

# Repositioning of Lighthouse Tourism by Expanding Offer Content

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The aim of this paper is to elaborate the possibilities of strengthening the attractiveness of lighthouse tourism in the Adriatic. This specialized tourist offer is also recognized in academic circles. Despite its unique attractiveness, lighthouse tourism has experienced stagnation in recent years, requiring innovative strategies for repositioning. The first ten years of successful development and growth were followed by stagnation and a decline in tourist visits. The change in the positive trend followed the suspension of promotional activities for the Stone Lights project. Noticing the problem of stagnation in the number of tourists visiting lighthouses, the authors pose a research question on possible activities to increase the attractiveness of this type of tourist offer.

The methodology includes exploratory research and theoretical analysis of the repositioning of the specialized tourist product. The authors set the framework for the primary research, which they conducted on a random sample of the tourists who stayed in the lighthouses in the Adriatic Sea in July 2022. This paper explores the potential of expanding the content of lighthouse tourism offer by including a diverse range of experiences and activities to attract a wider audience. The authors present the findings of the conducted research, based on which a model for repositioning lighthouse tourism in the Adriatic was developed and discussed.

In an argumentative and critical discourse, the authors present the causes of the current state of lighthouse tourism and we point out possible consequences if the proposed activities are not implemented.

## KEY WORDS

- ~ Lighthouses
- ~ Tourism
- ~ Repositioning
- ~ Specialized tourist product

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Croatian lighthouses are part of Europe's cultural and historical heritage and a resource with great tourism and marketing potential on the global market (Chylińska, 2021; Jakšić Stojanović and Šerić, 2019). This specialized tourist offer requires the highest ecological standards, which is why it is considered sustainable in the long term. These standards limit the number of tourists who can stay in each of the lighthouse buildings at the same time (Šerić, Pavlinović, 2011). The same standards determine the rules of conduct for tourists during their stay in the lighthouses, the model for the collection, sorting, removal, and disposal of waste, the use of electricity from renewable sources, the disposal and decomposition of sanitary water (septic tanks and biopits) for use in gardens.

The ecological features of the offer have contributed to a strong publicity and a positive attitude of the general tourist public. Thanks to the implemented ecological standards, the project was awarded the prestigious Eco-Oscar in the Tourism and Environment category (Šerić and Jakšić Stojanović, 2022). Reports about lighthouse tourism in Croatia have been published in the mass media (National Geographics, Le Figaro, Playboy, etc.). Finally, lighthouse tourism is also recognized in academic circles as a special form of tourism (Buhalis, 2022). The global professional public followed with interest the many innovative technical solutions applied by the Plovput engineers in this project. The ideas and solutions stimulated the commercialization of the lighthouses and the surrounding countries (Jakšić Stojanović and Šerić, 2020).

On the territory of the Republic of Croatia, there are 48 of these lighthouses, but the updating of the land registries after the independence of the Republic of Croatia resulted in the fact that the ownership rights to some of the land on which the lighthouses are located were not registered with the Republic of Croatia, but with the local self-government units. For this reason, several legal procedures have been initiated in the past fifteen years to transfer the ownership of these land plots to the Republic of Croatia. Until these procedures have been completed, Plovput cannot independently invest in the tourist transformation of these lighthouse buildings due to its legal status. However, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has approved the leasing of the lighthouse buildings for which land registration is being carried out, for 5-10 years through public tenders for tourism marketing. In this process, ecological and other standards are prescribed (renovation under the supervision of the Department for Conservation of Cultural Heritage - status of cultural and historical monuments). As a result of this approval, lighthouse tourism offers a different quality. The feature film *Houses of Light*, a story about Croatian lighthouses, filmed at the locations of many Croatian lighthouses during 2020-2021, featuring actors Franco Nero and James Earl Jones, also contributed to the global visibility. The premiere screenings of this film in 2022 in Tel Aviv, New York, Berlin, Brussels, Los Angeles, and other metropolises brought three international Grand Prix.

Despite all the positive experiences in the first years of commercialization of the project, public relations and activities were discontinued with the departure of the author and project manager from Plovput in 2008. Further development of the project was also hindered by unclear provisions of the amended Law on Maritime Property. They made it possible to charge an additional tax on commercial activities in the field of maritime property. This decision, which was first made in 2022, is legally illogical because lighthouses are not located in an area that is considered a maritime property. This additional financial tax, which is not charged in the tourism industry of other Mediterranean countries, poses a threat to the survival of lighthouse tourism as accommodation prices would have to be increased significantly.

