

# **ORGANIC FOOD AND ECO-LODGES CAPACITIES IN THE FUNCTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MONTENEGRO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In Montenegro, tourism represents the most important economic activity. One of the basic concepts of economics of natural resources and the environment is the concept of sustainability or sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is focused on the conservation of natural ecosystems and the rational use of natural resources and to improve the quality of the environment. Sustainable tourism means environmentally clean, untouched nature but does include the conservation of protected natural and cultural areas, but their full activation and evaluation. This form of tourism represents the best example of how to use the whole area for tourism, but also reduce the negative impact of tourism on the environment so Montenegro must make considerable efforts to develop sustainable tourism. The term eco lodge represents a type of accommodation that does not have a negative impact on nature, and it is constructed to be environmentally friendly. This paper highlights the importance of sustainable tourism development in Montenegro, provides an analysis of the advantages and weaknesses of sustainable tourism development, as well as a survey about the culture of consuming organic food. The research results can be used to better promote this tourist destination.

**Keywords:** eco-lodgeS capacities, organic food.

## INTRODUCTION:

Sustainable development presents an integral economic, technological, cultural and social development harmonized with the requirements of environmental protection, which allows to the current and future generations to meet their needs and improve the quality of life. The concept of sustainable development is directed on the conservation of natural ecosystems, on the rational use of natural resources of the country and it is associated with the increasing of quality of environment and quality of life. It means that human preserves nature on a sustainable basis and that he uses it as much as its reproduction allows.

A healthy environment is a basic requirement of life itself. The geographical landscape is rapidly transforming, and this creates the need to protect the environment, as it would remain biologically healthy, aesthetically beautiful and not to slow down the overall social development and improvement in the living standard of people (Radojcic, 1996). Protection and improvement of the environment are arising from the vital need to protect human life, to provide its quality, to ensure the prerequisites for self-protection of human values, development of the human personality as well as to create the promotion of individual and collective well-being in all dimensions of human existence (Pathak, 1992). To protect an area, facilities that support eco-friendly materials must be constructed, rare and protected species must be conserved and organic food must be grown. Range of measures and instruments intended for the preservation of natural resources exceed the measures of economic policy in the narrow sense and became the domain of environmental policy (Ma and Mc Gilvray, 1996). This approach allows the economic benefits both on the global and on the national level. The right of access to the information on the environment is a prerequisite for the realization of all other rights and activities in this area (Stec et al., 2000). Only citizens that have opportunity to find out what is the real situation of their living environment, what are the effects of the environment on their health, what is the degree of contamination, how domestic and international regulations regulate specific questions, etc.(Bruch, 2000) may be a reliable and effective partner of the state in designing and implementing environmental policy (Sands, 2000).

One of the basic concepts of economics of natural resources and the environment is the concept of sustainability or sustainable development. Despite the different interpretations that can be found in the literature, to this concept now belongs the central place in the consideration of longevity perspective of life and progress of mankind. Sustainability, or sustainable development, occurs both as an essential precondition and as the ultimate goal of efficient organization of a number of human activities on Earth (Pesic, 2002). In modern literature there are many different understanding of the concept of sustainability as well as the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is the essential prerequisite and the ultimate goal of an efficient organization of a number of human activities, so in the first place, there are moral reasons for today's generation to leave to the future generation at least a fair chance for development as they have it now. The second group of reasons for the sustainable development is of the ecological nature. As the third possible reason for the justification of the concept of sustainability can be given an economic argument that sustainable development is at the same time more efficient way of doing business. Respect for the principles of sustainability is one of the prerequisites for fast and prosperous development of all sectors of the economy (Kostadinovic et al., 2009).

