

## **POTENTIAL OF CREATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MONTENEGRO AND ITS BENEFITS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF DESTINATION**

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**Abstract:** The results of global market research have long been pointing to the fact that the importance of the creative economy is constantly increasing, with notable synergies with tourism appearing as a side effect, offering significant potential for increasing demand and developing new products, experiences and markets. This process results in a transition from conventional models of cultural tourism to new models based on intangible culture and contemporary creativity, interaction with the local population and active contribution to the sustainable development of visiting environment. All of the above are determinants of creative tourism, which UNESCO defined in 2006 as an engaged and unique tourist experience, with active learning about art, heritage or the special character of a place and establishing a connection with those who live there and create that culture of life. Bearing in mind the increasing demand in the domain of creative tourism, as well as the fact that significant results have been achieved in the region of southern Europe in the design and planning of creative and authentic tourist contents and products, the question arises as to whether Montenegro has the prerequisites for the development of this specific model of tourism and whether it has the potential to position itself on the tourist market as an attractive destination for creative tourists.

The aim of this research is to explain in more detail what is meant by creative tourism, how it can impact the sustainable development of the destination and to analyze the possibilities of developing creative tourism in Montenegro, taking into account current tourism indicators and tourism development strategy.

**Key words:** creative economy, creative tourism, sustainable development, Montenegro

### **INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE TOURISM**

The introduction of the term "creative tourism" in scientific literature is attributed to Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond, who in 2000. were the first to connect cultural tourism and creativity in a unique definition of creative tourism. Creative tourism was initially recognized as a market niche within cultural tourism, which, in addition to basic cultural content, offered tourists the opportunity to participate in creative ("arts & crafts") activities during their stay in the chosen destination, while these models were also noted during the 90s. Twenty years later, creative tourism is described as a phenomenon that has the potential to influence the development of tourism and can play

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a significant role in differentiating and changing the tourist experience (Richards, 2008). This form of tourism offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential by learning through experiences specific for the place where they spend their vacation (Richards, 2003). The emphasis is on authentic experiences that will help them understand the cultural specifics of the destination they are staying in (Landry, 2008). Also, creative tourism can be a way to develop smaller and more useful tourism models that emphasize the specifics of the environment, cultural sustainability, social inclusion and improvement of the local quality of life through "alternative" tourist destinations (Duxbury, 2021). The UNESCO definition from 2006 contributed to a closer understanding of the concept of creative tourism, which emphasizes travel aimed at engaging and authentic experience, with active learning about art, heritage or the special character of a place and establishing a connection with those who live and create there. life culture. The concept of creative tourism is linked to several different elements that are an indispensable part of that concept:

- active participation (Binkhorst, 2007; Richards & Raymond, 2000),
- co-creativity (Binkhorst, 2007; Richards & Raymond, 2000),
- authentic experience (Binkhorst, 2007),
- connection with the local community (Hull & Sassenberg, 2012; Richards, 2011; Richards & Wilson, 2006),
- skills development (Briggs, 2005; Richards & Raymond, 2000).

Taking into account the above, it can be concluded that the development of creative tourism to the destination can bring numerous benefits that contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the local community, as opposed to mass tourism, which has already reached saturation on both the supply side and the tourist demand side. The primary motives of today's tourists are much more related to the original experience of the environment they visit, than to the superficial viewing of natural or cultural assets, which, among vast similar sights, quickly lose their attractiveness. Today, they prefer engagement and involvement in processes and activities that will allow them, even for a short time, to feel as a part of a different tradition, culture and environment.

### **EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE IN CREATIVE TOURISM**

Among the destinations cited as examples of positive practice in creative tourism, the countries of Southern Europe are most often mentioned. The reason is the fact that there are situated the most visited tourist locations that have been feeling the burden of mass tourism for a long time and the devastating consequences that come as a result of uncontrolled and excessive tourist traffic in places that do not have the capacity to cope with this dynamic of activity, nor serve such a large number of visitors in an adequate way. The advantages of creative tourism refer to redirecting the focus of tourists to other locations in the destination (often smaller and rural areas), to which the interest of

visitors will spill over, because of an interactive and authentic offer based on local specifics. One example of such an approach is Portugal and their CREATOUR project, which brought together 40 institutions/organizations that through 5 research centers from 2016 to 2020 have developed and implemented 40 initiatives in the field of creative tourism in smaller cities and towns across the country (Duxbury, Bakas, Castro, Silva, 2021.). The aforementioned initiatives aimed to embody the specificities of each environment, local tradition, culture, landscape and activities through which these specificities are manifested. Each idea is characterized by the fact that it is centered on the interaction of visitors and local residents through joint participation in creative activities inspired by the natural and cultural resources of the local community. They can be realized through workshops, parades, exhibitions or other types of manifestations that not only contribute to the promotion of the destination and a richer tourist experience, but also have positive economic effects for the destination, without jeopardizing its sustainable development.