In recent years, lighthouse tourism has stagnated and tourist visits have declined due to the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Stone Lights project is now located in the graveyard zone due to an insufficient support to the project from the relevant Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Additional negative publicity for lighthouse tourism will potentially come from litigation brought by the concessionaires of individual lighthouses as a result of the special levy. In response to the observed stagnation of tourist flows to lighthouses, the authors pose a research question: What activities can be undertaken to increase tourist interest in this type of specialized tourism offering?

The results of previous and this research support the thesis that the national management of tourism development in post-transition countries should pay more attention to the sustainability of these valuable resources and cultural-historical heritage (Jakšić Stojanović et al. 2020; Šerić et al. 2020; Šerić, 2019; Režić and Šerić, 2014; Šerić et al. 2012; Šerić, Luković, 2010). All this points to the need for repositioning lighthouse tourism.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Future perspective of lighthouse tourism

Lighthouse tourism represents the commercialization and tourist valorization of lighthouse heritage (MacDonald, 2018; Jakšić-Stojanović and Šerić, 2020; Chylińska, 2021). In the past, lighthouses were part of the safety system of navigation and represented a symbol of the maritime prestige of the state (Šerić, Luković, 2010). Their importance as aids to navigation has decreased, but interest in them as tourist attractions has significantly increased. There is a special public interest in lighthouses as icons of tourist destinations. Many lighthouses around the world are open to the public, but few of them offer unique accommodation in charming and picturesque settlements with spectacular sea and panoramic views like the lighthouses in the Adriatic. Larger lighthouse buildings can be museums, restaurants, libraries, etc. In recent years, some lighthouses offer innovative products related to the lighthouse (organization of idyllic weddings, birthdays, receptions and other celebrations). Although most lighthouses today are automated, some of them still have lighthouse keepers, who offer tourists an authentic and unique experience. Lighthouses are suitable for various tourist programs such as photo safaris, hiking and biking tours, bird watching, fishing, diving, visits to national parks and historical sites. Lighthouse tourists usually look for new, unique, special, and authentic experiences and adventures. They are interested in cultural and historical heritage and like to stay in a natural, often isolated, and secluded environment (Meža and Šerić, 2014). There are two main types of these tourists. Ordinary tourists are interested in some general information about the lighthouses and who enjoy their surroundings and additional content at the destination. There are several subtypes of ordinary tourists, depending on their primary motive for visiting (adventure, nature, culture, luxury, etc.), and this must be taken into account when planning and developing a better lighthouse tourism offer. The second type of tourist is interested in the lighthouse as a structure, its lighting technology, history, architecture, etc. For this type of tourists, completely different programs are required, which should be taken into account when preparing strategic development plans for lighthouse tourism in a particular destination (Mihic and Šerić, 2008).

Appropriate maintenance of lighthouse buildings to sustainability standards requires large financial investments. However, there is a possibility of financial support from EU structural funds and programs to preserve and protect cultural heritage. The lack of personnel on the lighthouses after automation, natural conditions such as climate and weather fluctuations, and the physical and chemical properties of water have left many closed lighthouses around the world at risk of damage. Today, they are in a state of decay even though they are not used for tourist purposes (Jakšić Stojanović and Šerić, 2019). Many studies have clearly demonstrated the economic return on investment in the preservation, protection, valorization, and promotion of cultural heritage when the standards of responsible and sustainable marketing are applied (Jakšić Stojanović et al. 2020; Ritchie, 1998). Lighthouse tourism should be based on the principles of sustainability and only in this way it can contribute to the attractiveness of the country, its better positioning on the global tourism market and the differentiation of its tourist offer (Šerić, 2008; Šerić et al. 2002). Lighthouse tourism has been recognized as a unique and exclusive experience. It has also become a perfect tool to differentiate the tourist offer and expand the tourist season and the destination's attractiveness throughout the year. Lighthouse tourism can help attract tourists and bring many benefits to various stakeholders. It can create a source of revenue for the state, open new employment opportunities for local people, increase the demand for accommodation, local transportation, food and beverages, and authentic souvenirs made by the local people. Tour operators and other travel agencies nowadays use lighthouse tourism to differentiate their offerings. This type of tourism also offers a wide range of opportunities for international cooperation.

