

## NEW CONCEPT OF TOURISM PRODUCT: MATCHING SUPPLY ASPECTS

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**Abstract.** Due to economical hardships each of the countries reevaluates its own policies and looks for opportunities to optimize evolution of any development, searches for encouraging possibilities for those really purposive, repaying economical, political or alike worthiness. Accurate identification of inbound markets permits to pin pointedly delineate the potential of inbound tourism and single-mindedly develop the sector according to any needs of the typical tourist in determined tourism market, thus increasing the scope of provided services, which meet tourist's expectations. Of no less positive importance is the second aspect, when accurate assumption of priority markets allows economizing of marketing expenditures as mainly tourists from potential markets are being informed first. In the third place – assets are preserved, as instead of developing the whole tourism sector under tight budget conditions, broadening alluring tourism services and developing winsome tourism products, which both are inviting for prioritized tourists, are primarily encouraged. Main criteria for the inbound tourism market - tourism generated revenues by each country, desirability of tourism products dedicated for the purposive market, attainability, the potential of country's outbound tourism allows precise determination of the potential of any given inbound tourism market. Successful tourism development is predestined by evaluation of those criteria and their impact on the tourism destination.

**Keywords:** outbound tourism, tourism product, tourism supply, tourism demand, inbound tourism, potential tourism market.

**Jel classification:** L83, L84, O21

### 1. Introduction

Sometimes the question arises why some countries have made great strides in the development of tourism services and resources, while the other, though adding a lot of effort or taking up a good geographical position, with a maximum amount of available financial resources dedicated and strengthening human resource capacity, it still fails. Then you can understand that not only these criteria leads to business success in tourism, but also by many others overviewed at this article.

Objective of the study is to determine key gaps preventing successful tourism sector development in Lithuania in present period. Methods of the research: theoretical and statistical sources analysis and synthesis, comparison and interpretation.

### 2. Enhancement of supply dimension developing tourism product concept

Present-day tourism is one of the fastest growing industries internationally, nationally and globally. The contribution of tourism to economic well-being and economic growth depends on the economic benefits of the tourism supply. Current developments & forecasts reveal that international

tourist arrivals grew by nearly 7 % in 2010 to 940 million; in 2010, international tourism generated 919 billion US dollars (693 billion euros) in export earnings; UNWTO forecasts a growth in international tourist arrivals of between 4% and 5% in 2011. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress and have contributed to an acceleration of globalization and world economic integration (Melnikas 2008). Tourism provides a major economic development opportunity for many countries; this is why government really encourages tourism in their countries (Bagio *et al.* 2010).

Tourism development is usually given much attention in the political field as well as private business or autonomous/societal initiatives. Sustainable development of public policy in the legal framework, service quality regulations and requirements is a direct state or local government function; it is natural that the old EU countries are more advanced in this particular direction (Tvarionaviciene *et al.* 2009). New EU States are also developing their own tourism policies, but a variety of parallel processes (privatization of land, local community initiatives, public infrastructure and the ability to use and evaluate what estab-

lished), creates some barriers and obstacles to rapid and successful future (Tvarionavičienė *et al.* 2008). On the other hand even more important in the development of tourism is private business initiation, which organizes a variety of services, to attract public infrastructure and create opportunities for tourism products. Only when both players work together (whether state, private business suit) the highest score – consumer satisfaction, can be achieved. If this assertion could be directly adapted to tourism in the result one would expect the guaranteed flow of tourists, which is the purpose of each and in every tourism region or state.

In most cases state participation in the sector is defined the target's policy formulation, it application of measures and implementation (Laimer 2009). Exclusive tourism development tool of public policy in Lithuania is EU support, operating which state policies are defined by real instruments – financing of projects, resulting not only in creating public infrastructure (bike trails, campsites, hiking trails), but also involving private businesses to participate in the development of tourism activities. Only creating favorable conditions for development of various tourism businesses can encourage tourists to travel.

