
Tourism and Local Government Case Study: Region of Saranda

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Abstract

Local authorities play a significant role in the development of the tourism industry for a region, including the provision of various services and infrastructure. Local government has a role in partnership with the tourism industry to ensure the economic viability of their communities. Tourism offers to small and rural communities are significant opportunities for social and economic development, such as increasing income and employment. The aim of the study is to explore the involvement of local authorities in the field of tourism, their activities for the development of tourism in the region of Saranda and to issue suggestions for further development of tourism in the region. The study period is: 2007-2015. Data taken from the Statistical Yearbook of the District of Saranda. Sarande local governments cannot ignore tourism as an economic sector after the increase in tourist visitors has exceeded the average number of visitors who have visited Albania. The results show that despite the current actions undertaken by local authorities in the region, there is still need for more efforts to promote tourism and to provide more opportunities for encouraging the development of tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, local government, investment.

JEL Classification:

Entry

Saranda region is equipped with two tourism resources, natural and cultural heritage, which are developed and promoted, can improve the economic standard of living of its population. Due to the positive effects of tourism on the increase of real incomes of population and employment generation, the central government has seen tourism as a promising opportunity to reduce the gap between rural areas and those in developed countries, and as a tool for modernization of the base their economic. Local government plays a major role in tourism and is engaged in tourism

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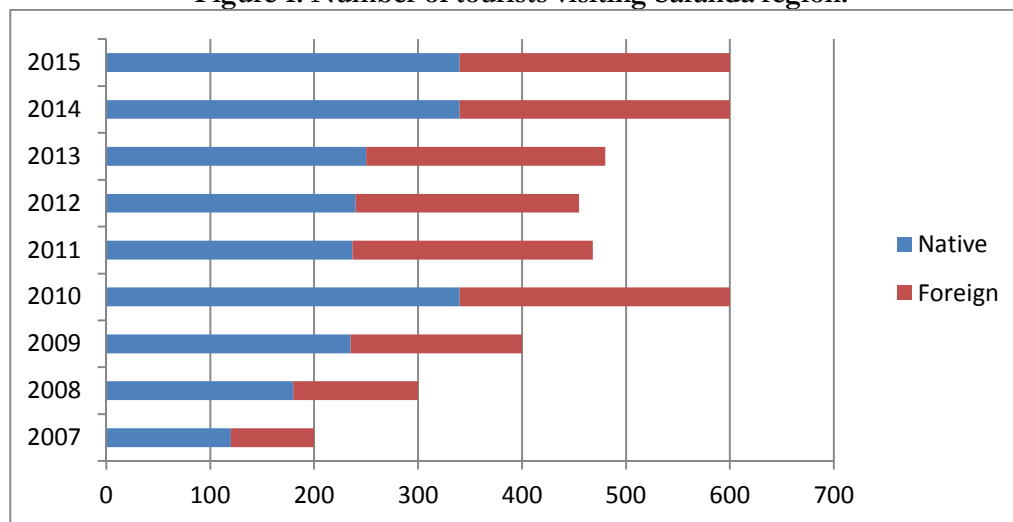
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in many ways. Commitments are actively involved in promoting tourism, providing infrastructure and services to support tourism, but also in managing the impacts of tourism. Local authorities play a complex role, and exercise a central core and critical impact on the tourism industry.

Local authorities have conducted a high policy for expanding the tourism sector to see tourism as a way of development, transformation and strengthening of the economy. Locally, causing its effects, tourism could represent a factor of economic recovery, pointing to good use as the local human and material potential.

Saranda region is economically dependent on tourism. Tourists that visit Saranda are the main source of income. The tourism industry is almost exclusively driven by the private sector. Saranda in economic development plays the key role of tourism, trade, maritime transport, fishing, agriculture, and farming. The number of tourists visiting the region for 2015 was 600 thousand, which as compared with the number of tourists in 2007, increased 3 times (see Figure 1). Saranda operate 120 hotels with 2750 beds. Also many second homes are used for tourism, with about 24,000 beds. The main shares of visitors to the region as tourists keep Kosovar and Macedonian. Constitute the rest of European tourists as Polish, English, German, Swedish, French, Greek, Italian, Austrian and Nordic countries.

Figure 1: Number of tourists visiting Saranda region.



Source: Statistical Yearbook, Department of Statistics Sarandë.Viti 2016.