Examples of such successful initiatives in Portugal are as follows:

- "Casa do Barro" - Workshop for making pottery and decorating pottery dishes with cultural and historical motifs of Reguengos de Monsaraz;
- "Play Evora" - Family activity "Discover Evora" through games, drawing and creative writing workshops in cooperation with local guides;
- "Verde Novo" - A cycle of activities for making cotton fabrics, from picking cotton in the field to making fabrics, with exhibitions of works and stories about the old skills of local women from Norte Province;
- The Algarve region offers a stay with shepherds and help in keeping the herd with additional creative activities - making baskets from wicker or palm leaves;
- The city of Amares organizes a five-day parade during which workshops are organized for learning local dialects, learning folk dances, making traditional instruments, etc.

Interesting examples can also be found in France, where the small town of Perpignan offers numerous creative activities to tourists looking for original experiences. Located between Barcelona and Toulouse, Perpignan has a dual identity - both Catalan and French. There are 20,000 hectares of vineyards in this region, which makes it a perfect destination for wine tasting from Roussillon, but also for art workshops where wine is used as a material for painting. In addition, tourists are offered the opportunity to learn the techniques of decorating ceramic objects or making mosaics, because the place is also known for this type of artistic creation. Catalan culture includes many festivities and local parades, such as the one dedicated to the "sardana" dance, whose steps visitors can learn with a local folklore group. The capital of Cyprus, Nicosia, has also in the past actively worked on diversifying its offer and developing authentic contents and locations for tourists, through numerous initiatives coordinated by the national tourism organization. "Ngage Culture & Creativity" is a tourism sub-brand developed to highlight Nicosia's cultural and creative assets such as museums, galleries, craft workshops and various art spaces. The result are numerous educational and artistic workshops, exhibitions, festivals of performing arts, experimental theater and similar interactive manifestations whose goal is to brand the city as a cultural and creative

destination. The following destinations confirm that there are numerous examples of attractive content from the domain of creative tourism outside the European continent:

- Bangkok, Thailand - offers fruit carving workshops to visitors. arranging flowers, making ceramic objects or objects made of wicker and leaves, lessons in traditional dances, Thai massage or Thai boxing;
- Medellin, Colombia – the possibility of active participation in the traditional flower parade, photography lessons at famous locations, lessons in cooking local dishes or learning national dances;
- Kingston, Jamaica – in the city that is considered the cradle of reggae music, creative tours have been developed that introduce visitors to six musical genres and subgenres whose founders created it in Kingston.

### **BENEFITS OF CREATIVE TOURISM FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF DESTINATION**

There are numerous ways in which creative tourism is able to contribute to the sustainable development of an environment, of course, with the active role of all relevant factors in that destination - administration at the local and national level, tourist boards, local economy, cultural and creative organizations and entrepreneurs, etc. The non-profit organization Creative Tourism Network (CTN), founded in 2010, singles out the following among the many virtues of creative tourism:

- Compliance with the new demands of tourists who are eager for unique experiences;
- Diversification of the offer without large investments, only by optimizing the existing intangible heritage;
- Positive effects on the profitability of cultural infrastructures thanks to new demand;
- Quality tourism with high added value and purchasing power;
- Non-seasonal nature of tourism, which enables a better distribution of tourist traffic throughout the year;
- Geographical redistribution - less interest of creative tourists in "tourist hotspots";
- Self-confidence of the locals thanks to the new interest in their culture and traditions;
- Empowerment and employment of the local community;
- Social cohesion through the co-creation of meaningful storytelling;
- Sustainability that relies on authenticity and creativity as the main resource.

