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METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCHING THE MARKETING ACTIVITY OF A HEALTH TOURISM DESTINATION OF MUNICIPAL LEVEL

The purpose of the article is the development of a methodology for researching the marketing activity of a health tourism destination at the municipal level. Tourism has not only a socio-economic but also a political contribution to the development of the country. A kind of "local export", it helps to bring the Bulgarian economy to European standards, to be included in the process of global economic integration. Given that the international tourism market is becoming a "buyer's market" and intensified global competition is redistributing the market shares of tourist destinations, the problems of their competitiveness are becoming extremely relevant. Municipalities in Bulgaria, in their role as main territorial administrative structures, must play a decisive leadership role in the process of developing and implementing programs for the development of sustainable tourism and increasing the competitiveness of the tourist destinations they represent. Updated the definitions of the concepts "tourist destination", "health tourism", "marketing process" their content is interpreted in the context of their modern use. A methodology has been developed for researching the marketing activity of a municipal destination for health tourism.

Keywords: tourist destination, the marketing process, health tourism.

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МЕТОДОЛОГІЯ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ МАРКЕТИНГОВОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ДЕСТИНАЦІЇ ЛІКУВАЛЬНО-ОЗДОРОВЧОГО ТУРИЗМУ НА МУНІЦИПАЛЬНОМУ РІВНІ

Мета статті полягає в розробці методики дослідження маркетингової діяльності дестинації лікувально-оздоровчого туризму на муніципальному рівні. Туризм має не тільки соціально-економічний, а й політичний внесок у розвиток країни. Своєрідний «експорт на місці», він допомагає привести болгарську економіку до європейських стандартів, включити її в процес світової економічної інтеграції. З огляду на те, що міжнародний туристичний ринок стає «ринком покупця», а загострення глобальної конкуренції перерозподіляє ринкові частки туристичних дестинацій, проблеми їх конкурентоспроможності стають надзвичайно актуальними. Муніципалітети в Болгарії, як основні територіально-адміністративні структури, повинні відігравати вирішальну лідерську роль у процесі розробки та реалізації програм розвитку сталого туризму та підвищення конкурентоспроможності туристичних дестинацій, які вони представляють. Уточнено визначення термінів «туристична дестинація», «лікувально-оздоровчий туризм», «маркетинговий процес» та інтерпретовано їх зміст у контексті сучасного використання. Розроблено методику дослідження маркетингової діяльності дестинації лікувально-оздоровчого туризму на рівні муніципалітету. Обґрунтовано впровадження маркетингової концепції в управління дестинацією оздоровчого туризму на муніципальному рівні, враховуючи специфіку надання лікувально-оздоровчих послуг при розробці детального плану маркетингу дестинації. Початковим етапом розробки цього плану є маркетингове дослідження та аналіз існуючої ситуації на ринку лікувально-оздоровчого туризму, а також складання прогнозу на майбутнє. Другий етап – визначення стратегічних цілей маркетингу, вибір цільового ринку та розроблення комплексу маркетингу для кожного цільового ринку. Далі йде розробка конкретної програми дій, бюджетне планування маркетингового плану та контроль за виконанням програми дій.

Ключові слова: туристична дестинація, маркетинговий процес, лікувально-оздоровчий туризм.

Timeliness of the problem. A high degree of uncertainty of the market situation, political and international instability, seasonal fluctuations in the demand for tourism services, tightening of competition, limited resources, epidemic crises on a global scale, climate change, demographic problems lead to difficulties in the activities of tourism companies and increase of the complexity of tourism business planning. In this situation, the modern marketing concept of planning, modern methods and forms of marketing influence on the formation of market demand, the competitive position of the tourist territory (municipality, city) and the ways of marketing the tourist destination are of significant interest. It turns out to be most effective to propose a concept for the development of a tourist destination based on a marketing approach, which is realized in the system of organizational and legal forms

of functioning of the resort-recreational enterprises as the core of the resort-recreational subsystem of the resort city. Tourist destinations cannot rely on random success, which is why their competitiveness is established as a core function of their management and marketing systems.

Municipalities in Bulgaria, in their role as main territorial administrative structures, must play a decisive leadership role in the process of developing and implementing programs for the development of sustainable tourism and increasing the competitiveness of the tourist destinations they represent.

Analysis of recent research and publications. A well-systematized interpretation of a destination is offered by Goldner, Ritchie and McIntosh [14; 17]. Authors such as R. Mill and A. Morrison, E. Inkeep, P. Murphy, E. Laws, M. Manette and C. Goldner have made significant

contributions to the development of the system model of the tourist destination [14; 16; 17].