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present but it doesn't endanger the possibility of future generations to meet their own needs (Stojanovic, 2006). Special importance is given to the principle of sustainability in tourism as one of the important factors of economic development. WTO predicts that 21 countries of the Mediterranean will double the number of tourists in 2020 to \$ 345 million and Eastern Mediterranean countries should expect the highest rates of growth (Pasinovic, 2006). Montenegro's tourism industry occupies a key position in the overall economy. From its market orientation and intensity of promotion, attractiveness, the quality of services and total revenues depend not only workplaces and living standards of a large part of population, but also the further progress general as well as economic strength of the country. The strategic objectives of the country are high quality tourism throughout the year, increased revenues per guest / day, opening prospects for attractive new working places, sustainability and the improvement of general quality of life.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN MONTENEGRO:

Montenegro became famous for being one of the first country that officially declared for the sustainable of its future development - Declaration adopted in 1991., in the Parliament of Montenegro. Sustainability is regulated in Art. 1 of the Constitution of Montenegro, and relies on relevant strategic documents, including the National Sustainable Development Strategy, and the Law on Environmental Protection. Article. 23.of the Constitution of

Montenegro provides priority to the protection of the environment, with assured freedom of entrepreneurship. The Law on Environmental Protection emphasizes the great importance that should be given to the positioning of Montenegro as an ecological state but also protects all natural values and biodiversity. For each project that could harm the environment, it requires verification of compatibility with the environment (Tourism Development Strategy of Montenegro till 2020, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro, 2008., page 69.).

Tourism as a business and activity is an important factor of the environment changing as it takes place in it and because of it. The most important forms of tourist movements are performed in a preserved, but also very sensitive environment. In addition, in certain tourist destinations environment has been greatly changed by the influence of tourism. Large anthropogenic pressure of the environment leaves a number of negative effects on the environment. (Ljesic, 2005). Tourism potentials of Montenegro are of significant proportions, because nature has been generous in the creation of diverse, rare, lavishly designed and contrasting macro-and micro-relief forms, hydrological objects and appearances and complex ecosystems (Nikolic, 2000). Tourist and environmental potentials of the country are complemented with cultural and historical monuments, starting from Roman mosaics, the remains of ancient cities up to the monasteries and churches that have survived degradation. To present the offer to ecotourists, more attention must be paid to the engagement of local people through projects that will benefit in environmental, cultural and economic sense.

An important reason why tourists visit a certain place is its spatial attractiveness-the uniqueness of the natural environment. These are the primary goods that are nonrenewable, irreplaceable and the reason for development of the tourism activity. In Montenegro, tourism is one of the most important industries. At the moment, Montenegro is in the group of countries with a high rate of development of tourism in the world. At the Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam 2008., at the exhibition dedicated to the tourism and sustainable development, prognosis was that annual growth rate of tourism in Montenegro will be about 14% till 2014.

([http://www.expeditio.org/benefitliving/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=75%3Aodrivi-turizam-i-prostorna-devastacija-u-crnoj-gori&catid=7%3Aexpeditio&Itemid=13&lang=en](http://www.expeditio.org/benefitliving/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75%3Aodrivi-turizam-i-prostorna-devastacija-u-crnoj-gori&catid=7%3Aexpeditio&Itemid=13&lang=en)). Up to now, some important documents have been adopted or are in the development process dealing with the subject of sustainability in building, either through the concept of the principle of sustainable development or through increasment of energy efficiency. The Declaration on the Ecological State of Montenegro (1991) first expressed a commitment to sustainable development. In the adopted Strategy for the reduction of poverty states that it is necessary to increase energy efficiency. The issue of energy savings in building sector is significantly treated by adopted Energy Efficiency Strategy of the Republic of Montenegro, as well as the National Energy Strategy. Increasing energy efficiency is one of the obligations that Montenegro has on its way to the European Union ([http://www.expeditio.org/benefitliving/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12%3Aizazov-ekologog-granja-u-crnoj-gori&catid=7%3Aexpeditio&Itemid=13&lang=en](http://www.expeditio.org/benefitliving/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12%3Aizazov-ekologog-granja-u-crnoj-gori&catid=7%3Aexpeditio&Itemid=13&lang=en)). The Strategy of Tourism Development in Montenegro from 2008. stands out that the vision of Montenegro to become an attractive Mediterranean destination as well as the leader in the Mediterranean market regarding nature-based tourism, but unfortunately, although Montenegro has great potential to become unique in preserving its natural and cultural heritage, after only few years it is closer to the negative examples of turist resorts on the Mediterranean region that are degraded and left to mass tourism. Strategic orientation of tourism development of Montenegro until 2020. is that Montenegro is the tourist destination with the offer throughout the year, with picturesque landscapes and protected biodiversity, preserved heritage and tradition. The basis of sustainability that dominates everything, is not important only from an environmental and social aspects, its principles protect all values of the tourism industry and the slogan of Wild Beauty, respectively Wild Beauty became the core product of this tourist destination. Sustainability priorities affect many sectors. National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro (NSSD) under the term sustainability in tourism involves development of:

1. that respects economic, ecological and social principles in mutually balanced relation;
2. does not exhaust natural resources, but only use them to the extent that ensure that they are available to future generations;
3. that preserves cultural diversity and identity, while fostering social cohesion, and in addition, takes into account the satisfaction of tourists.

NCSD starting from that vision, identifies five specific goals (Tourism Development Strategy of Montenegro till 2020., the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro, 2008., Page 70.):

1. The acceleration of economic growth and development - primarily the hinterland of Montenegro - as well as reducing of regional disparities.

2. Poverty reduction and ensuring of equal access of the population to services and resources.
3. Reduction of the environment pollution, ensuring of the effective protection of the environment and the efficient management of natural resources.
4. Improvement of the management system, inclusion of public as well as professionals at all levels.
5. Protection of cultural diversity and identity.

Table 1. provides an overview of the advantages, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the development of sustainable tourism in Montenegro.

**Tab. 1.Swot analysis of sustainable tourism in Montenegro**

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Advantages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural and historical heritage</li> <li>• National Parks</li> <li>• Natural values</li> <li>• Diverse offer in a small space</li> <li>• Climate and geographic location</li> <li>• Healthy food and traditional products</li> <li>• Preserved ambient</li> <li>• Favorable environment for investors</li> <li>• The hospitality of the local population</li> <li>• The favorable geographical position</li> <li>• New destination</li> </ul> | <b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The poor economic situation</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of the importance of tourism within the major part of the population</li> <li>• Poorly developed environmental awareness</li> <li>• disintegrated offer</li> <li>• Inadequate supporting infrastructure (water supply,wastewater, solid waste, roads, parking ...)</li> <li>• unplanned construction</li> <li>• outflow of population to large cities</li> <li>• insufficient research</li> <li>• Insufficient training of the population for tourism</li> <li>• Insufficient use of IT</li> <li>• Lack of staff in terms of quality and qualifications</li> <li>• Low quality of services</li> <li>• Insufficient Initiative in tourism</li> </ul> |
| <b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing international demand for tourism that is nature-based</li> <li>• Growing demand for new (unused) destinations</li> <li>• Growing importance and applicability of the concept of sustainable development and environmental protection</li> <li>• Promovisanje i upoznavanje sa ponudom putem interneta</li> <li>• Tekuća integracija u EU</li> <li>• Razvoj regionalnih turističkih asocijacija</li> </ul>                           | <b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing trend of prices of transport (oil prices)</li> <li>• Growing trend of food prices</li> <li>• Climate change (natural disasters)</li> <li>• Lack of prominence of the region</li> <li>• Unfavorable economic situation in the region</li> <li>• The effects of the global economic crisis</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## ECO LOGDES ACCOMODATION AND ECOTURISM:

Thanks to untouched nature cultural and historical monuments, springs of clean water, and especially the hospitality of the local population in Montenegro, there is the opportunity to develop eco-tourism. Although opinions about future demand and growth in ecotourism market change, all experts and operators agree that ecotourism market will increase approximately 10% per year during next ten years, what is consistent with estimates of the growth of the number of travels in general. Through the analyzes that are carried out in order to position forms of tourism, it has been established that ecotourism in the right format is not yet present in Montenegro. Still all comes down to the analysis of the potential, and what is called ecotourism accommodation is not in the true sense of such accommodation capacity.