In CTN, whose leader is the recognized author in this field, Greg Richards, point out that the development of creative tourism encourages local communities to diversify the tourist offer, making small entrepreneurs more proactive because they become able to create new products without the need for large investments in material infrastructure, but using their creativity to attract the interest of tourists. Also, they emphasize that

intangible tourism products can help the destination to include in its offer locations that are usually not part of conventional tourist routes, as well as to stimulate the introduction of more environmentally friendly tourist practices that are not applicable for mass tourism.

The OECD report on tourism and the creative economy from 2014 states that the importance of the creative economy continues to grow, and as a side effect, important synergies with tourism are emerging, offering significant potential for increasing demand and developing new products, experiences and markets. Following, it is elaborated that new connections are driving the transition from conventional models of cultural tourism to new models of tourism based on intangible culture and contemporary creativity and it is emphasized that active policies are needed so that countries, regions and cities can realize the potential benefits of connecting tourism and creativity. Also, the report indicates that creative industries today offer various opportunities for improving the quality and attractiveness of local communities, through supporting this tourist model and stimulating creative exports.

As part of the European Commission's URBACT II program in 2011, an initiative was developed that dealt with the role of creative clusters in less populated areas, in which institutions from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Finland and Great Britain participated. It pointed out the necessary prerequisites for achieving goals that are based on creative strategies and that contribute to the active participation of all representatives of the local community:

- Local leadership as a driver of development;
- Leaders of change as the driving force of creative transformation;
- Community cooperation and engagement;
- Territorial integration into creative networks and partnerships;
- Avoiding local conflicts and social gentrification;
- Providing visibility to local creative people;
- Local educational systems adapted to creativity;
- Flexible, temporary and accessible creative spaces;
- Promoting well-being and quality of life.

Although the benefits of implementing the creative tourism model can be numerous, especially in less developed or less populated and rural areas, there are still negative effects that can occur if the entire process is carried out without a carefully designed strategy, clear goals, precisely defined role holders and support of local community. Comprehensive planning for the development of creative tourism is the key to ensuring positive visitor experiences, benefits for local residents and minimization of negative impacts, which means that tourism planning must be locally driven and focused on the links between cultural resources and the life of the community itself (Fernandes, 2012).

## **TOURISM IN MONTENEGRO**

The data of the Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) related to 2022 point out that 2.18 million tourist arrivals and 12.43 million overnight stays were achieved that year, mostly in coastal towns (93.8%), followed by the capital (2.9%), northern region (2%) and other towns (1.3%). Of the total number of overnight stays, 95.5% were made by foreign tourists and 4.5% by domestic tourists, while in the structure of foreign tourists, the most overnight stays were made by tourists from Serbia - 25.5%, followed by Russia 16.45%, BiH 16.4%, Germany 5.9%, Ukraine 4.9%, Kosovo 4%, United Kingdom 3.3% and from other countries, a total of 30.1% of overnight stays.

As far as financial indicators are concerned, revenues from tourism in 2022 were in amount of 997 million euro, which is 275 million euro more than in 2021, and only about 50 million euro less than the record year of 2019. It is interesting that revenues from tourism in the fourth quarter of 2022 were 123 million euros, which is the highest revenue ever registered in that period - in the fourth quarter of 2019, revenues from tourism were 67 million euro. According to the report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), when looking at the data for the period from 2009 to 2019 in Montenegro, it can be stated that the number of tourists increased by 119%, the number of overnight stays by 91%, and the total revenues for 92%. The total (direct and indirect) contribution of the tourism and travel sector to GDP is about 30%, the total contribution of employment is also about 30%, and the share of tourism in exports is over 50%. When it comes to the structure of the tourist offer, data from the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism indicate that 470 accommodation facilities with a total of 45,222 beds are currently registered in Montenegro, with the largest share of high-category accommodation facilities (4 and 5 stars) amounting to 45,75%. Montenegro as a tourist destination is divided into eight tourist clusters, which differ from each other in socio-cultural, historical, traditional, natural and economic characteristics, and at the same time represent the basis for a unique and specific tourist product of Montenegro. In November 2022 Government had adopted new Tourism Development Strategy of Montenegro until the year 2025, which also identified a new vision, mission and credo for the future development of tourism in Montenegro. Within this document Montenegro is envisioned as a country that “manages the destination in a sustainable way, creating an innovative, green and inclusive tourist product, influencing the increase in tourist consumption, reducing seasonality, regional disparity, with the aim of raising the standard of living of the local population and the satisfaction of tourists”. Mission is for Montenegro to “become a globally recognizable tourist destination until 2025”, while the credo is “Montenegro promises. Explore it.”.