To clarify the nature of the tourist destination, definitions of the concept of "destination" by authors such as S. Marinov, M. Vodenska, M. Rybov, M. Neshkov, S. Rakadzhyska, S. Medlik, G. Schroeder, J. Valls, C. Gunn [7; 8; 9; 14]. It is necessary to conclude that the tourist destination is always spatially specified, and it can be a country, region or settlement, in which there is a presence of tourist attractions, material and technical base and enterprises that organize the service of visitors. Philip Kotler equates the marketing process with the process of the overall strategic planning of a health tourism destination at the municipal level [15, p. 27].

According to Dickson and Peter R view of the marketing process, which includes strategic and tactical marketing planning, development and control of a health tourism destination at the municipal level, the result is the creation and offering of a certain health product [13, p. 23].

The conclusion is that the study of the marketing activity of a health tourism destination at the municipal level is a phenomenon with a complex content, and the systematic approach is suitable for its study.

Purpose statement. Methodology for researching the marketing activity of a health tourism destination at the municipal level.

The main research material. Given the particularities of marketing a health tourism destination at the municipal level, the system of the destination's marketing activity should be taken into account and given significant attention.

- It includes:
- analysis of the surrounding (external) environment of the destination;
 - market research;
 - analysis of the internal environment of the destination;
 - market segmentation and selection of target market segments;
 - development of a plan (program or complex) of destination marketing;
 - planning the assortment of health services;
 - goal planning and pricing policy development;
 - placement planning, demand formation and sales promotion, advertising and presentation of health services in the market.

The scheme for the marketing activity of a health tourism destination at the municipal level is presented in Figure 1.

An analysis of the marketing activity of a health tourism destination begins with an analysis of the external and internal marketing environment. The external environment of marketing is characterized by factors and forces external to organizations that affect its ability to establish and maintain successful cooperation with consumers. These are such factors and forces beyond the control of the destination as suppliers, intermediaries, direct competitors, new competitors, consumers, industry organizations, transport, government bodies, as well as political, legal, economic, environmental and natural factors, demographic and socio-cultural factors, technological factors [11, pp. 104–108; 12, p. 29].



Figure 1. Destination Marketing Activity Scheme for health tourism at the municipal level

Source: compiled by the author

In the concept of marketing management of the development of a health tourism destination at the municipal level, the marketing environment is considered as business development, human resources, infrastructure, recreational-health sphere, etc. Each of the development directions is responsible for a program, task, project and control. The external environment of the destination refers to the relations with the neighboring territories, investors, tourists and guests of the municipality. The internal environment – the municipal budget, expenses, subsidies, the economic situation in the municipality [3, p. 234].

Factors for the attractiveness of the health tourism destination at the municipal level should become the health recreational resources, the attractive infrastructure and the historical significance of the municipality, as well as the quality of life, the ability of the institutions, the commercial culture, the identification and the image of the municipality [2, p. 55–57].

The concept of the marketing management of a health tourism destination at the municipal level should foresee the possibilities of the destination and include an estimate of their financing. Task control requires a unified system to measure the progress of work on the concept compared to the project plan, according to the budget and in the form needed to meet the goal. Thus, the marketing plan includes 4 directions: production, promotion, investment and personnel (see Figure 2).

In this way, the algorithm of the marketing plan of a health tourism destination at the municipal level includes the following stages:

- research, situational analysis (external and internal);
- destination branding;
- determining the key factors of possible supply options; positioning the destination regarding potential competitors.

First, the analysis of the external environment of a municipal destination for health tourism in order to establish the opportunities and threats affecting the development of the destination includes the following elements:

- the external environment should be analyzed according to its constituent elements: macro environment – analysis of the impact of political, legal, economic, natural, environmental, demographic, social and technological factors;
- market environment – analysis of the volume and structure of tourist demand of the market segments and the behavior of users of the market segments of the destination;
- competitive environment – analysis of the impact on the destination of suppliers, direct competitors, the appearance of new competitors [2, p. 55–57].

Second, the internal environment of the health tourism destination at the municipal level is analyzed in order to establish its strengths and weaknesses. All system elements of the destination are subject to analysis: transport accessibility, tourist resources, tourist information, tourist superstructure, tourist industry, tourist personnel, marketing mix, industry organizations.