It should be noted that the most important group of private business services is organizing accommodation services. Most of the accommodation facilities are private business initiative, which successful operation is ensured by the various forms of service (clusters, networks, etc.). However, there is a public private partnership, or even state-owned accommodation forms, which are important for the unorganized (without intermediaries) tourists flow.

Catering services are the second most important part of tourism services, where private businesses are thoroughly involved. That service group is particularly important for tourism, not only because it's an important part of every tourist's traveling expenditure, but also because it creates a cherishing opportunity for the cultural heritage, traditions; that is extremely important to the overall tourist's choice.

Combined initiatives and close cooperation between public policy and private business guarantees the transport accessibility and development of travel opportunities. Every tourist travel often leads to success as air, rail, sea lines provide services and car rentals or, certainly, the public transport services, function.

These basic accommodation, catering and transport services group provide a basis for devel-

opment of tourism, but that is not enough for tourism to become a successful part of the acting industry. Usually on the open market industry success depends on two poles – the demand and supply. Tourism could be expressed as function of supply and demand interaction (Iatu 2011), also. If there is a supply and demand will be, and vice versa.

The analysis of *tourism supply* should include transportation, accommodations, human resources, infrastructure, and other factors which have a significant impact on travelers' expectations and needs as well as the quality of the tourist experience (Goeldner *et al.* 2009). Tourism from a *demand perspective* is closely linked to economic development and encompasses rising number of new destinations. A destination, according Murphy *et al.* 2000, may be viewed as a mixture individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited. When the demand for a tourism product is higher than the existing supply, it will decrease the quality of service and satisfaction of visitors. Similarly, when the demand is less than supply, revenues are lost because of unused opportunities and resources (Kandampully 2000). It is clear that this process is a complex and sophisticated services and consumer demand satisfaction match score. Therefore, tourism demand analysis is related with research of the existing and potential markets or market segments for the destination, involving a deep market analysis that examines the likely tourist arrivals and characteristics and the travel patterns as well as trends of the markets.

The evaluation of the provision of tourism, which is – the result of a successful trip is individual tourist experience; common set of supply must be included with attraction services group, which usually enhances the value of travel. Pleasure and personal activities during trip is the least cost in traveler budget, but their uniqueness and convenience of the most important factors to consider. Tourists' diversified and complex expectations (Keller 2000; Pechlaner *et al.* 2009) could be presented in the following four dimensions: the wish to experience an emotional event (Slak 2005); access to a wide range of products; sensitivity to pricing; immediate availability of the supply and ease of booking. The initiators and providers of such services are mostly private businesses that want to attract or to increase time of stay of tourists and thus offer an attractive service added to catering, transport and accommodation (Fig. 1.).