Based on the above, guidelines for future activities have been defined in the direction of ensuring the full and high-quality valorization of all potentials in a dynamic and



optimal manner, in accordance with current market circumstances, while respecting the principle of sustainability, which refer to the following operational goals:

- Operational objective 1 – Improved regulatory framework in tourism with formalization of tourist traffic;
- Operational objective 2 – Improved touristic and supporting infra and supra structure;
- Operational objective 3 – Improved quality and quantity of accommodation capacities;
- Operational objective 4 – Improved quality of the diversified tourist product;
- Operational objective 5 – Improved human resources, knowledge and skills in tourism;
- Operational objective 6 – Development of digital, innovative solutions and new technologies in tourism;
- Operational objective 7 – Montenegro - a globally recognized tourist destination.

The strategy further points out that the analyzes of the situation in the tourism sector during the previous period indicated numerous limitations to faster development, which are the main cause of the still present short period of operation of the tourism industry during the year, as well as the imbalance of the tourist offer between the coastal and northern regions of the country. In this regard, three main "concentrations" have been identified that should be reduced in the following period:

- 95% of tourist traffic (night stays and income) is realized on the coast,
- 75% of tourist traffic is realized in the summer months,
- 70% represents the share of individual (private) accommodation in total capacities.

## **POTENTIALS FOR CREATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MONTENEGRO**

In the report on tourism and the creative economy from 2014, the OECD defines sustainable creative tourism as the integrated management of creative tourism activities and experiences in cooperation with the local community, with the creation of social, ecological and economic benefits for all stakeholders in order to achieve the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and sustainable development of tourism. This definition helps create a clearer picture of the prerequisites that are necessary for the development of creative tourism, as a specific form of tourism in Montenegro. It emphasises that for successful strategic and operational action in this direction, the following are necessary:

- the existence of appropriate tourist demand;
- appropriate management system - clearly defined competencies, program goals, regulatory framework;
- active participation and support of all stakeholders - representatives of the administration, tourist organizations, creative creators and associations, local communities, etc.;

- natural and cultural heritage as an incentive for creative activities;
- tourist contents based on creative experiences;
- implementation in accordance with the principles of smart and sustainable development of the destination.

As for tourist demand, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), by 2030, the growth rate in tourist movements will be around 3.3%, and the number of tourists will be 1.8 billion. In the WTO report from 2017, it is further stated that the modern tourist expects an intensive vacation in which different tourist products are combined, he is sophisticated and wants to get acquainted with the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the tourist destination - "to live like a local", it is stated in report, it has become the manner of many tourists, because they are looking for authentic experiences on their annual vacation. The aforementioned data indicate the fact that tourist demand in the segment of cultural and creative tourism will continue to grow, and that it is realistic to expect that part of that demand will also be directed to Montenegro. The interest already exists because, according to the data of the national tourist organization based on surveys conducted among tourists in Montenegro, for 28.9% of tourists, getting to know the natural beauty and cultural sights, manifestations and events is one of the leading reasons for coming. When it comes to the regulatory framework, certain guidelines and role holders have already been defined through the Tourism Development Strategy of Montenegro until 2025, as well as through the Cultural Tourism Development Strategy with Action Plan until 2023. The last document identified creative tourism as intangible cultural tourism that is based on familiarizing tourists with the traditional way of life of the local population, learning the local language, participating in local events and local crafts. It is also noted that among the intangible heritage in tourism valorization, the performing arts (folkloric and musical heritage) achieved the most significant reach, presented through numerous manifestations, festivals and celebrations held in the territory of Montenegro. The cultural tourism development strategy further cites the wealth of authentic, intangible cultural assets as significant advantages, as well as the wealth of legends and myths with almost every location, which requires expert design in the field of content for visitors, but also a significant potential for the creation of authentic souvenirs. When it comes to problems and limitations, this document emphasizes the inadequate distribution of intangible cultural assets, their devaluation through poor presentation and insufficient representation through current events. The action plan that defines programs, measures, carriers, financial and other frameworks for the implementation of priorities, among others, identifies the program area of stakeholders in cultural tourism whose evaluation is a necessary measure to be taken in order to successfully achieve strategic goals.