However, there are some threats: inadequate treatment by the national government, lack of high qualified experts, strict requirements for natural and cultural heritage in the lighthouse areas, etc. Vacations in nature, with a small number of people and in remote and isolated places have become more attractive and interesting than ever before (Melović et al. 2022; Šerić et al. 2022; Šerić and Jakšić Stojanović, 2020). Some other types of tourism such as cultural, adventure, nature, eco, and sports tourism could be related to lighthouse tourism (Jakšić Stojanović AND Šerić, 2020; Šerić et al. 2020; Šerić, 2018). Under these circumstances, the interest in lighthouse tourism could increase significantly in the future. In order to make this segment of the tourism offer more attractive, it is necessary to work on the creation of new authentic products around lighthouses, which are based on the principles of sustainable development and can be attractive on the global tourism market. The potential of lighthouse tourism is still considerable, but it is necessary to reposition the offer by expanding the content to bring it out of the graveyard zone (Bulović and Šerić, 2021; Vitner-Marković and Šerić, 2011). Following these assumptions, a complex research was conducted to determine and argue marketing guidelines in the context of the research problem - a proposal for a repositioning model of lighthouse tourism by expanding the content of the offer.

## 2.2. Repositioning of a specialized tourist product

The authors practice the repositioning of a specialized tourist product in order to strengthen the visibility of the offer and, additionally encourage the attraction and loyalty of tourists (MacDonald, 2018; Šerić, 2017). The primary focus in this process should be on the content, not on the brand or the way of promoting the specialized tourist product (Melović et al. 2022; Šerić et al. 2020; Šerić et al. 2015; Šerić et al. 2012). The aim is to create additional leverage in the market communication. An additional argument for repositioning a tourist offer today is the changed awareness of the tourist population due to COVID-19 pandemic (Šerić et al. 2022; Šerić et al 2021). In the practice of repositioning a specialized tourist product, the authors practice creating new impressions of the content of the offer, changing the market niche, or a combination of both. The choice of the option depends on the assessment of the long-term perspective of maintaining the intensity of attention of the tourist audience (Šerić et al. 2020; Šerić, 2018; Šerić et al. 2010). It is advisable to change the niche if there is a niche with a smaller number of competitive contents, considering the preferences of tourists who choose such offers. Changing the impression of the content means expanding the tourist offer. By implementing additional and supplementary content, a change in the niche can be understood. The procedure is similar to positioning, but with a preliminary investigation of the causes that led to a decline in tourist interest and visits. The selection of a new market niche is made by ranking possible options and considering the identified strengths and weaknesses of the expanded specialized tourist product. The expansion of the offer can be done through additional or supplementary content, but also through their combination (Buhalis, 2022). Additional content presupposes something significantly different from the existing offer. The supplementary content serves to strengthen the attractiveness of the existing content of the offer. The newly chosen niche should be consistent with the vision and mission of the tourist offer, not necessarily with the business vision and mission of the tourist entity (which is one of the possible reasons for the need to reposition the specialized tourist product). In some authors' practice, it has been shown that repositioning in a niche with many competitors involves higher costs of managing the tourist offer (Melović et al, 2022; Šerić et al, 2012; Perišić and Šerić, 2010). The authors practice the repositioning of a specialized tourist product in five steps: analysis of strategic broadcast markets, selection of key features of the identity of the offer to be communicated more intensively, selection of a niche, definition of the promotional mix, and critical analysis following the initial reactions of the tourist audience. It is useful to identify the reasons for the order in which competitive offers are positioned in the considered niche. Understanding the competitors' engagement in a particular niche helps to clarify one's own dilemmas (Rozga et al, 2013; Šerić and Petričević, 2009). Highlighting the expanded content of the tourist offer additionally attracts the attention of the tourist audience. Choosing a new niche opens the prospect of attracting the attention of new tourist segments.

### 3. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The research was conducted by surveying tourists staying in Croatian lighthouses in July 2022, using a convenient sample. The questionnaire was distributed through social networks.