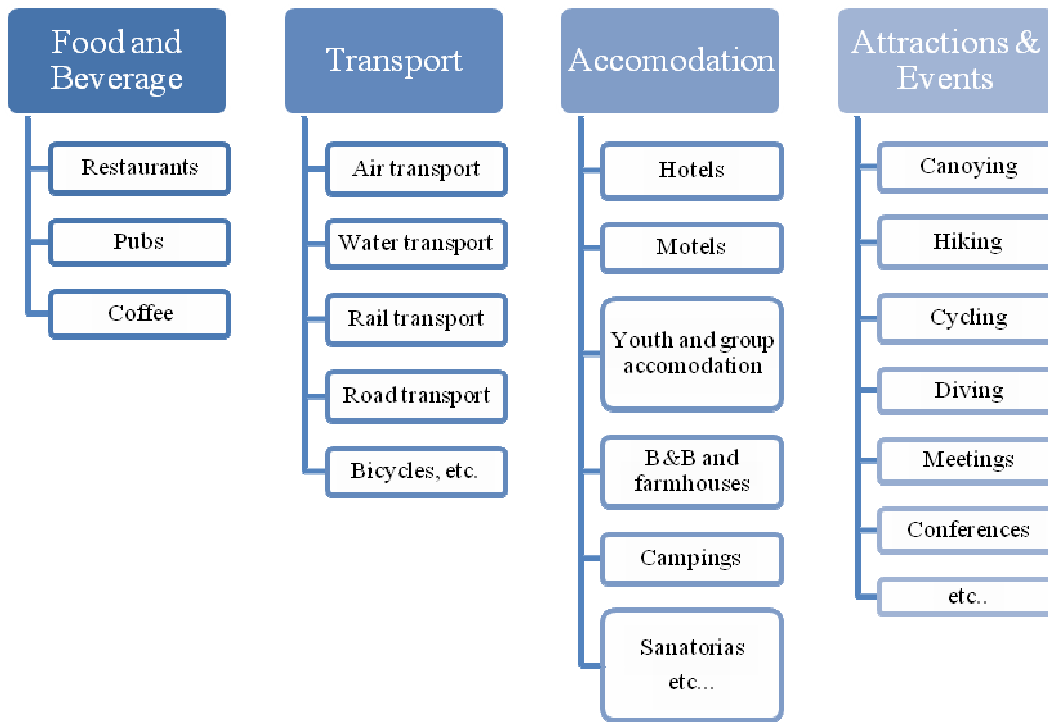


Fig.1. Tourism service supply

Accommodation, catering, transportation and entertainment are the main groups of services on which a tourism industry is based (Fig. 2.). Obviously, there are authors who complements these services by other groups – like events (Cooper *et al.* 2005), or their analysis of tourism products emphasizes total destination identity itself (Gilbert 1990). Tourism product like any product is something that attracts tourists as buyers and must designed for and continuously adapted to match changing needs and expectations of target market. Tourism, as a dynamic and exchanging process, involves a direct and reciprocal relationship between users and producers of the tourism product (Brida *et al.* 2011). Customer satisfaction is seen as the essential determinant of any business success (Moore *et al.* 1998). The tourists’ satisfaction depends on certain characteristics of the tourist product offered, such as transportation, accommodation, gastronomy, attractiveness and cost of the service (Pizam *et al.* 1978).

Tourism product as defined by the World Tourism Organization and used by Collier (1994) is unique in that it is composite in nature, is an amalgam of tangible and intangible factors that includes everything that tourists experience (Murdick *et al.* 1990; Hall *et al.* 1997; Albayraki *et al.* 2010).

Tourism is a complex activity made up of a range of economic activities and their products. (General guidelines 2005). The tourism product is extremely diverse: natural and cultural resources, tourism facilities, the communications infrastruc-

ture, accommodation and restaurants are the basic resources of a tourist destination (Eragi 2006).

Most of the tourism products are composed by several heterogeneous but complementary goods and services supplied by firms belonging to different industries which are mainly, but not exclusively, located in the tourist destination and are normally in the form of combinations of both tangible and intangible elements (Vassiliadis 2008; Xu 2009). However, this article will analyze only the tourism service product, without going into destination product and tourism business product peculiarities.

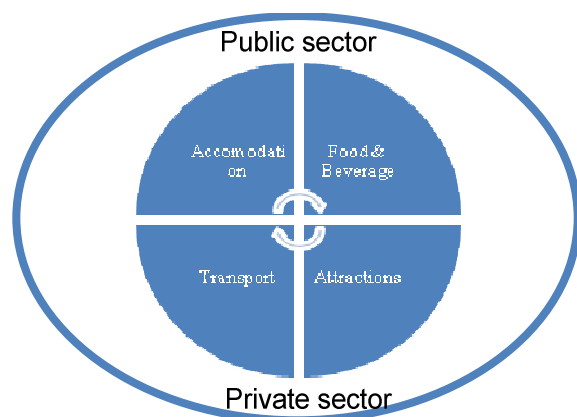


Fig.2. Matrix of tourism service supply

However, we have to return to the considerations about success factor in tourism business. The consumer and his needs are critical in the tourism services sales process, i.e. in our case, a tourist, the identification of whom is a complicated stuff, and ways to achieve this target consumer is still one more a challenge. Apparently, this problem was at

the emergence of such analytical processes as the tourism product, tourism destination management, brand development and other in the tourism industry. A lot of scientists are working to analyze a variety of successful business models and trying to apply them in practice, therefore the Lithuanian market is looking for appropriate ways to stimulate the flow of inbound tourists to Lithuania.