The main interventions Sector with the local authority in tourism are:

- The local authority has the responsibility to coordinate the strategic planning of local tourism, protection of the environment through urban and coastal planning.
- Local Authority promotes local tourism resources and infrastructure, provides incentives for the private sector in terms of building infrastructure.
- Local Authority promotes the region as a tourist destination, promoting tourism products and services of the private tourism sector as well as alternative forms of tourism along with the expansion of the tourist season.
- The local authority carries out checks on tourist enterprises to help improve the service.
- The local authority provides training opportunities for all employees involved in the tourism industry.
- local authority creates the conditions for cooperation between the public, private and community sector.

Development of tourism in the region of Saranda is not without problems. The biggest problem facing the development of tourism in the region is seasonality. During the peak tourism that is the month of August, the number of tourists for 2015 increased by 58 times compared with the number of tourists in January, while compared to May, the number of tourists increased by 5.7 times. (Office of Tourism, Saranda Municipal).

To overcome this problem, local authorities have taken steps to reduce seasonality. Local government has designed promotional campaign along with private sector bodies. This campaign includes participation in exhibitions, production and distribution of promotional materials is for the region of Saranda and providing information via the Internet. Saranda Municipality has designed brochures, tourist guides and has opened for tourism web page.

Public sector bodies collaborate to expand the current season and the creation of new seasons of tourism activities, through the promotion of alternative forms of tourism. (Eg, promotional campaigns abroad and the creation of necessary infrastructure). Saranda promoted more for its cultural tourism Cultural Heritage has very rich region. With assets of cultural heritage, beaches, preferred points of cultural tourism, with accommodation capacities, service and entertainment, it is becoming more and more a tourist destination pleasurable. Situated between two ancient civilizations: Foinike and Butrinti, Saranda and its region possess over 97 outdoor assets and cultural heritage.

Other actions undertaken by the municipalities in the region of Saranda, increase the competitiveness of tourism products by improving infrastructure and services, protection of coastal areas, the promotion of local products, improving cooperation with tour operators, planning and project for the creation of a aerodrome, marina, providing information to all parties who are involved in tourism.

Other problems facing the region of Saranda:

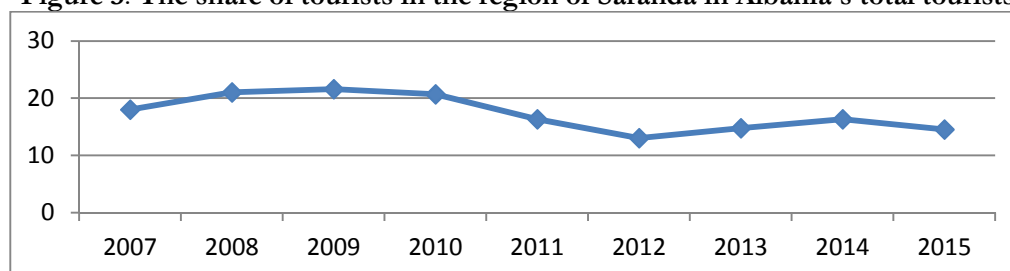
- Marked regional disparity in development of tourism, where the vast majority of tourists is concentrated in the region of Ksamili.
- Environmental degradation, resulting from excessive constructions and no plan of tourist facilities.
- General insufficient infrastructure to cope with the tourist influx.

According to (Peterson 2010), the development of infrastructure in rural areas in developing countries is still a significant barrier to the development of tourism.

Tourism is an important driver of economic development and employment growth, but impacts on the community and the environment must be managed.

The local authority in the region of Saranda is developing a strong presence in tourism and giving more attention to tourism management and policy. Sarande local governments can not ignore tourism as an economic sector after the increase in tourist visitors has exceeded the average number of visitors who have visited Albania (Figure 3). In 2010 compared with 2005 the number of tourists visiting Saranda region increased by 4 times and the number of tourists visiting Albania increased by 2.23 times. For 2015 the number of tourists Saranda region constituted 14.52% of the total number visiting Albania.

Figure 3: The share of tourists in the region of Saranda in Albania's total tourists.



Source: INSTAT, the Office of Tourism in the Municipality Sarande.

