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Development of New Postgraduate Curricula

Accreditation of modernized and developed programmes

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Project Task:

Activity 2.4. Developed postgraduate curricula

The description of the project task:

At least two postgraduate study programs – master studies (120 ECTS) or specialization studies (60 ECTS) will be developed respecting the obtained outcomes of WP1. Thus, BTC will develop postgraduate study program in Ecological Tourism, as the lack of competent personnel in this field was identified in Zlatibor County area. Pursuant to this, the UNIKG will prioritize the spa and the health tourism, and other partners will incorporate the tourism specificities of their regions in study programs.

The description of the outcome:

This report is the result of joint work of staff at the Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja University of Kragujevac.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>CAQA</i> | Commission for Accreditation and Quality |
| <i>CONUS</i> | Conference of the Universities of Serbia |
| <i>ECTS</i> | European Credit Transfer System |
| <i>HEI</i> | Higher Educational Institution |
| <i>BTC</i> | Business Technical College of Vocational Studies in Užice |
| <i>HBSL</i> | Higher Business School, Leskovac |
| <i>UNIKG</i> | Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, University of Kragujevac |

INTRODUCTION

Upon completing the assessment of currently available study programs in tourism at undergraduate and graduate level in Serbia and taking into consideration the existing market needs in the field of tourism, project activities were directed towards modernization and harmonization of existing undergraduate curricula and developing new postgraduate study programs. These activities represent the core of the project effort and the overall objective of those activities were to create study programs that will enable students to attain necessary knowledge, skills and expertise that will allow them greater mobility during their studies and assist them to enter the job market more successfully after graduating.

Specifically Activity 2.4 was aimed at developing new study programs at the graduate level. As such, this activity was carried as a logical continuation of modernization of undergraduate study programs among partnering institutions, while respecting existing available resources in terms of available staff and prospects for ensuring sustainability of the introduced programs in the future. The goal was to design at least two new postgraduate study programs – one at the master academic studies level (120 ECTS) and the other at the specialization studies level (60 ECTS).

Results of the situation analysis on current study programs (Activity 1.1) revealed that there were eleven accredited study programs at the master academic studies level at the Serbian universities enrolling close to 450 students on an annual basis. In addition, the same analysis found that there was only one accredited program at the specialization study level enrolling 50 students. Recognizing this opportunity, new postgraduate study programs were designed by focusing on areas of study that are not covered in the Serbian educational market, offering rather unique areas of specialization, knowledge and skills for prospective students.

The UNIKG has submitted to CAQA documentation for accreditation of postgraduate study program in “Health Tourism” and has received accreditation in January 2016 (Annex 1). The first generation of students is enrolled in the academic 2016/2017.

In addition to accrediting new study program at the master's level, the UNIKG was successful in accrediting doctoral studies program titled "Management in Hospitality and Tourism". The accreditation by CAQA was received in October 2016 (Annex 2) and the first generation of ten doctoral students will be enrolled during the academic 2016/2017. This way, the UNIKG will become the first and only public faculty in the field of tourism to offer studies at the doctoral level in Serbia. We strongly believe that the new doctoral study program will become a fertile ground for nurturing well-rounded scholars, as well as, professional who will be able to contribute significantly to the long-term development of tourism sector in Serbia.

1. Reasons for introducing postgraduate study program in "Health Tourism"

The rationale behind introducing study program of "Health Tourism" at the master (graduate) academic level was to educate students in the field that has a great untapped potential in the Republic of Serbia. Namely, currently there is no similar program at any level of academic or professional studies being offered. On the other hand, health tourism – that comprises of medical and wellness tourism – is becoming globally recognized as one of the most promising types of tourism that can be offered. Indeed, studies show that health tourism market is worth about 100 billion dollars on annual basis and that some 5% of all international travel is related directly to health tourism. Furthermore, this type of tourism is making significant growth rate, which is higher compared to many other types of tourism activities and such trend is expected to continue in the future as well.

Such development is a result of price disparity in providing medical/wellness services in the developed and developing countries. Sometimes the difference in costs of medical treatments between the countries can be up to ten times, while the quality of rendered medical services is rather similar. Certainly, some of the key factors for deciding on a given health tourism destination, apart from price are the expected level of medical services, competency of the medical staff, available medical facilities and the attractiveness of the destination itself.

In that context, Serbia has a great potential for becoming one of the top health tourism destinations. Some estimates reveal that costs associated with medical treatment, medical care after the treatment, travel and accommodation are often about one third of costs of medical treatment alone in the Western Europe. Combination of trained medical staff, low costs of medical treatments, proximity to wealthier countries, hospitality of people, dynamic history and beautiful nature represent the foundation for successful launching of health tourism destination. Serbia possesses all of these pre-required elements. In addition to this, Serbia has a rather large diaspora that lives in many developed countries who are willing to travel back to Serbia and undergo medical treatments. As of now, Serbia has to offer about 2,000 different medical services along with 50 different spas suitable for treating various diseases. Even though Serbia

has all this at its disposal it seems that health tourism has neither been promoted nor represented adequately in the Serbian tourism offer. Recognizing this opportunity the UNIKG has decided to accredit study program at the masters academic level titled “Health Tourism”. The CAQA has accredited the study program in January 2016 (Annex 1).