Perhaps the easiest solution to this gap is usually resolved by informing a targeted audience (Rose 2009). But how to reach a targeted tourist and what marketing categories, marketing vehicles and marketing tactics to use is the tremendous challenge still (Busby *et al.* 2010).

Different sources of information for tourism product demand increasing and matching with supply opportunities are required. Although tourists largely collect and use destination information for functional reasons (product knowledge, decreasing risks, utility, efficiency) or to plan and take trips. The touristic information should also appeal to the salient needs in order to capture the attention of potential tourists (Komppula 2005). In the tourist's information search process the needs to be innovative, hedonic or entertained, and aesthetic or visual information choices have an important role (Vogt *et al.* 1998). It should also be mindful of the fact that the budget on marketing in Lithuania is very limited – just 1.2 million Euros per year (National Tourism Development Program for 2010–2013 period 2009). What marketing tools should be used, which tourist products to be offered to a maximum efficiency reaching all potential markets?

### 3. Changes of tourism service supply in Lithuania

As already mentioned above new challenges in market in Lithuania has changed the service sector, too. Not only has the quantity of services changed but also the quality. The number of all accommodation establishments in comparison with 2005 increased by 30 per cent: in 2010 – Lithuania had 908 accommodation providers, of which 586 are working a year-round; the rural tourism sector has almost doubled, from 355 dwellings in 2003 to 590 in 2010.

Analogical changes occurred in the accommodation service quality field. Accommodation services appeared in Lithuania with the very varied choice of palette, from 5 star hotels to rural tourism dwellings or camping sites. But not always businesses develop the services according to the demand. Often, tourists are not satisfied just because the business does not respond to market changes. In Europe, Lithuania is often referred to as a country with low-cost travel opportunities to

lower and middle-class income earners, but the hotel sector development in Lithuania does show that less than 20 % from a number of hotels provide 1 or 2 stars level of services. Number of camping in Lithuania increased from 7 (2005) to 18 (2010), but whether it changes the situation of the substance? The state also initiated the development of cheaper accommodation and there is an element of EU assistance funds, whereas for the period of 2008–2013 about 62 thousand Euros were allocated to such objects.

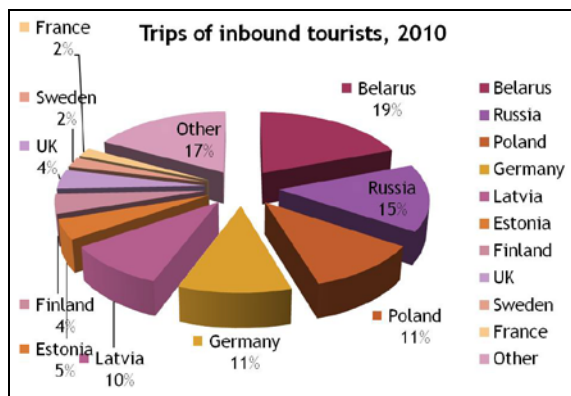
Food service business in Lithuania matches the global level – there are not only a world-famous fast-food restaurants, but also Indian, Chinese, Thai, Korean and so on food kitchens. The traditional Lithuanian food kitchen has been continued to foster the success, which is often attractive and unique for the visiting tourists. On the other hand it should be noted deficiencies in the eco tourism; the vegetarian food industry is just beginning to develop, what is not acceptable and attractive to subtle tourists.

Development of transport services in Lithuania increases rapidly as well: inbound arrivals are well organized by different airlines, including low-cost Ryan air, and the country is perfectly accessible by road from not only Europe but also Russia. However, the sea and river transport is still minimally developed as in a way the bicycle tourism too. Tourism attractions – gliding, scuba diving, kayaking, canoeing and many others also increasingly become embedded in the Lithuanian market (Macerinskiene 2010), so creating the tourist satisfaction gets more and more opportunities.