Local government focus should be on tourism, because tourism creates jobs and alleviates poverty more than other sectors, tourism also has the ability to spread its benefits even in remote and rural areas. When making decisions that affect the

tourism industry, local governments are required to consider the views of the wider community. In some circumstances, the investments made by municipalities in the activities of visitors, should be accepted by the community, who may allege that the investment had to be done better elsewhere. According to Eze-Uzoamaka (2006), tourism depends on two main factors: the host community and tourists. Visitors play an important role in the life of a community and increase economic prosperity through expenses that carry out in private and public businesses. Social and economic benefits that offer visitors is much wider, as tourism impacts are direct, indirect and induced. Tourism planning requires strong local support. Communities should be ready to cater to tourists and provide settings and experiences that are attractive to tourists. (Stevenson, 2002).

Review of the literature

Local government plays an important role in promoting the development of sustainable tourism. Central and local governments are responsible for the provision of general infrastructure of a country. (Cameron et al 2001; Stamos and Kicosev 2010)

Per (Ogechi and Igbojekwe, no year.) There is an urgent need to involve members of the community and local government in the planning of tourism in Nigeria. The authors recommend a broad community participation in local government through the planning process and the development of tourism must therefore be more effective partnership between, local government, central and tourist sector. Local governments play an important role in the success of the local tourism industry and should have a strong impact on the preservation of its resources in the Philippines. (Javier and Elazig 2011)

According Birkic, et al, 2014, the local government should be responsible for coordinating the development of sustainable tourism at the local level. Special focus in this document is given to the role and responsibility of local government and key stakeholders in coastal destinations. The research results prove that local government has an irreplaceable role and responsible tourism development at the local level. While by Elliot (1997), local governments play an important role in tourism, since it has the power only to ensure political stability, security, and legal and financial framework which requires tourism. Per (Nodder, Cate, Slater, and Milne, 2003), the local government is often where business operations interlink tourist tourism policy at national level.

The tourism industry plays an important role in the economic development of many developing countries. However, the tourism industry can be seen as a destructive force, its associated negative impacts such as destruction of these natural resources, traffic congestion, environmental degradation and culture. These problems can be

exacerbated more planning when there is a lack of well-designed and effective management of tourism development. (Brokaj 2014)

Local government has a unique and important role in the tourism sector.

Local government is the most important partner of the tourist industry. Local governments play an important role in determining the level and the quality of visitor services, the availability of infrastructure, to organize events and public cash invested to promote the destination. Local government has a primary role to ensure that the living environment for locals and tourists to be clean, safe and healthy.

Every tourist destination requires the mobilization of social capital, financial and natural to a region, to achieve the objectives of the local community. To achieve these objectives should be developed destination management plan and this plan must be part of regional planning. This becomes necessary today, when the tourist industry becomes more complex. Expansions of tourism and fierce competition have brought changes in the ways of management of destinations. Local authorities represent the views of those who develop policy, planning and making decisions about future public developments. Local government officials can be regarded as experts in the local tourism industry. This type of planning is done best when the community, tourist sector and local government jointly decide on the priorities of the community and tourists. Investments in infrastructure by local governments in major tourist projects such as stadiums, airports, ports for passengers, yacht harbors, etc., are areas in which local governments play an important role as a partner.

Local government supports local experience and heritage, which attract visitors, such as museums, art galleries, events and festivals. From these events as tourists but also benefit the local community. Regions strongly compete to attract tourists, so local governments supporting regional events and festivals which increase the number of visitors.

Visitor contribution to the regional economy strengthens the sustainability of businesses and assets, provides social benefits that come from interactions between the community and visitors.

But on the other hand, individual businesses provide products and services that attract visitors, increasing the total tourist offer of the region. Local government invests in infrastructure but retains responsibility for providing clean water and constant removal of waste, ensuring that not sewage into the sea, and creating a safe environment for visitors.

The involvement of local authorities in the region of Saranda in tourism.

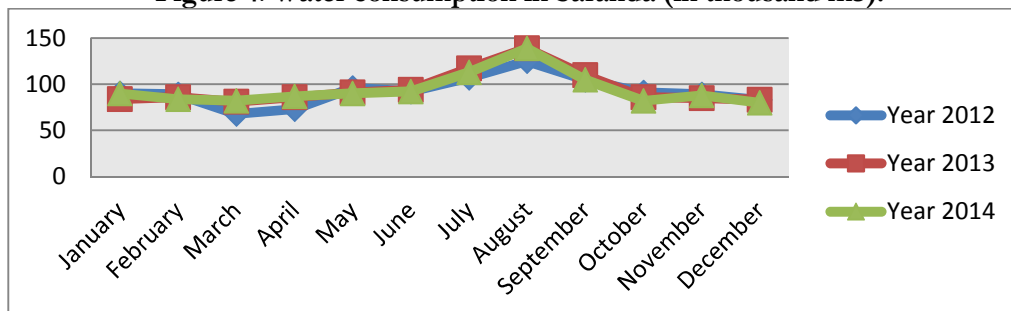
The involvement of local tourism should be to influence the best results possible economic and social communities to develop tourism. The tourism industry has an impact on the majority community in the Saranda region and supports local services and employment. These include shops, supermarkets, cafes, bars, restaurants and service stations, as well as investment in public services such as hospitals and schools. The industry is also an important catalyst for new investment capital and infrastructure.