Ecotourism is such that it requires detailed planning and full compliance with the ambience of environment in which it develops. Good location forms the basis of eco-tourism and eco lodge accommodation, and it is achieved in protected areas where enhances the evaluation so far inaccessible locations. When the location of future eco-habitat is determined, than the analysis of micro-zones is needed, and the number of eco-lodges must be defined in order to avoid repletion. When choosing a location for eco accommodation, several factors are observed of which the most important are accessibility, attractiveness, content, without losing the identity of the area. After site selection, it is necessary to analyze the natural characteristics of places, vegetation and previous

activities. Then comes the synthesis with the local population that will be the foundation for further development through the role of host and supplier. Eco-tourism in Montenegro is still not developed enough but the beginning of the development of eco-tourism is related to an eco-village Yugoslavia, which was built in Crkvicko Polje 2008., beside that village, it is also known eco-village Podgora in the Durmitor National Park, near the town Zabljak. In addition to these eco-villages, there are other eco-villages in Montenegro, but eco lodges accommodation should be the object of the future projects in Montenegro.

The concept of eco lodge accommodation in Montenegro is considered in conjunction with the German Society for Technical Cooperation. Eco Lodge accommodations are being built in national parks, strictly following the principles of environmental protection and energy efficiency. Each lodge should have a capacity of 15 to 35 rooms (Tourism Development Strategy in Montenegro until 2020, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Montenegro, 2008, page. 94.). What distinguishes eco-lodge accommodation capacity from other types of accommodation is that in some cases the eco-lodge leased or purchased surrounding land to create its own reservations and achieve a better income and preserve habitat. Such reserves represent public protected areas that contribute to the further development of ecotourism destination. Location on which eco-lodges are built, are characterized by a lack of infrastructure and poor accessibility. When constructing eco-lodges, costs should not be higher than the cost of construction of standard buildings, so that is the advantage of this construction through the reduction of maintenance costs, a pleasant stay throughout the year, the long term of the facility life and measurable contribution to the protection of nature and climate. Proposal and example of construction of an eco-lodge as excellent macro ecotourism destination in Montenegro could be Skadar Lake National Park taking into account the contents offered by the lake. There are present natural ambience of the lakewater activities, bird watching, nearness of the sea and the mountains. This area is rich in cultural monuments, traditional table which is rich in fish dishes, and this location is defined by the study The area of Vranjine with Lesendro. In that study, eco-lodge is conceived as a tourism product built from traditional materials, stone that dominates the area. About 25 accommodation units could be built, which are linearly formed along the isohypses, as well as the public zone with the service contents ([www.infobiro.gov.me/vijesti/328\\_15/21520.html?alphabet=lat](http://www.infobiro.gov.me/vijesti/328_15/21520.html?alphabet=lat)). In addition to this, another study of an eco-lodge was done, which would be located in the future on the territory of the Durmitor National Park, on the top called Sedlena beam ([www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=123045](http://www.mrt.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=123045)). Extremely attractive landscape was one of the factors that this area opted for the position of eco lodge. In addition to this settlement, there would develop the site Branis, rich with natural sources of water.

According to the fact that Montenegro is an ecological country, eco lodge as a form of sustainable tourism development can have its final shape in the next few years.

## **ORGANIC FOOD AND ORGANIC PRODUCTION IN MONTENEGRO:**

Organic production is defined as production of healthy food in ecological manner. Organic food production is part of a sustainable development where there is a balanced system between soil, plant, animal and human in food production (Lazic et al., 2008.) Organic production is aimed to produce healthy and quality food in an environmentally responsible manner. In organic farming, the use of agrochemicals is avoided and thereby contributes to the preservation of the environment. Growers apply practical methods to maintain optimum of the soil fertility and its biological activity, as well as increase the biodiversity of the environment by stimulating the spontaneous development of flora and fauna on own farm.