Primary stakeholders include local authorities, destination marketing organizations, destination operators of tourist attractions, transport companies, restaurants, hotels, residents and tourists. Among the goals of the primary stakeholders of the local



community, the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, preservation of cultural identity, redistribution of income, creation of conditions for local business to benefit from local resources, better access to public services, increased opportunities for education, increased employment and contribution to a better quality of life stand out. The goals of tourists as primary stakeholders were also presented - improvement of personal experience, new knowledge about cultural assets, personal confirmation, family bonding through various activities and establishment of new friendships during group activities. The Chamber of Commerce, local community groups, media, building owners, tenants, banks, etc. are mentioned as secondary stakeholders. whose goal is to redistribute income and create conditions for local business. Among the extremely important stakeholders in this process, although they are not explicitly mentioned in the strategy itself, it is necessary to highlight the representatives of the creative industry in Montenegro. In the Cultural Development Program of Montenegro 2016-2020, creative industries are defined as activities in the domain of culture, aimed at generating income or profit, inclusion in the business sector, i.e. the economy, which make a contribution to sustainable development at the local and national level and are recognized in the fields of architecture, arts and crafts, design, photography, fashion and other applied arts, festivals and events, digital arts and new technologies in culture, audiovisual, music-stage and performance activities, the fields of publishing and literature and fine visual arts. It also states that, from the aspect of cultural heritage, the protection and preservation of traditional crafts and creative industry skills represent a potential resource and development category for the future design of small and medium-sized enterprises and family businesses. According to research by the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (IPER), the gross added value of cultural and creative industries (CCI) in 2018 amounted to EUR 58 million, which represents 1.5% of the gross added value at the level of Montenegro, while the total number of business entities in CCI amounted to 2031, which represents 3.5% of the total number registered at national level.

Among the further prerequisites for the development of creative tourism in Montenegro, natural and cultural heritage and tourist content based on creative experiences are certainly key. In the part of the Strategy for the Development of Cultural Tourism of Montenegro, which refers to the resources of cultural tourism, it is stated that there is a large number of immovable cultural assets in Montenegro, namely cultural-historical units, cultural-historical objects and localities, as well as movable cultural assets and intangible heritage which, well valorized and presented, represent a key component of the development of cultural tourism. The most attractive basis are considered to be the cultural properties listed as the UNESCO World Heritage (the agglomeration of Kotor, Perast and Risan, the Venetian fortifications and the Durmitor necropolis), cultural properties listed on the national tentative list, cultural and historical entities - urban and rural agglomerations and cultural-historical objects with special reference to sacral

objects. Also, five national parks (Durmitor, Biogradska Gora, Lake Skadar, Lovćen and Prokletije) have recorded an increase in visitors year after year, while nature parks - new protected areas that are particularly attractive from the aspect of wildlife observation and birdwatching activities - attract an increasing number of interested tourists. With such a rich natural and cultural heritage, there are countless opportunities to valorize the mentioned heritage through tourist facilities that will offer tourists a creative and authentic experience on site or somewhere else, but inspired by characteristics of those locations. Examples of creative, educational and entertaining activities in which tourists could actively participate through interaction with the local population already exist in Montenegro, and following could be singled out:

- Wine and gastronomy tours - visits to local wineries and producers of traditional local specialties (wine cellars in Crmnica and Piperi, prosciutto and cheese in Njeguši, olives and olive oil in Bar and Ulcinj, etc.). As part of the visit, tourists can also participate in grape harvesting, olive collection, olive oil pressing, preparation of cheeses for drying, and leave with souvenirs in the form of mini packages of local foods;
- Events presenting the local cultural, gastronomic and other specificities of the destination - Peraška Fašinada, Bokeška Noć, Mimosa Festival, Grad Teatar Budva, Dani vina i ukljeve Virpazar, Dani kamelija, Kostanijada, Dani mimoze, Podgoričko kulturno ljeto, etc.;
- Folkloric dances and learning traditional dances and playing old instruments – Kolo bokeške mornarice, Crmničko Oro, dance with sword, fiddle playing technique;
- Workshops of traditional crafts - learning how to knit Dobrota lace or work on decorating folk costumes with local craftsmen;
- Research of archaeological sites - participation in the research of underwater archaeological sites, sunken ships, etc. or localities on land, such as the remains of Illyrian buildings, mosaics, necropolises;
- Staying in ethno-villages and katuns - getting to know the old way of life of the locals and participating in daily duties in the household and on the farm (planting and harvesting fruits, drying herbs, preparing winter shelter, making objects from wool or wood, riding horses, etc.) ;
- Stay in art colonies - education and artistic creation based on natural and cultural motifs of Montenegro, enriched with additional content ("paint & wine" workshops, etc.).