Local government has a role in partnership with the tourism industry to ensure the economic viability of the community.

Strong partnerships between local councils and regional tourist actors are vital to economic success. However, cooperation is not limited to this sector. All subjects dealing with the economy and more specifically the growth of Saranda are the subject of dialogue with their local authority. Councils and the tourism industry are interdependent. Strong and effective relationship between the tourism industry and councils are a vital element of a successful economy.

Mutual relations are useful to help the two sides, the community, to realize the benefits of tourism and advice, which help them to make decisions that are beneficial to the tourist economy. Public investments carried out by the local government of Saranda were, rehabilitation of public infrastructure, reconstruction of roads, construction of new water to suit the demand for water which almost double mostly during the summer (see Figure 4), reconstruction of the building to the location of the ethnographic museum and art gallery that, improving performance and increasing capacity among the public beaches, etc.

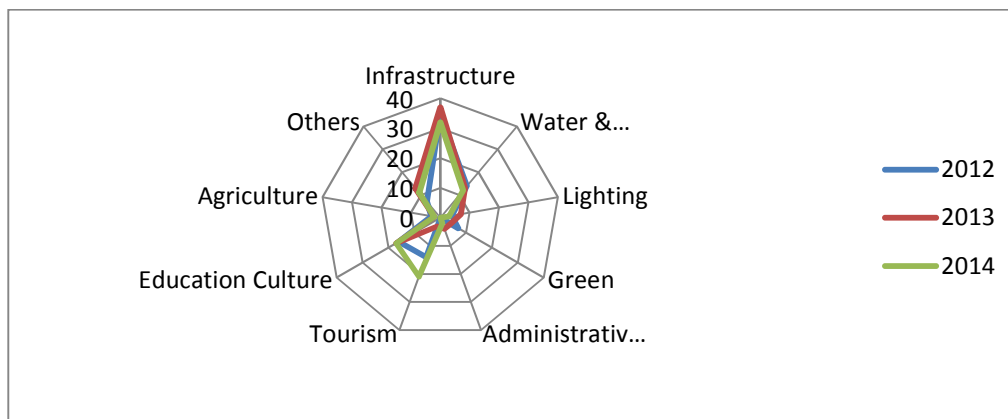
Figure 4: Water consumption in Saranda (in thousand m3).



Source: Statistical Yearbook. Department of Statistics Saranda. 2016.

In the figure 5 shows the distribution of investments are carried out with its own resources, the local government of Saranda, as a percentage of total investments committed its own resources. Time periods are 2012-2014. For three years the majority of infrastructure investment has taken over 30% of the total investment.

Figure 5: Investment financing information from its own resources Saranda Municipality, as % of total investments.



Source: Office of Program Development. Sarande Municipality.

In 2014 a huge weight had tourism and education. Saranda region secondary school operates Hospitality - Tourism, which comes more to help students through the development of tourism to qualify that gives the tourism sector, but with different training courses to unskilled workers.

The main challenge is to improve the local quality of life of residents, ensuring a sufficient economic growth. In order to succeed, it must develop infrastructure to attract investors and encourage local businesses. Recent years in southern Albania, which is part and region of Saranda, are implementing the project financed by the World Bank for the integrated management of coastal areas and cleaning. Infrastructure and rehabilitation of the south coast is the most important component of this project, totaling \$ 35 million. For the Saranda region, part of the project is Bajkaj landfill as one of the largest projects in the south of the country for waste management and treatment plant wastewater.

