

**THE NETWORK OF SMALL AIRPORTS AT THE HINTERLAND OF
ADRIATIC COST (NSA AC) AS A IMPORTANT POTENTIAL ECONOMY
PROJECT**

Darko Petković
Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre at the University of Zenica
Fakultetska 3, Zenica
Bosnia & Herzegovina

Radoje Karadžić
Faculty for Management in Transport and Communications
Donje Luge 120, Berane
Montenegro

ABSTRACT

This paper points out the necessity of detailed planning of the network of small airports at the Adriatic Sea area of south-east Europe (NSA AC). Construction, which must be balanced between the state criteria and end user benefits, must also include sustainable progress based on the environment management. There is a real necessity to build up new airports and, also, to renovate or reconstruct those ones which have already been existing. All of this is needed in regard to providing better traffic network and to have a better impact on business and tourism as well. Due to that, it is necessary to develop an optimal and quality airport network and many less specialised airports and aerodromes, located at the important areas for business and tourism as well.

Keywords: airports, business, tourism, economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Starting from the fact that from the standpoint of the international tourism market the Adriatic cost of South East Europe (AC SEE) is recognized as a charter destination, it derives a significant role of air traffic in the development of tourism, which is a precondition for a competitive position in the tourism market. Rapid tourism development planned for the AC SEE, demanded the formation of a network source markets and more uniform utilization of airport facilities, where it follows the socio-economic justification for the revitalization and development NSA, which is the essential element of quality of tourism offer of the AC SEE region. The necessity of better usage of airports emerges from importance and role that airports have as national and regional starters of economic development. Also, the vitality of airport provides the social improvement and regional accessibility, improvement of tourism, and others. In course of planning, the existing and a possible new traffic network must be included, as well as potential airport users, that means an impact on business, tourism, industry and agriculture has to be taken into account.

2. A POTENTIAL NETWORK OF SMALL AIRPORTS IN THE ADRIATIC SEA SURROUNDINGS OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

The development of NSA AC SEE should encompass Slovenia, Croatia, B&H, Montenegro, Albania, and it is also open for other countries of JIE (Serbia, Greece, Turkey, etc). Namely, the number of small aircrafts increases on a daily basis, and it has surpassed the number of 540 000 small aircrafts.

On one side, the NSA AC SEE (locations Niksic, Ulcinj, Bar, Trebinje, Ljubinje-Ravno, Mostar, Medjugorje, Brac, Losinj, Zadar, Pula, Portoroz, etc.) represents one of the easiest ways for the more and more clients to arrive at certain destinations of the Adriatic coast and its mainland; on the other side, it offers many possibilities of safeguarding the majority of small aircrafts. One of the most important areas of activity for this type of airports would consist of servicing small aircrafts, which have specific procedures of flight checks, repair and flight authorizations. The main users of these services would be the owners of small aircrafts, who are numerous these days in Europe, and to whom the concept of an open EU sky since 2012 has more and more erased the areas of large airports. Namely, the over-tightened airport network and high prices of airport services, traffic breakdowns which occur in their proximity and lead to ever longer approaches to the airport, are becoming a restraining factor of their development and use. On the other side, popular locations, which are situated in the areas of favorable climate conditions (more than 300 sunny days on average for the AC SEE), enable the every day use of airports, which is not possible in most other parts of Europe. On the other side, there is a possibility of parking during the winter months, particularly for the climatically unreliable locations in Switzerland, north of Italy, Austria, Hungary, Great Britain, Russia or other countries of northern Europe. As potential clients, we also have in mind the aircrafts of agricultural aviation, fire prevention aviation and medical aviation, which are necessary, especially in the conditions of underdeveloped road infrastructure. Therefore, we should observe this networks on one side as an additional offer in the area of tourism (development of sport aviation, sailing, parachuting), along with the development of new accommodation capacities and other contents (for example, golf courses, etc.). From a small list of NSA potential locations, it can be seen that it covers the most important touristic locations of certain countries (for example, Mostar, Trebinje, Medjugorje, Ulcinj), which are distanced from the sea coast less than 50 km. The reliability of meteorological conditions is also very important, and it can be offered by a very small number of locations in Europe; the safety is provided by the terrain configuration, and it was recognized long ago, before there were constructed large airports (Niksic); and, at the end, there is the tradition and technical culture in the production and maintenance of aircrafts, not only know in the local frameworks (factories for production and maintenance as “SOKO” in Mostar, “ORAO” in Bijeljina). The necessity of international planning of the airport construction, which must be balanced between the economic criteria and benefit of the users and community on the one hand, and space management based on the sustainable development principles, including all categories of environmental aspects, on the other hand [1]. Possible influences of an airport on the surroundings surpass all its prognosticated area and expands to the land adjacent to the airport. An airport occupies the area from several dozens (smaller aeroplanes) to several hundreds of hectares (larger aeroplanes) [2]. Planing must respect the existing and possible new traffic connections, potential users of the airport – tourism, fishery, industry, agriculture and central services, and estimate contribution of the airport to the total development of the island, and also existence and demographic development of the local population [3].