#### 3.1. Survey of tourists who stayed in a lighthouse

Out of 120 questionnaires collected from tourists staying in the Adriatic lighthouses in 2022, 73 were completed in full, and the data from these questionnaires were collected and processed. It was found that the tourists' first associations with the lighthouses were related to the impressions they gained from viewing photos and video clips about the places where they were staying. In general, the lighthouses that the respondents first associated with the offer are Palagruža (n=31; 42.47%) and Veli Rat (n=26; 35.62%). More than a fifth of respondents named Host (n=16; 21.92%) and Porer (n=15; 20.55%), while for 14 respondents Pločica and Sušac (n=14; 19.18%) were the association. Other responses mention Savudrija, Struga, Stončica, Tajer, Sućuraj, and others. 42 respondents (57.53%) consider the existing model of tourism valorization of lighthouses as cultural and historical assets in a sensitive natural environment appropriate, 27 respondents (36.99%) are unsure of their position, and 4 respondents (5.48%) believe that the existing standards should be raised. Opposing views of respondents differ statistically significantly only at the threshold significance level of 10% ( $\chi^2=3.26$ ;  $P=0.071$ ), which means that the existing standards of commercialization are also at an appropriate level.

The majority of respondents associate the lighthouse with solitude and silence (n=25; 34.25%), a slightly smaller number of respondents associate it with navigation safety (n=13; 17.81%), an attractive landscape (n=11; 15.07%), cultural and historical heritage (n=12; 16.44%), and only a few to tourist or nautical destinations (n=5; 6.85%).

The majority of respondents were motivated to book an apartment at the lighthouse by the features of a peaceful, remote, quiet destination and seclusion (n=46; 63.01%), a slightly smaller number of respondents were attracted by the landscape and the underwater world (n=36; 49.32%). The possibility of meeting and socializing with other lovers of lighthouse tourism was an incentive for a smaller number of respondents (n=8; 10.96%).

According to Likert scales for evaluating attitudes, respondents highly valued stories and legends related to the location of a particular lighthouse, an overnight stay in a century-old building, an attractive and rich underwater world, as additional attractive features, and the possibility of freedom of behavior was also important to a smaller number of respondents. Regarding the additional possibilities that they thought about during their stay at the lighthouse, the respondents rated privacy and peace as the most important, followed by the unique experience of being alone in isolation, and the possibility of getting to know the local culture and gastronomy, while photography and underwater research were rated as somewhat less important. Of the more important features of the existing offer, the most important were the apartments equipped with additional equipment (n=31; 42.47%), and the attractiveness of the landscape and the specifics of the location (n=32; 43.84%). Although with a smaller number of respondents, the impression it will leave on friends was rated as important (n=15; 20.55%).

Regarding the additional features of the offer that significantly attracted them, the respondents consider the most important thing is that the apartments are categorized, even though it is a type of Robinson tourism, as well as the different prices of accommodation at different lighthouses. In addition, they rated the architectural features of the lighthouse building as important. The possibility of recreation and distance from the civilization are important to them, so they feel extra safe, and detailed information about the lighthouse and its surroundings about which they are informed before booking, is also important to them. The intensity of significance was tested with the Wilcoxon test for one independent sample, which confirmed the mentioned features of the offer, which are recommended to be additionally highlighted in the promotion.

LABEL	ASSERTION	P	CONCLUSION
A	Architectural features of the lighthouse building	0.311	Indifferent answer
B	The distance of the lighthouse from civilization, the complexity of the arrival and the price of the transfer	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
C	Landscape attractiveness of the location.	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
D	The impression of personal safety given the location and distance of the lighthouse from civilization	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
E	Information about the location and details of the stay	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
F	Equipment of the apartment with additional equipment	0.134	Indifferent
G	Categorization of apartments	0.082	Indifferent
H	Price of accommodation	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
I	Recreational activities except swimming and diving	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
J	Communication during the selection and reservation of the selected lighthouse	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
K	The impression you will leave on your friends and acquaintances by staying at the lighthouse	<b>0.022</b>	Not important
L	Identity of a tourist stay at the lighthouse	0.100	Indifferent
M	Promotion of tourist stays at lighthouses	0.055	Indifferent
N	Ecological standards and environmental preservation of the specific lighthouse location	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
O	Ecological standards of accommodation at lighthouses	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	Important
P	Different prices of accommodation at different lighthouses	0.274	Indifferent