The above suggestions are only a small part of the possibilities for offering creative content to tourists in Montenegro, which are practically unlimited, if they are planned and designed in an adequate and sustainable way, with the involvement of all relevant actors, ensuring of appropriate resources (spatial, technical, etc.), promotion and good communication with identified target groups.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis represents one of the most frequently used techniques for assessing the advantages and disadvantages of a specific tourist product or offer, as well as opportunities and threats in the immediate and wider environment that can affect development and placement on the market. This type of analysis is an effective tool for optimizing available resources, predicting future market trends and minimizing risks through adequate and timely action. The following is a SWOT analysis of creative tourism in Montenegro, which aims to indicate the potential for the development of this specific form of tourism in this destination.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location in one of the leading tourist regions in the world (Southern Europe - Mediterranean);</li> <li>- Part of a fairly economically and security-stable region (NATO member, member of the EURO zone, candidate for the EU);</li> <li>- Part of the European region with the most favorable climatic conditions;</li> <li>- Rich cultural and historical heritage spread in all geographical areas;</li> <li>- Three material goods among UNESCO protected areas;</li> <li>- The tradition of various local and international events and festivals;</li> <li>- Five national parks, along with numerous other natural attractions;</li> <li>- A rich offer of tourist products based on active and adventure tourism combined with natural heritage;</li> <li>- Well-developed bathing and winter tourism;</li> <li>- Rich offer and recognizability of eno-gastronomic national specialties;</li> <li>- Strategic commitment to diversification of the tourism product of Montenegro;</li> <li>- Mapped creative industries and identified links with the development of cultural tourism;</li> <li>- Existence of guidelines for the development of the cultural and creative industry;</li> <li>- Strategic commitment to the further development of intangible cultural tourism;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weak connection between culture and tourism;</li> <li>- Seasonal concentration of tourists;</li> <li>- Geographical concentration of tourists (more than 90% in the coastal area);</li> <li>- Deficit of qualified human resources;</li> <li>- Weak knowledge of foreign languages and new technologies among employees in culture and tourism;</li> <li>- Very low level of use of digital technologies in the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage;</li> <li>- Unsatisfactory state of a large part of cultural assets (necessary reparation);</li> <li>- Unsatisfactory maintenance of part of the natural heritage and ineffective environmental protection measures;</li> <li>- Unclear system of competence of local self-governments and higher instances;</li> <li>- Weak capacities of management structures in terms of preparing applications, designing and managing projects financed by the EU and other international funds;</li> <li>- Weak transport infrastructure;</li> <li>- Weak signaling (road signs, etc.) in areas of natural and cultural heritage;</li> <li>- Weak involvement of the local population in cultural and creative content;</li> <li>- Insufficient support for creative entrepreneurship and creative association;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Certain elements of creative tourism have already been implemented as new contents of the tourist offer in Montenegro.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequate promotion of cultural and creative content on the tourist market;</li> <li>- The potential of intangible cultural heritage is not sufficiently recognized and is little used in the tourist offer.</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural and creative tourism is gaining importance worldwide;</li> <li>- The demand for products based on cultural and creative tourism is constantly increasing;</li> <li>- Mass tourism and passive vacations show a decreasing tendency;</li> <li>- The preferences of high-paying tourists are towards sustainable forms of tourism;</li> <li>- The offer based on creative tourism contributes to the extension of the tourist season and the extension of the average stay of tourists;</li> <li>- The offer based on creative tourism contributes to a better geographical distribution of tourist traffic (greater representation of smaller and rural areas);</li> <li>- There is an increasing awareness of the tourist potential of the natural and cultural heritage of Montenegro;</li> <li>- There is an increasing awareness of the importance of the further development of tourism as a leading economic branch in Montenegro.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weak functioning of state and local bodies (too frequent changes of authorities and managers at all levels in the previous period);</li> <li>- Unfavorable investment environment due to political instability;</li> <li>- Insufficient budget investments;</li> <li>- Tourist expansion of neighboring countries, primarily Croatia and, more recently, Albania;</li> <li>- Proximity to competing cultural assets in neighboring countries;</li> <li>- Tradition of manifestations of a similar type in the surrounding area;</li> <li>- Weak initiative of the local community;</li> <li>- Weak support and motivation of creative entrepreneurship;</li> <li>- Insufficient quality of service for high paying tourists.</li> </ul>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MONTENEGRO**