### 4. Tourism demand variability in Lithuania

Twenty years of independence and new opportunities changed in essence Lithuania's, as former Soviet Republic's, where services were based on preplanned organizing principles, foundations of state development. The main stream of tourists – Russian tourists, are importantly complemented by the tourists from Germany and neighboring markets (Fig. 3.), and the remainder of the domestic tourism, orientated exclusively for the summer season (mass traveling to the Baltic Sea), was changed by outbound tourism split into two periods, summer and winter. Currently, Lithuania is to be attributed to outbound tourism region. In 2010, the number of Lithuanian inhabitants, who went off for same-day, or tourist trips stood at 4.3 million. Compared to 2009, the number of trips of same-day visitors and tourists increased by 18.4 per. On the other hand, 4.1 million foreigners arrived in Lithuania, which is by 1.8 % more than 2009. In 2010, compared to 2009, the number of

residents' trips abroad increased by 17.7 % and stood at 4.4 million. In 2010, the trips of same-day visitors to Lithuania made up 63 %, overnight trips – 37 %. Same-day trips of Lithuanian residents abroad made up 65.2 %, Lithuanian's overnight trips – 34.8 % (Tourism in Lithuania 2010). The most significant factor in these statistics is: the number of tourists, who arrived to spend more than 3 nights, is very small, but the average duration of a foreigner's trip in Lithuania was 4.3 nights in 2010 (in 2009, 4.5 nights); in 2010, compared to 2009, the number of shorter trips (1–3 overnight stays) increased by 13.5 %; but such trips accounted for 75 % of all overnight trips!



**Fig.3.** Top ten incoming markets in Lithuania (Tourism in Lithuania, 2010)

In 2010, the average of stay per guest duration in rural tourism farmsteads decreased and amounted to 1.7 overnight stays (in 2009, 1.8 overnight stays). The average duration of stay of the resident population was 1.6 overnight stays, that of foreigners – 2.1. The major share of guests arrives only on weekends. On average, a Lithuanian resident paid 13 Euros for an overnight stay in a rural tourism farmstead, whereas a foreigner – 17 Euros. Such statistics are shameful, because biggest potential of the world's sustainable tourism is in – outdoor, agro, nature tourism.

### 5. Tourism product - the service-orientated way to the target consumer?

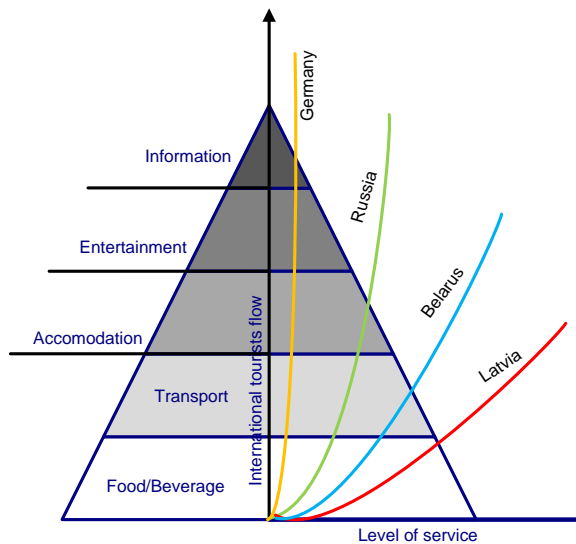
For these and many other aspects that changed, not only in Lithuania, but also the global tourism market, back in 2009 the tourism sector development measures have been reviewed and corrected. Since 2010 the tourism program for the development of tourism products, that meet both the supply and demand, has been launch of in Lithuania. Now we can already see the positive results. During this period aims have been to create and develop the cultural (cultural heritage and cultural events), active (cycling, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, golf, fishing, hunting etc...) and health tourism products (Kucinskiene 2011) for the period 2010–2013.

However, the actual governance of the state cannot fully orient business development, well, unless using the incentives mentioned above. Tourism product suppliers at first presenting existing prepared product and then researching which market might be interested in its purchasing (Seaton 2006). Intermediaries, tourism service providers must comply with the proposed policy and guide the activities in that direction, exactly as offered by state policy. It must be remembered that not all tools are acceptable to both sides.