Organic production in Montenegro is developing in the last few years. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Montenegro allowed to the interested manufacturers free certification of the national agency Monteorganica, which, if they have developed export capacity, can ensure them cooperation with its partners and valid certificates on the markets around the world. The Parliament of Montenegro adopted the Law on Organic Agriculture in 2004. This law regulates the production, control of production, processing, transportation, storage, certification and labeling of organic agricultural products. (Law on Organic Production of Montenegro, Official Gazette of RMNE 49-2004). This law allows the creation of brand of products from organic agriculture, as well as the affirmation of local products of high quality. Consumers are interested in the source and type of traditional products and therefore it is very important safe information about the origin and method of production. Procedures for the protection of traditional food products are challenging, slow, and expensive (Vulic, 2006), and the situation is similar with the procedures of certification of organic food production. In Montenegro, there are companies that produce organic food: Eco Meduza-Bijelo Polje, Alexandria-Bijela, Eco Montenegro-Bar, Pirrela-Podgorica, L ars-Podgorica. Marketing of organic food through the tourist offer of Montenegro provides indirect agricultural products. That is the reason to include the offer of



food from organic production in the tourist offer of Montenegro.

Economic Development Strategy of Montenegro is focused on the development of tourism and agriculture. Improvement of tourist offer of organic food is insufficient so far, and the reasons are:

1. small amounts of Montenegro's organic products
2. lack of Montenegro's organic brands
3. high prices of organic products
4. weak and disorganized promotions
5. lack of participation of all actors in distribution channels.

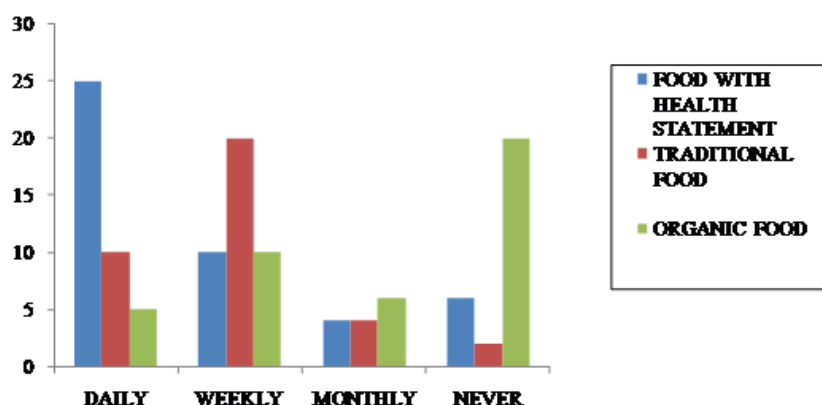
In order to determine the food culture of the Montenegrin population, studies have been done which included ten questions for getting a clear picture of how many Montenegrins consume organic food, traditional food and foods with health statements. The study included 80 questionnaires, face-to-face method, 40 questionnaires in the northern part of Montenegro and 40 questionnaires in the coastal region of Montenegro. The structure of elected persons for the survey was formed as follows: the northern region 40 subjects of which 22 are women (55%), 18 men (45%), the southern region 40 subjects of which 19 are women (47.5%), 21 men (52.5 %). Total of surveyed women are 36 (46.6%), and total of surveyed men are 44 (53.4%). This study showed that the Montenegrins mainly consume foods with health statements. (72 respondents). The population in the northern region (Figure 1) often prefer to consume traditional foods (10 once per day and 20 once per week), because in their opinion, they are healthy, delicious and unique because of the ingredients. Although a large number of organic producers are concentrated in the northern region of Montenegro, still population insufficient know organic food and its significance for the environment, and only six respondents consume organic food once a day and ten once a week). Figure 2 show the results of consuming organic and traditional foods with health statements in the southern region of Montenegro. Ten respondents knew that there are specialized stores, as Biomontenegro in Podgorica, and the others mostly answered that these products can only be purchased directly from the manufacturer (14 responses) or on the markets (16 responses). Among the younger population, which is below the age of 18, it was noted that many have not heard of the term organic food. (of 40 respondents, 29 said that they have never consumed organic foods). This suggests that in families and educational institutions do not pay enough attention to the education of the importance of a healthy diet, there are no organized visits to organic farms. Based on these surveys, it can be concluded that the typical consumer of organic products could have the following characteristics:

- a) to live in a town and to take care of healthy diet, quality and origin of the purchased products;
- b) that he/she is highly educated, between 25-35 years old, very busy
- c) to have good income and a lack of free time.