Table 1. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Regarding recommendations for ways to promote this specialized tourist offer, the largest number of respondents suggested that they are intensively used to strengthen the attractiveness of the image of the national tourist offer (n=38; 52.05%), for the needs of the film industry (n=33; 45.21 %), for the organization of

smaller exclusive private events (n=24; 32.88%), and as an argument for declaring the immediate surroundings of Adriatic lighthouses a protected nature park (n=21; 28.77%). In addition, it is suggested to use the lighthouse in educational research programs, for exhibitions, permanent multimedia installations, exclusive eno and gastronomic events, archaeological and speleological research, and for various forms and types of sustainable sports and nautical tourism.

### 3.2. Research results and the proposal of a repositioning model of lighthouse tourism offer

The research results indicate that lighthouse tourism in the Adriatic is in a phase of stagnation. Repositioning this specialized tourist offer by introducing additional and supplementary content is the only way of long-term sustainability. Following the confirmed potential of lighthouse tourism, according to the present results, changes and intensive marketing communication are necessary to strengthen its market position. Lighthouse tourism in the Adriatic was designed and launched primarily for the purpose of restoring devastated lighthouse buildings. This aspect of social responsibility of the project has become even more important with the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union because the Adriatic lighthouses are also European cultural heritage. Lighthouse tourism is perceived as a stereotype regardless of which lighthouse one stays in, although the respondents perceive different characteristics of individual lighthouses (accommodation capacity, building and tower architecture, environment, etc.). The characteristics of an individual lighthouse, along with additional and supplementary content, should be the starting point for new marketing stories. It is recommended that the existing marketing potential of each lighthouse be revised and that in the future only the key ones and the general features be removed from the promotion. Swimming and passive recreation in isolated locations are features that are currently recognized in the lighthouse tourism offer. Such an image is only a modest version of Robinson tourism. It needs to be changed because Robinson tourism does not belong to the premium tourist products. A premium tourist product implies added value. In the case of lighthouse tourism, the added value should be based on additional and supplementary content as the basis of the premium surcharge in the price.

The resources of lighthouse tourism indicated by the research results should be the basis for developing supplementary and additional content. They should be customised for each lighthouse. The impact of the perennial global pandemic on tourists' purchasing decisions shows that isolation and seclusion during a tourist stay have become an important feature of the tourism offer, but not what positions it competitively. Attractive underwater world is a prerequisite for the development of various additional and supplementary contents in the lighthouse tourism offer. The care should be taken to ensure that the extensive range of new contents does not compromise the basic characteristics of seclusion, tranquilly, and recreation, which are important to tourists. Diving tourism is acceptable (autonomous diving, snorkelling, underwater photography, and underwater fishing). As part of the basic Plovput activity, acquiring certain skills can be a starting point for developing additional and supplementary content (use of radio communications, participation in hydrometeorological measurements with lighthouse keepers, acquisition of boating skills, etc.). Other options include free climbing, photo safaris, and more. Ideas related to establishing lighthouse heritage interpretation centres in larger lighthouse buildings would enhance the sense of exclusivity of lighthouse tourism. Many lighthouse visitors are not familiar with the broader aspects of lighthouse heritage and tradition in the Adriatic.

### 3.3. Model proposal

Research findings have shown that by redefining the offer of tourist accommodation in the lighthouses of the Adriatic, the interest of the global tourist public in this specialized tourist offer can be rekindled. It is necessary to periodically analyze the existing offer and redefine it with additional and supplementary content according to the current tourism trends. The existing concept of tourism valorization of the Adriatic lighthouses is exhausted and is not even adequate to the potential of the lighthouse heritage. Since this offer is based on various resources - cultural and historical heritage, indigenous customs and traditions, the diversity of the preserved landscape, the possibilities for additional and supplementary contents that need to be communicated

as new features are varied. The existing concept of lighthouse tourism in the Adriatic lighthouses cannot ensure the growth of visits as it is based exclusively on staying in seclusion in an ecologically preserved environment and swimming, which gives it a seasonal feature. The implementation as well as the promotion of new additional and supplementary content is essential to maintain and increase the existing demand for lighthouse tourism. The added value should be presented through additional and supplementary contents, which were previously the result of improvisations of the guests and the lighthouse keeper. This content should be systematically planned and customized for each lighthouse individually. When designing the additional and supplementary content, it is recommended to focus on the lighthouse heritage, local customs and gastronomy, and active recreation.