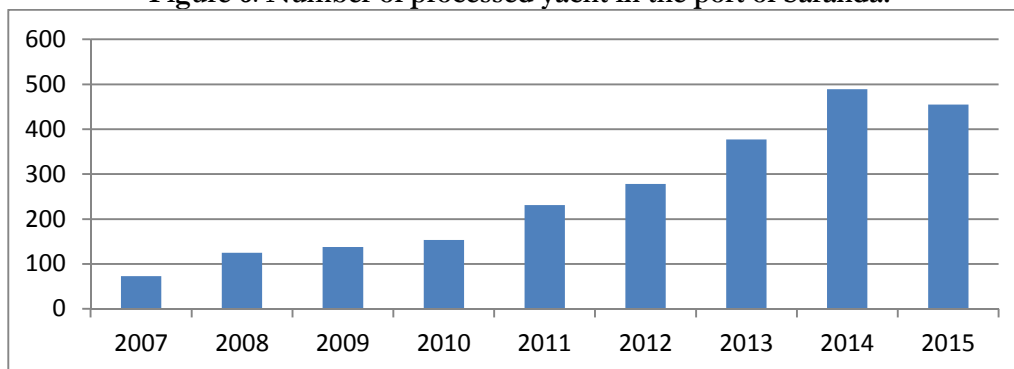
But tourism developments in the region have turned into a necessity and construction of several projects that will develop more this region:

- Expanding the promenade length 3 km and a width of 10 ml with urban values, tourism, social and environmental.
- Extension of the location of the university. In this university study "Tourism Business Administration" system Bachelor and Master system. General tourism education and vocational training in dealing with tourism constitute an important factor for improving the quality of tourism.
- Construction of the Water Sports Complex - Olympic Pool.

- Construction of the Ring of the big city. Transportation systems are a key factor for the successful development of tourism. In the period of peak tourist season, increasing the number of population and vehicles cause many problems in the circulation, thereby blocking it.
- Construction of an underground parking with surface 5000 square m per 600 vehicles with 3 floors.
- Construction of steps (1075 946 ml scale length) functional -town 40 Saints Monastery. This building is an object of tourist, historical, cultural and urban areas. It connects the city with the name of the historic building turning it into a place of pilgrimage very interesting.
- Construction of parking of mobile houses.
- Construction of the airport in the Saranda region. Sarande access are by road and by sea. Airfields closest to the region are in Tirana that is 5 hours away from the center of Saranda vehicle and he Corfu which is 2 hours away by sea.
- Construction of the yacht port with an initial capacity of 180 yachts. Number of yachts that visited Saranda in the last nine years is 2319 yachts (Figure 6).

By comparing the number of yachts in 2015 with the number of yachts in 2007, this number has increased 6.2 times. But not having a port for their position, to carry out the services they need, to supply them with fuel, they do not stay more days in Saranda.

Figure 6: Number of processed yacht in the port of Saranda.



Source: JSC "Saranda Sea Port".

A definitive role for local governments in facilitating sustainable tourism development is to promote the organization of events and festivals. The development of events and festivals are two ways of stimulating the growth of

tourism, which are used frequently, especially to attract local tourist. They are a tool for revitalizing local economies and reducing the effects of seasonality.

"Tourism is an activity events for which local authorities are becoming increasingly concerned with because of its potential to promote the region, the huge economic benefits and employment growth. (Fry, 1993, Kean, 1993 :).

In the region of Saranda is a tradition in tourist season months to develop various cultural activities to support financing information central and local government. Some of these events are held only in Saranda and have participation from other groups abroad such as: Festival of Song and Dance Cham, International Film Festival, International Festival of Theatre, opening the exhibition personal painters Saranda Gallery "Art Saranda ", Fair of the tourist souvenirs, along the promenade of Saranda, with the participation of the production and trading of tourist souvenirs from some cities and by Kosovo Albanians of Macedonia, etc.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Given that tourism is a complex process which is related with different sectors of society and economy is clear that its development requires mutual respect, unity and permanent cooperation between all public and private bodies, their activities They are connected with tourism directly or indirectly in the local and national level.
- Despite the orientation of the overall tourism development can be established at national level, but local communities with the participation of representatives of all stakeholders and frequent communication with the local people are the ones that will develop and will develop the type of tourism who want to offer their region.
- The cooperation of public and private sector must rely on the goodwill of all parties for the success of a common goal.
- Ensuring the participation of local government in planning the development of tourism will achieve that, the development of tourist activity to bring benefits mainly in the local society and not on external economic factors, better acceptance of tourism by local residents and the active participation of residents to maintain local tourism resources.
- Education is obliged to remain contributing not only to gain professional skills people dealing with tourism, but also to create awareness of all stakeholders, in order to have normal and sustainable development of tourist areas.

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