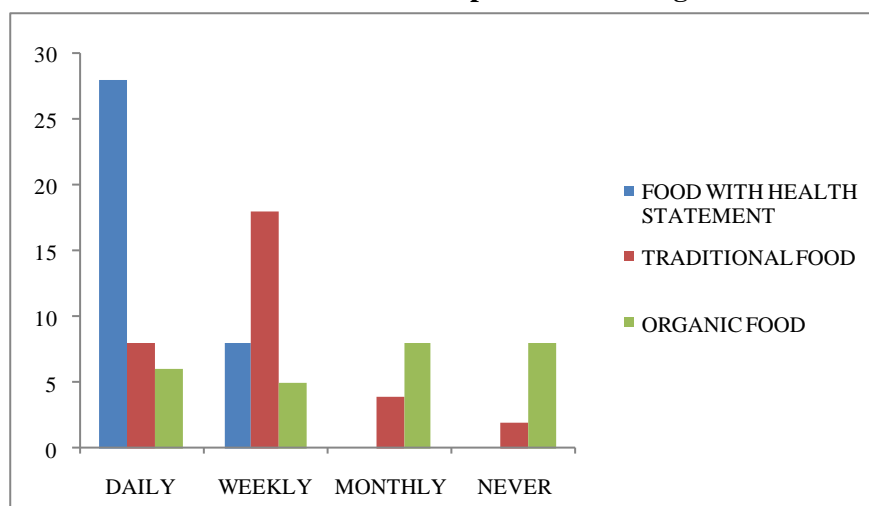
A typical consumer of traditional dishes and traditional products buyer could have the following characteristics:

- a) to live in the countryside and to be mostly engaged in agriculture;
- b) typically these are older people or retired persons, as well as those persons with lower personal income;
- c) unemployed mother and housewife with a lot of free time, who like to prepare homemade traditional dishes by inherited recipes.

**Figure 1. Results about consuming eco food, traditional food and food with the health statements in the northern part of Montenegro**



**Figure 2. Results about consuming eco food, traditional food and food with the health statements in the south part of Montenegro**



## CONCLUSIONS:

Sustainable development is a strategy for further development of modern civilization in the 21st century. All segments of society, economic sectors and activities, and all the elements and components of the development must be sustainable. On that axiom of the third millennium a modern stage of development-sustainable tourism was created, that maximally respects ecological principles and laws. In this way was formed the general trend in the future phases of the development of tourism sustainability.

Tourism as a business and activity is an important factor of the environment changing as it takes place in it and because of it. The most important forms of tourist movements are performed in a preserved, but also very sensitive environment. Sustainable development means that the man preserve the environment on a sustainable basis and to use it as much as its reproduction allows. Montenegro's tourism industry occupies a key position in the economy. From its market orientation and intensity of promotion, attractiveness, service quality, depend jobs and living standards of a large part of population, but further progress general as well as economic strength of the country.

Through the analyzes that are carried, it has been established that ecotourism in the right format is not yet present in Montenegro. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that requires detailed planning and full compliance with the ambiance of the environment in which it develops. Good location is the foundation of eco-tourism and eco-lodge accommodation, and especially are suitable protected areas where with this kind of tourism promotes the evaluation so far inaccessible locations. Eco-lodges are built in the national parks, with strict observance of the principles of environmental protection and energy efficiency. According to the fact that Montenegro is an ecological land, eco-lodges as a form of sustainable tourism development can have its final shape in the next few years.

Organic production is the production of healthy and quality food in an environmentally responsible manner and it contributes to the preservation of the environment. In recent years, more and more is being done to improve tourism offer through the market of organic food, but at the same time organic food production is favoring as an important impetus to the development of certain forms of tourism in Montenegro.

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