around 63 stane/vikend hoouses that are located in the new are.

- 4 families in total have 350 head of sheeps
- 6 families with les than 40 heads of cattle



To better understand the current situation and to discuss the different possibilities of the development of rural tourism in the area of “Stanet e Shipkovices”, we have committed a questionnaire from 16 questions with 32 owners out of 63.

The aim of this research was Identification of the natural potential in Mount Sharr with special emphasis on the region of Stanet e Shipkovices and their conversion into added value of agrotourism, Determining the development paths of this area and the possibility of organizing a structure which would highlight the rural tourism potential and the way of providing services

On the question: “How long do you have the weekend house/stani, 21 out of 32 have declared that they own them more than 10 years, 7 are owners between 5-10 years and only 4 are between 0-5 years.

When asked if they are the first owners or have inherited it from family members, 25 have declared that they are the first owners and only 8 have inherited it. From these 8, 7 have inherited it from their parents and only one from their grandparents.

One interested fact is that, on the question if they use their “stani” for livestock or just as a holiday home, 25 have declared that they use it only as a weekend house and only 7 for live stock. 11 are using it only

during the summer, 10 out of 32 are using from 2 to 4 times per month, 5 once per week, 4 of the each weekend and only 2 of them go up also during the winter.

On the question: “Do you think that “Stanet e Shipkovicës” can help the rural economy, 28 of them replay positively and only 4 of them negatively. Also even that 27 of them confirm that they have knowledge that there exist financial fund to support rural development, only two of them have used such a support.

If there is any project that would like to help you improve the conditions in your farm, would you be interested in helping, would you be interested? 21 of them replay positively and 11 negatively, and their requirements are as following:

- a) arrangement of internal spaces -7
- b) Isolation of floors -5
- c) creation of better hygienic conditions -16
- d) training for serving the guests who come to the station - 1
- e) milking equipment - 3

However, to use the potential benefits for a sustainable business, they face one big challenge, since from all 63 current existing houses /stane, only for have solved legal status, the rest have not defined yet the formal property ownership, but in case there is a Legal solution in the future, 30 out of 32 would like to solve this issue.

Have you ever thought that in addition to your family needs, you could rent it out? Only 17 have confirmed positively and 15 are not willing to rent it. If there was a platform where “stanet” that can be rented would be registered, would you be interested in being a part of it, all the 17 who are willing to rent it, they would prefer to be part of such platform.

Based on the types of the services they can offer for the potential tourists, 21 of them can offer only accommodation, 8 of them can offer accommodation and food, two guide service and only one the three services (accommodation, food and guide).

And on the last questions, what do you think the local government can do to facilitate and increase the economic value of “Stanet e Shipkovicës”?, they came with a clear list of activities that can really improve the quality of the services that can be delivered in this area:

- a) Road adjustment,
- b) The prohibition of irresponsible persons who damage nature with motor vehicles

c) the prohibition of irresponsible persons who damage nature with motor vehicles

d) appointing special guards who will check the tourist spots, especially during the weekend, to take away the garbage.

Conclusions

Rural tourism can be a determining factor for the development of the rural economy with special emphasis in Sharr Mountain. The lack of information for economic development is one of the main factors that still this rural opportunity is not used effectively. One of the main challenges remain the problem with the legalization of the properties by the owners. That situation it is expected to be solved after the approval of the new Law for legalization of the constructed facilities including houses and weekend houses.

The design of a platform which will identify, register, and keep updated the information about the apartments/weekend houses is necessary, can play a crucial rule for information as well as for formal organization of the owners. The need for continuous information of local residents with the development potentials of tourism and rural economies. Marking of tourist routes for tourist guides, using local toponyms and not alienating them from markers of other cities, since that will cause confusion, what at this moment is a case unfortunately

With a better organization and effective use of the local resources including developed standardize services, “Stanet e Shipkovicës”, can play a crucial rule in local employment especially in the rural tourism development, what will have positive effect in stagnation of migration from the villages in the area and especially those living in the village of Shipkovica.

Reviewers:

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