

Chapter 10


Eco-Innovation and IT Technologies for Sustainable Development of Health and Recreational Tourism of Serbia

Gordana Petar Djukic

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5419-0725>

Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Ilic S. Biljana

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6137-8478>

Faculty of Management, Megatrend University Belgrade, Zajecar, Serbia

Goran R. Milovanović

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9758-3606>

Faculty of Economics, The University of Nis, Serbia

ABSTRACT

The aim of the chapter is to point the importance of eco-innovation and IT technologies for the sustainable development of health and recreational tourism in Serbia. The subject of the research is the rehabilitation center in Eastern Serbia. The main idea of the chapter is to show how those hospital institutions use artificial intelligence-IT technologies for improving recovery services to patients in the post-COVID condition. The chapter will discuss the most common types of support and measures to facilitate the functioning of eco-tourism in Serbia with the aim to adopt good practices of developed countries (Hungary). Ecological tourism takes place in areas of pure and preserved nature. The contribution of the chapter is to point to new strategies in spa tourism, to shorten the time and reduce business costs. This would contribute to the sustainability of tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's time of modern business, the most important thing for all types of organizations is to accept changes. The sooner organizations adapt and introduce new innovative business techniques, the sooner they will be competitive in the market. However, with the globalization of the concept of sustainable development, every business has taken the premise of the sustainability.

Acting sustainably, as well as achieving the desired results without violating the right to natural resources, economy, and social dimension of future generations, is the basis of the concept of sustainable development. Tourism has also taken the premise of sustainability, becoming a new way of tourism business - ecotourism. Interest in ecotourism has never been more pronounced than it is nowadays. Based on the fact that the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as its suppression, has taken precedence on a global level, current situations have posed many challenges to modern mankind, primarily in healthcare. But first of all, the next question needs to be asked: What is the term or definition of sustainable tourism? Sustainable tourism represents an industry that has a minimal impact on the environment and local culture, while at the same time it earns money, creates new jobs, and protects local ecosystems (Ilic, Djukic, Radisavljevic, 2020). That is responsible tourism which is friendly to the natural and cultural heritage. Rural tourism is an inseparable part of ecological tourism because it is connected to the preservation and undisturbed nature. Health and recreational tourism belong to the category of rural tourism. Since the chapter will be based on health and recreational tourism, it is necessary to point to the fact that both types of tourism take place mostly in spas. Spas are destinations rich in sources of thermal and mineral waters, clean air, and favorable climatic conditions. It is not uncommon for specialized treatment institutions, i.e. rehabilitation centers, to be settled in spas, because of the providing patient accommodation services, using mineral healing water for medical purposes. Rehabilitation centers also provide many other medical services depending on the health problems that patients have. Considering the indications that are affected by the composition of mineral thermal water, specialized rehabilitation centers treat those diseases on which spas water has the best effect. Some spas treat that treat the skeletal system, air spas that are recommended for the treatment of lung diseases, diseases related to the nervous system, cardiovascular diseases, and more. In 2019, the COVID-19 virus crashed like a Tsunami on the Planet and attacked the entire human race (OECD,1-7). Mankind, as the youngest and most tender species on Earth, is trying to "save" life with all available knowledge - using modern technologies and scientific achievements, especially in medicine. The whole world is witnessing a race of mankind and viruses. Whether and how long, humanity can cope with the rates of mutation and adaptation of the virus (that is trying to survive) remains to be seen in the future. With the achievements of modern medicine, several types of vaccines against viruses have been found, and many of them are obtained with the most modern technologies - that have not been used before. Based on the fact that life always finds a way to survive, the entire humanity began to adapt to the situation caused by the pandemic. New technologies and new ways of business have been introduced in almost all branches of the economy. There are almost no economic sectors without huge business losses, but tourism as the branch of industry that promised the most income before the appearance of the COVID-19 virus, can be one of the branches with the biggest losses. Because the pandemic promotes social distance, it resulted in reducing travel to all world destinations. Income of the tourism sector (globally) dropped by 90 percent during 2020 and at the beginning of 2021 (Behsudi, 2020). Countries around the world, depending on their economic capabilities, responded by providing certain subsidies and assistance, but many organizations and employees in the tourism sector "unfortunately did not have that privilege." According to the forecasts of the World

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