The macro environment of a health tourism destination at the municipal level is recommended to be analyzed using a PEST analysis. The development and justification of the methodology for the development of the marketing program of a health tourism destination at the municipal level is aimed at the development of the theoretical aspects and the practical implementation of the marketing of the destination and will allow to achieve greater progress in the field of the formation of a new quality of the management of the municipality in the conditions of a market economy. In such a way, the justification of the concept of effective functioning of the recreation-health subsystem of destination for health tourism at the municipal level allows to conclude that it should be considered primarily as an initiative of municipal authority and consolidation of the efforts of the main subjects of the socio-economic and socio-political life of the destination in the process of agreeing on joint actions in the direction of the development and implementation of the strategic plan for the development of the municipality, in which a number of targeted and complex programs for the marketing development of a destination for health tourism at the municipal level in the

**DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING A DESTINATION
MARKETING PLAN FOR HEALTH TOURISM AT
MUNICIPAL LEVEL**

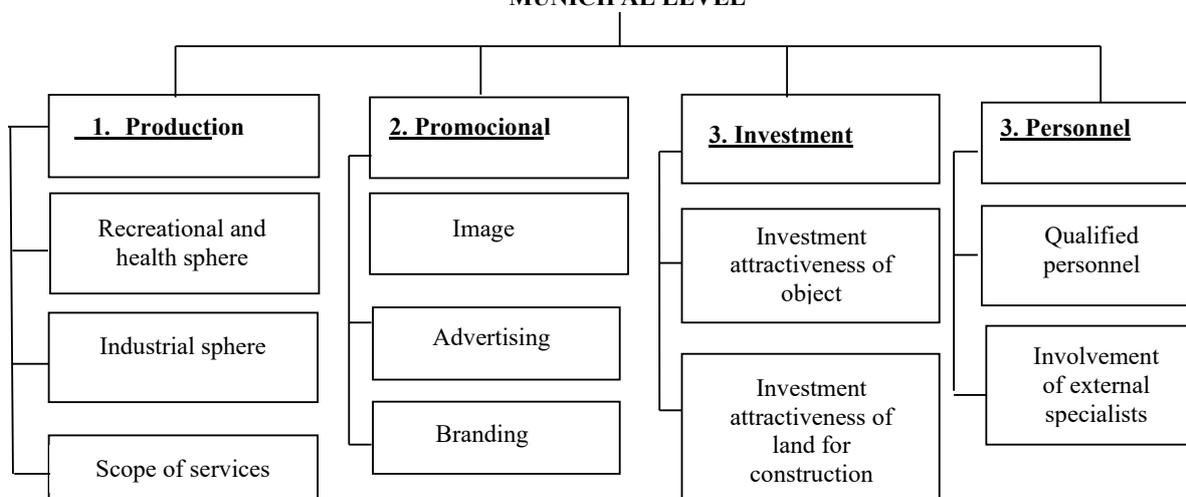


Figure 2. Directions for developing a marketing plan for a health tourism destination at the municipal level

Source: compiled by the author

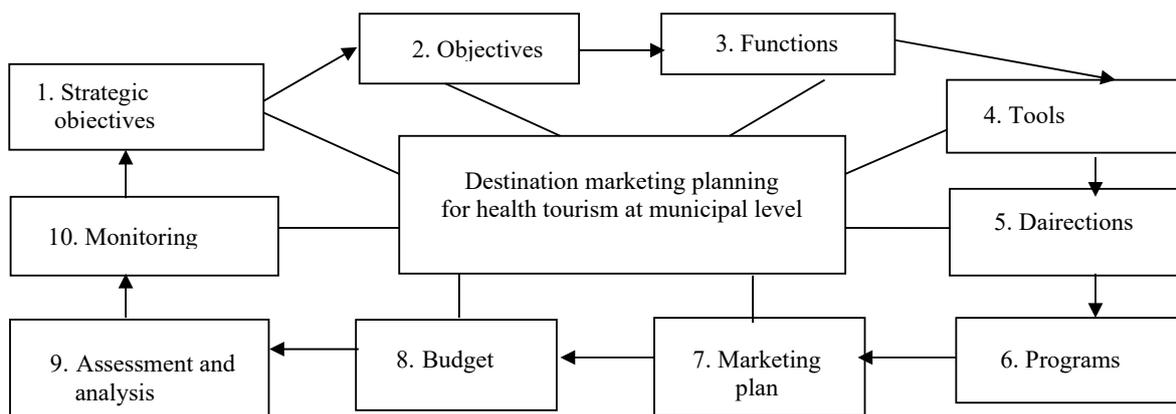


Figure 3. Marketing planning technology on destination for health tourism at the municipal level