The previous analysis has pointed to the significant potential of Montenegro in the domain of creative tourism, as well as numerous opportunities caused by the weakening of mass tourism and the increase in demand for an authentic, active and creative tourist experience. According to that, following is a proposal of measures that should be implemented in Montenegro in order to develop the tourist offer based on creative tourism:

- Development of a strategy or program for the development of creative tourism with an action plan and identified priority areas of action, operational goals and key stakeholders;

- Defining mechanisms for better intersectoral cooperation of culture (creative industries directorates) and tourism;
- Strengthening the capacity of administrative bodies in the preparation and implementation of projects in the field of valorization of cultural heritage and creative industry towards the EU and other international funds;
- Investments in the revitalization / reparation of cultural assets;
- Investments in the preservation of natural heritage (revision of spatial planning documentation);
- Strengthening the capacities of small and medium-sized creative entrepreneurship;
- Incentive for local associations of creative entrepreneurship;
- Raising awareness of the demand for creative and interactive tourist content within local communities;
- Investments in local project ideas that involve visitors in creative content (workshops, manifestations, research, etc.);
- Ensuring creative spaces / environments / locations for demonstrations of various types of interactive activities (performing arts, workshops, exhibitions, etc.);
- Development of the concept of a longer tourist stay that includes more original experiences in different geographical areas (thanks to the small territorial scope);
- A more effective strategy for the promotion of tourist content innovated / enriched with creative experiences (use of digital technologies);
- Education of tourist intermediaries about new contents and services that offer tourists original and creative experiences;
- Raising awareness among tourists and locals about the connection between creative tourism and sustainable development of the local community (creative content contributes to sustainability).

The above mentioned measures represent strong recommendations for further action in the direction of the development of creative tourism in Montenegro, with an emphasis on long-term sustainability, promotion of authenticity and active participation of all stakeholders, the most important of which are the local population and the local economy with its creative potential. It is precisely for this reason that strengthening capacity and raising awareness of the necessary diversification of the tourist product in this direction are indispensable, in order to adequately position Montenegro on the map of creative tourism destinations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Montenegro is a tourist destination on the Mediterranean, recognized for its well-developed summer tourism and rich natural and cultural heritage, which are the leading reasons for tourists' visits. Tourism has a particularly high share in the country's GDP, which is why it is of strategic importance that the tourism product of Montenegro be differentiated, aimed at reduced seasonality, better geographical distribution of tourist traffic and based on the principles of smart & sustainable development. In the process of diversifying the tourism offer, it is necessary to take into account the current trends in the tourism market and the directions in which the global tourist demand is moving. The analysis of the indicators in this area shows a departure from the tendencies of mass tourism, especially after the Covid 19 pandemic, and the need to satisfy tourist needs through experiences different from just passing through a destination and passive sightseeing. Today, tourists are eager to interact, connect with the local environment and customs, actively participate in traditional events and express creativity through the acquisition of authentic knowledge and skills. The epithets that dominate are authentic, creative, unique, exciting, unusual... and these are the emotions that the tourist offer should evoke today. The above mentioned represents the basic elements of creative tourism, a specific form of tourism that was recognized as such in the early 2000s, and whose principles are fully aligned with the strategic and operational goals of tourism development in Montenegro. Also, the contents and activities in the domain of creative tourism are based on the motives of the natural and cultural heritage of the destination, where Montenegro has an extremely rich heritage in relation to the very small territorial scope and population. Bearing this in mind, it can be concluded that the development of creative tourism in Montenegro would contribute to a better valorization of natural and cultural heritage, a reduction in the seasonal concentration of tourists, an increase in tourist traffic in less developed places, greater involvement of local communities and their sustainability. Through the research of legal regulations in the field of culture and tourism, as well as an overview of the current tourist offer and its capacities for further development, it was determined that there are numerous potentials for designing new products and contents based on creative tourism in Montenegro. However, it is necessary to engage more intensively in the area of strengthening the capacities of tourism development providers, public information and education about the creation and promotion of innovative tourist offers, as well as stable and long-term investment in new project ideas that will stimulate the development of creative content and activities.



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