Under the existing functions of the state in Lithuania it may promote marketing tools, form the image, create public infrastructure. Meanwhile, businesses provide services directly to tourists, they need an understanding that the solitary services offered, without orientating them towards the segments in the tourist market, do not necessarily result in success. However, current statistics are just to indicate that the market situation is not always of a great importance for the service providers, while strangely it does sound. Lithuanian priority markets are Germany (which is historically close to the Klaipėda region) and neighbouring markets, which presumably means that the business knows well the customers of these markets. It would seem that it should not be difficult to offer services for the familiar segments. However, it appears that there is a fundamental error.

Customer satisfaction scale and opportunities were measured on the first axis, level of supply on the other. According to customer satisfaction techniques, which are being dealt with by many researchers, criteria have been selected to measure expectations of the arriving tourists. The most popular, but perfectly suitable method – Maslow assessment methodology (Maslow 1970) was chosen for this study, based on which the fundamental gaps in the tourism development were attempted to be established.

In order to keep accurate statistics illustrating the specific needs of tourists arriving on the market, it is important to conduct a study; the results providing an opportunity to collect data. However, if such tests are not carried out, there is another great way of statistical data analysis, what is used in this study. Outbound tourism is perfectly suited to determine the characteristic features of the inbound tourism market: travellers or tourists from the general population, the main objectives of the trip, travellers age, the ways and means of travel, travel frequency, the most popular destinations and the average amount of expenses during the trip, the average travel time, the most popular travel destinations. Service supply we estimated by the width and depth of the tourism services market, as discussed above (Fig. 4).



**Fig.4.** Linking the Lithuania tourism products to tourists needs

The results showed that different tourist markets require different levels on pricing and servicing. Travellers from the neighbouring markets seek just catering service and travel by transit through Lithuania or stop short – shopping, entertainment day (Belarus, Latvia tourists). Tourists from Russia, Poland markets are looking for places to stay and what to see, because they feel good coming back or visiting Lithuania occasionally. There are also longer-term flows of tourists who travel for tourism purposes, usually individually with the car, bicycle, looking for a longer stay, more of tourist information, entertainment and of course enjoy a higher amount of offered services (German tourists). Given these trends business should be aligned offering services for incoming tourists. It should also be noted that the selected markets in the study are very different and could be considered as prototypes to attract the other potential foreign tourism markets.

It should be noted that in order to promote the flow of tourists, even minimal opportunities available must be exploited by use of marketing tools, expanding the range of accommodation services sector and increasing the accessibility.

## 6. Conclusions

Theoretical studies of foreign scientists have shown that the determining factor for the tourism success is in the synthesis of supply and demand, otherwise – tourist satisfaction level. However, there is another difficult aspect - the impressions of a tourist do not only derive from services, but they also depend on many subjective things like impressions, weather conditions, or the price level, which is often a very individual aspect. Despite this, there are ways to develop such tourism prod-

ucts that meet the needs of inbound tourism market. The evaluation of tourist services offered in Lithuania and tourist polls conducted upon their departures led to observation of the major gaps: marketing shortages in the market-oriented tourism, lack of the necessary activities, development of the transport accessibility measures (cycling and water transport).

The most important criteria for the success in the relationship between tourism supply and tourism users – tourists, otherwise – the demand, are level of service and visitor satisfaction. To determine the satisfaction of the tourists, namely to identify the features of the inbound tourism market, outbound tourism indicators are fit to use: travelers or tourists from the general population, the main objectives of the trip, travelers age, the ways and means of travel, travel frequency, the most popular destinations and the average amount of expenses during the trip, the average trip length, the most popular travel regions. Meanwhile, to determine the level of service both the width of the range of services and its depth should be measured.

No less important for the tourism development is the equivalence between the state decisions and business activities: the state investigates the market and shapes policies, when business, service providers, on the basis of investigations and proposed development vectors are ought to develop activities or to create new services required for incoming tourists.

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