Table 1. The value forecasts for foreign air transport in Dubrovnik [7]

Year	Forecasting values
2003.	439.321
2004.	497.856
2005.	556.392
2006.	614.927
2007.	673.463
2008.	731.998
2009.	790.534
2010.	849.069

In order to develop better traffic connections and to achieve business and tourism development, there are real necessities for construction of new airports and also for revitalisation and reconstructing of those already existing. For that reason, it is necessary to develop an optimal and quality tertiary airport network, as well as, less specialised airports, heliports, sea plane bases on all important tourist destinations. For example, an aviation infrastructure development in Montenegro would identify activities, that are necessary to be performed, in order to realize all stated above:

1. To equip and modernize airports in Podgorica and Tivat,
2. To revitalize and activate Berane airport,
3. To build or reconstruct the airports in: Nikšić, Žabljak, Ulcinj, Pljevlja, Bar.
4. To enable heliports [5],[6].



Figure 1. Existing airport network in Montenegro [9]

Small sport airports, equipped to accept airplanes, could provide many benefits to the local economy improvement. The realisation of this program would give a great chance to the local managements for increasing the investor interest based on the improved air traffic infrastructure.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AVIATION – POSSIBILITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

General aviation has access to the larger amount of airports than commercial and other aviatiions. Therefore, the travelling time is shorter and the smaller regions can be reached, even though they are not covered by the large airline company flights, for the reason of not being cost reasonable. Modern aircrafts of general aviation have the on-board equipment for approaching and landing, so it is possible that the unequipped small airport makes no problem in their functioning [4]. The private, sport and taxi airplanes can be landed on this kind of runways. To improve alternative airports in the AC SEE, so they can support commercial air traffic, large investments are needed. The state has a task to provide legal foundation by the way of clearly stated conditions and terms on which airports can get licences and certificates, and all the rest is on local managements. This program comprehends cooperation of more ministries; those that must be included are ministry of sport, economy, state management, areal planning, and ministry of defence. There are much more airports that can be used by the general aviation airplanes, than those that can be used by the commercial airline airplanes [8]. Air traffic infrastructure is necessary condition for development of all kind of tourism. This infrastructure can be very expensive from the point of view of local communities, but the financial, and other, benefits will be great, due to the enlargement of tourist numbers. Airport and heliport network development program in the function of tourism development in the AC SEE must be prepared as soon as possible. The most important documents in this case are: Strategic Plan of sustainable tourism development in the AC SEE and Parliament Declaration of ecological state (Montenegro). In the new context of sustainable development, airport infrastructure development finances must be provided, in the way to eliminate all possible bottlenecks in traffic and to achieve balance between air traffic and other kinds of traffic usage. Main goals of air traffic system development are:

1. Improvement of safety and security aimed at saving human life, material value, and state recourses;
2. Integration into European Union and improvement of competitiveness of domestic transport economy;
3. Air traffic service quality improvement;
4. Economic growth stimulation through more efficient and less expensive air transport;

5. Minimization of negative impact of air transport and infrastructure development on the environment and society in general.

It is very important to emphasize that the network of small airports has not only a traffic function but it has to bring to life the former sector of production and maintenance of aircraft, and to boost its economic momentum.



Figure 3. Special influence zone of NSA AC SEE

The economy of this region has to abandon the service sector of military aircraft maintaining, and it has to embrace and develop a sector of small aircraft maintaining in civilian aviation. It is the last chance for the technical expertise and human resources of companies such as “ORAO”, “Zrak”, “Soko”, and others to be used in a small aircraft maintenance program. On the other hand, this network of small airports provides a potential opportunity for different services, and it is similar to the opportunities, that have been very well used for many years, in the sector of small boats (yachts) in Croatia and Slovenia, and recently also in Montenegro.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order to achieve better traffic connections in function of business development, international investments, and especially tourism development, there are real necessities for improving the existing infrastructure and for constructing new smaller airports as well. Equipment and development of airport network can provide to the AC SEE countries the fulfilment of all propositions and they can become well covered by air traffic. Air traffic infrastructure development program in the function of business development in its strategic part must have a strong foundation for future activities. For real success of business tourism as an economic branch, the strategic task must be to make those destinations accessible to business and tourism clients. In our opinion, a small airport network development is not even questionable, it is inevitable. We need to investigate and describe the airport network development process in an innovative way for the reason of having a complete role in business development.

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