Figure 1. The model proposal.

The most economical solution of maintaining lighthouse tourism for Plovput is to take care of it because of its logistical infrastructure and experience, but it is necessary to find a competent person for marketing communications, whether through insourcing or outsourcing, primarily publicity, which has so far proven to be the most effective promotional activity in the life-cycle of the project. Maintaining Plovput's authority over lighthouse tourism is also a guarantee of maintaining the existing and raising the same ecological standards that are an important feature of this specialized tourist offer. The diversity of resources on which lighthouse tourism is based is a prerequisite for the development of various story concepts that may be of interest to the media and journalists. The concession of the lighthouse under the public-private partnership model is justified where this activity would not be economical for Plovput or where it can be legally challenged (unsettled situation in the land registers). The new Law on Maritime Property should limit the introduction of additional tax reliefs for lighthouse tourism, as it is already subject to all tax obligations that apply to other tourism businesses.

Institutional tourism stakeholders in the Republic of Croatia should be encouraged to use lighthouse tourism and brand the Stone Lights more flexibly to differentiate the national tourism offer. The Croatian government should also encourage the relevant ministries (Ministry of Tourism and Sport and Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure) to use this project to promote national identity and to contribute more actively to a further development of lighthouse tourism.

### 3.4. Limitations and future research recommendations

Limitations of the research refer to the relatively short time of conducting the research and the small sample of respondents. It is recommended that the research be conducted periodically over a longer period of time. The research could be extended to other tourists in the future to investigate their interest in this type of specialized product. This research focuses only on lighthouses in the Adriatic with the specific management model of the Plovput Company, so it may not be applicable to other destinations. The size of the sample can be considered a limitation of the research, but it is a specialized type of tourism, which implies very limited accommodation capacities and a smaller number of tourist segments. The findings could be a useful platform for future research into various specialized tourist products as the methodological approach has proven to be useful, and the presented proposed model of repositioning and rejuvenization of the specialized tourist product is a suitable starting point for new research in that sphere.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The repositioning of lighthouse tourism through the expansion of the content of the offer has the potential to revitalize this sector and create new opportunities for the coastal communities. Regardless of the cultural and historical aspect related to lighthouse tourism in Croatia, this resource is no longer sufficient in the changed interests of tourists to ensure a satisfactory visit to lighthouses. As a result of these findings and other researches of the authors, it is clear that the phenomenon of additional and supplementary content in any tourist offer should be given much more marketing and practical importance than has been practiced so far. By integrating diverse experiences such as heritage conservation, cultural events, eco-tourism, and adventure tourism, lighthouse tourism can attract a broader audience, fostering increased interest and economic growth. Moreover, the repositioning of lighthouse tourism can contribute to the overall socio-economic well-being of coastal communities by creating new job opportunities, enhancing tourism infrastructure, and promoting the cultural and historical significance of these iconic structures. Ultimately, a comprehensive and diversified approach to lighthouse tourism can breathe new life into this unique sector, leading to its long-term growth and success and further enriching the experiences of both tourists and local residents alike.

The findings of the research proved that the neglect of promotional activities is the root cause of the stagnation of tourists' interest. Guidelines have been suggested according to which it is possible to successfully reposition this specialized tourist offer. The concept proposed by the presented model for this purpose is also applicable for other specialized types of tourism, which represents the fundamental scientific contribution of the paper. A modest opus of published scientific papers on the management of specialized tourism products makes

this contribution even more concrete. The applied contribution of the research is argued by the growing trend of specialized tourist content in the offer of the Republic of Croatia and in the Mediterranean. The presented guidelines and suggestions in the management of specialized tourist products are an important prerequisite for maintaining competitiveness and tools that can be used to maintain attractiveness and a satisfactory annual tourist visit. The findings of the research are valuable in a scientific and applied sense because they indicate a changed state of tourists' consciousness when choosing a tourist destination after many years of COVID-19 pandemic.

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