Source: prepared by the author

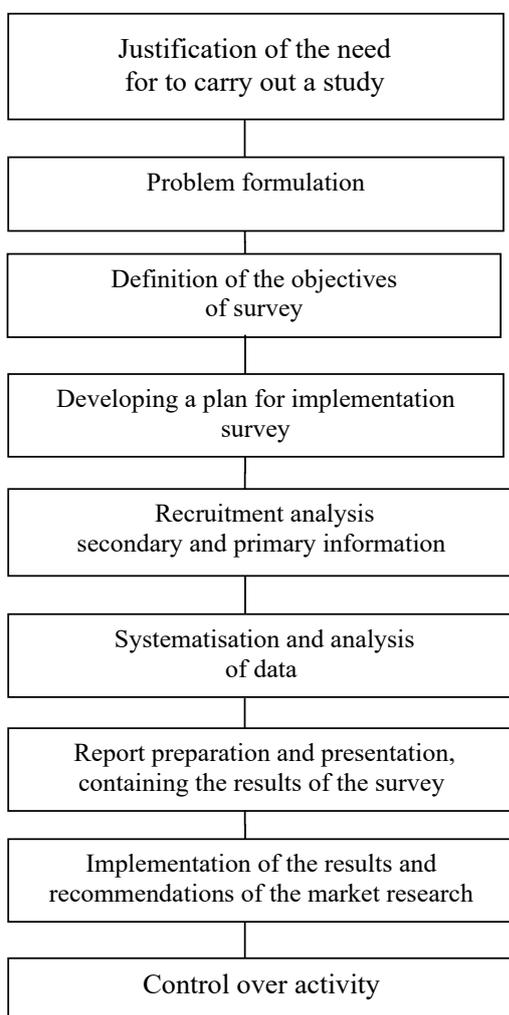


Figure 4. Destination Marketing Research Model for health tourism at the municipal level

Source: compiled by the author

planning technology of destination for health tourism at the municipal level (see Figure 3) [4, p. 73].

The situational analysis of the destination requires timely, reliable and complete information about all system elements of the environment in which it operates. We can obtain the necessary information from international and national sources of statistical data [4, p. 73].

Based on fig. 3 it can be seen that the methodology of marketing planning of a municipal health tourism destination is a binding of strategic goals, tasks, functions, tools, principles, strategies, programs and marketing plans, assessment and analysis, monitoring.

In this way, it can be claimed that a marketing program of a municipal destination for health tourism has been developed, which will ensure:

- creation in the municipality of high class new products and technologies;
- creation of a national and global level of information about the subjects of the economic activity of the municipality;
- maintaining and ensuring a trend towards increasing the competitiveness of the enterprises located in the municipality from the field of services on the domestic, interregional and international market;
- raising the standard of living of the population;
- expansion of interregional socio-economic relations;
- entrepreneurship development;
- improving the infrastructure of the municipality, including by improving the cultural attractiveness;
- attracting new tourists and developing the health sector of the municipality.

The development and justification of the methodology for developing a marketing program of health tourism destination at the municipal level is aimed at developing the theoretical aspects and the practical realization of the marketing of the municipality, which will allow to achieve greater progress in the formation of a new quality of management of the destination in the conditions of a market economy. For making correct management decisions, it is important to develop a good methodology: not only theoretically sound, but also practically applicable to the specific tourist destination. The marketing research model of health tourism destination at the municipal level is presented in Figure 4.

individual areas, the organizational and legal arrangements for their realization and the sources of funding.

The analyzed literature on the development of the marketing plan allows us to summarize the marketing

In conclusion, we can analyze the presented model (Figure 4): the study of the marketing activity of the destination would contribute to the improvement of the marketing policy with a view to increasing its effectiveness to achieve a higher competitiveness of the tourist destination at the municipal level.

In order to assess user satisfaction, it is proposed to develop a model of an in-depth interview and a survey card, researching destination for health tourism at the municipal level. In this model, a logical structure must be ordered, whose purpose is to rationalize and detail actually existing segments of the tourist market, distinguished by synthetic and analytical characteristics.

Conclusions. In summary, it can be concluded that the application of marketing in the management of health tourism destination at the municipal level corresponds to the analysis of the specifics of the resort production and the development of a detailed marketing plan for the destination. The initial stage of the development of this plan is marketing research and analysis of the existing situation, as well as drawing up a forecast for the future. The second stage is the determination of the strategic objectives of marketing, the selection of the target market and the marketing mix for each target market. This is followed by the development of a specific program of action, budget planning of the marketing plan and control over the implementation of the program of action.

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