2. Purpose of the postgraduate academic study program “Health Tourism”

The purpose of introducing study program of “Health Tourism” at the postgraduate academic level is to educate student in the field of health tourism, introducing the following concepts:

- Types and trends of health tourism
- Macroeconomic, microeconomic and global aspects of health tourism
- Destinations of health tourism
- Sustainability of health tourism
- Managing development of health tourism destinations
- Managing relationships with the users of health tourism services
- Financial management in health tourism
- Organizing of health-tourism based manifestations

On the other hand, the purpose of the study program (curriculum is shown in Table 1) consists in the contribution regarding preparation of students for individual and team work in the domain of analysis, planning and organizing of health tourism based activities within a given destination and managing all activities that are relevant for this type of tourism. Contribution of this study program is reflected in the development of creativity among students, which is of essential significance in making adequate business decisions in order to assure success in delivering value to the tourists. In that way, students will be prepared to – by employing general management principles – to carry complex business tasks and solve ongoing strategic business problems.

Table 1. Curriculum of the postgraduate study program “Health Tourism”

| No. | Course Title | Semester | Status | ECTS |
|-----|------------------------------------|----------|----------|------|
| 1. | Research Methodology | 1 | Required | 8 |
| 2. | Types and Trends of Health Tourism | 1 | Required | 8 |
| 3. | Health Tourism Destinations | 1 | Required | 8 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|-----------|
| 4. | Elective 1 | 1 | Elective | 8 |
| 5. | Elective 2 | 2 | Elective | 8 |
| One of two offered courses is taken | | | | |
| 4a. | Relationship Management with Health Service Clients | 1 | Elective | 8 |
| 46. | Financial Management for Providers of Health Services | 1 | Elective | 8 |
| One of two offered courses is taken | | | | |
| 5a. | Tourism and sustainable development | 2 | Elective | 8 |
| 56. | Balneoclimatology | 2 | Elective | 8 |
| 6. | Independent Study Research | | | |
| 7. | Master's Thesis | 2 | Required | 20 |
| Total number of ECTS | | | | 60 |

3. Objectives of the postgraduate study program “Health Tourism”

Main goals of the postgraduate study program “Health Tourism” is directed towards obtaining skills and specific knowledge in accordance with contemporary achievements in tourism theory and practice. Direct objectives are:

- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding theoretical, methodological and applicative dimensions of researching within the field of health tourism
- Provide better understanding to students in terms of organizing facilities for health tourism in order to provide better service
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding key aspects and phenomena of globalization and its impacts on tourism/health tourism.
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding contemporary trends and health tourism destinations
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding sustainable economic development and sustainable health tourism development
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding macroeconomic policy and its impact on functioning and development of health tourism
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding human resources planning in tourist organizations related to health tourism
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding with regulations, standards and legal aspects related to health tourism
- Enhancing students’ knowledge regarding the significance of conducting scientific work in the field of health tourism

By completing this study program, student acquires necessary knowledge and skills in the domain of the health tourism segment. Acquired knowledge and skills render student to be competent enough to solve tasks at hand individually or as a part of the team in the domain of health tourism. This graduate program provides good opportunity for students to upgrade their theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of health tourism.

4. Purpose of the doctoral study program “Management in Hospitality and Tourism”

The purpose of doctoral study program is educating students to independently conduct original scientific research that should result in contribution to society in general, business and in particular to hospitality and tourism – as an important segment of the overall economy. In addition, the purpose of this doctoral program directly aligned with the existing mission and objectives of the Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjacka Banja. Indeed, by introducing the study program, the Faculty will be able to offer all three levels of education in hospitality and tourism under ‘one roof’ while enabling students to conduct the most complex scientific and managerial work. The need for this type of experts has grown not only in Serbia, but also in the region, which is evident given the attention that the Serbian authorities are giving to further developing Serbian tourism potentials.

Study program (shown in table 2) has an intention to prepare student for managing the most demanding tasks in the domain of economic development, services, consulting and research in the domain of hospitality and tourism management. Potential for developing significant parts of economy and the tertiary sector lies mainly on the work and effort of researchers, scientists and experts of this profile. Doctoral studies provide the opportunity to include young experts into contemporary development trends in the service sector with a special focus on hospitality and tourism. Certainly, raising the level of education in this area should contribute to the further development of hospitality and tourism, and national economy in general.

**Table 2. Curriculum of the doctoral study program
“Management in Hospitality and Tourism”**

| No. | Course Title | Semester | Status | ECTS |
|-----|--|----------|----------|------|
| 1. | Methodology of scientific research | I | Elective | 15 |
| 2. | Economic policy and planning in tourism | I | Elective | 15 |
| 3. | Intelligent information systems | I | Elective | 15 |
| 4. | Traffic law in tourism | I | Elective | 15 |
| 5. | Issues and perspectives of contemporary tourism development | I | Elective | 15 |
| 6. | Tourism and space | I | Elective | 15 |
| 7. | Marketing of sustainable development | II | Elective | 15 |
| 8. | Non-material cultural heritage | II | Elective | 15 |
| 9. | Cultural tourism and creative industries | II | Elective | 15 |
| 10. | Managing tourism resource through GIS | II | Elective | 15 |
| 11. | Development and perspectives of health tourism | II | Elective | 15 |
| 12. | Organizing and managing program of health tourism in health institutions | II | Elective | 15 |
| 13. | Marketing management of tourist destination | III | Elective | 15 |
| 14. | Managing natural resources | III | Elective | 15 |
| 15. | Globalization and intercultural management | III | Elective | 15 |

| | | | | |
|------------|---|-----|----------|-----|
| 16. | Managing human resources in tourism | III | Elective | 15 |
| 17. | Event tourism | III | Elective | 15 |
| 18. | Branding in tourism and hospitality | III | Elective | 15 |
| 19. | Research, publication; First doctoral colloquium | IV | Required | 20 |
| 20. | Research, publication; Second doctoral colloquium | V | Required | 20 |
| 21. | Research and publication in journals | VI | Required | 20 |
| Total ECTS | | | | 150 |

5. Objectives of the doctoral study program “Management in Hospitality and Tourism”

One of the main objectives for introducing this doctoral study program is related to educating experts in certain subject areas as well as in developing “soft” skills such as teamwork, persuasive presentation and conducting independent scientific research. More specific objectives related to this study program are:

- Development of analytical skills, critical thinking and leadership among students,
- Introducing students into the fundamentals of theoretical, methodological and applicative dimensions of research within the fields of hospitality and tourism,
- Sharing up-to-date knowledge that is related to the chosen field of study and mastering methodologies needed for analysis of complex scientific problems,
- Gaining skills in conducting scientific research and further development of professional skills,
- Preparing student for publishing their scientific research in accordance with the highest academic standards,
- Understanding mechanisms of sustainable economic development as well as sustainable tourism development,
- Enabling students to take active participation in domestic and international scientific and development projects, allowing them to apply for project calls in the future,
- Enabling students to disseminate results of their scientific research more effectively.

By completing this study program, students attain competencies and skills in the domain of hospitality and tourism. Gained knowledge and skills allow students to be competent in conducting scientific research both, individually or as a part of the team, in the field of tourism.

Annex 1 – Certificate on accreditation of master academic studies – Health Tourism

The coat of arms
Republic of Serbia
Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance
Number: 612-00-00638/2015-06
15 January 2016
Belgrade

CERTIFICATE
ON ACCREDITATION OF A STUDY PROGRAMME

University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, with the seat at the following address: Vojvođanska Street, Vrnjačka Banja, TIN: 107134513, official registration number: 17821148, has met the standards set out in the Rules and Regulations on Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes ("Official Gazette RS", number 106/06, 112/08, 70/11, 101/12-I-25, 101/12-I-26, 13/14), for the accreditation of the study programme **Master Academic Studies 1 - Health Tourism**, within the field of humanities and social sciences, and it can enroll 25 (twenty-five) students at the institution's seat.

The certificate has been issued pursuant to Article 16, Paragraph 5, Item 1) of the Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazzete RS ", number 76/05, 100/07, 97/08, 44/10, 93/12, 99/14, 45/15, 68/15).

To be delivered to:
- the higher institution
- CAQA Archives

President:

Prof. Ćemal Dolićanin, Ph.D.
(signed manually)

(The round seal over the signature reads: Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions, II, emblem in the middle)

Annex 2 – Certificate on accreditation of doctoral studies – Hotel Management and Tourism

The coat of arms
Republic of Serbia
Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance
Number: 612-00-00709/2016-06
14 October 2016
B e l g r a d e

CERTIFICATE ON ACCREDITATION OF A STUDY PROGRAMME

University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, with the seat at the following address: Vojvodanska Street, Vrnjačka Banja, TIN: 107134513, official registration number: 17821148, has met the standards set out in the Rules and Regulations on Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes ("Official Gazette RS", number 106/06, 112/08, 70/11, 101/12-I-25, 101/12-I-26, 13/14), for the accreditation of the study programme **Doctoral Studies - Hotel Management and Tourism**, within the field of humanities and social sciences, and it can enroll 10 (ten) students at the institution's seat.

The certificate has been issued pursuant to Article 16, Paragraph 5, Item 1) of the Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazzete RS ", number 76/05, 100/07, 97/08, 44/10, 93/12, 99/14, 45/15, 68/15).

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