

## **Logistics Chain Model of Bee Tourism**

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### **Abstract**

*Tourism has developed intensively in recent decades due to various social and economic trends. Rural tourism, which includes various tourist activities in rural areas (domestic tourism, ecotourism, recreational, adventure, sports, health, artistic, cultural tourism, bee tourism, etc.) is gaining more and more importance. The main tool for effective realization of the flows of people, goods and information in the supply chain of rural tourism and increasing the competitiveness of tourist products is logistics. Logistics provides a tangible and intangible basis for rural tourism services. As suppliers of raw materials and finished products to other participants, but also as creators of their own tourism offer, households are significant participants in the supply chain and generators of logistical flows in bee tourism. The specific form of rural tourism related to household and agricultural production is called agritourism. This article analyzes the logistic vertigo model of bee tourism and the role of actors in it.*

*Keywords: bee tourism, beekeeping, logistics chain, tourism value chain*

*JEL Code: Z32*

### **Introduction**

Tourism is considered one of the important sectors of the Bulgarian economy. Its potential is evidenced by its contribution to gross domestic product, exports and foreign exchange earnings, as well as job creation. The high territorial concentration, combined with the uniformity of the product and the gaps in the marketing of the tourist destinations, reduce the chances that the current growth rate will continue in the medium and long term. The National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development, developed in accordance with the National Strategy for Regional Development (NSRD), aims to achieve dynamic and balanced development of individual planning areas. She sees tourism not only as a means of "protecting the natural and cultural heritage", but also as a means of "strengthening the ties between cities and regions and strengthening socio-economic cohesion". The object of study in the development is bee tourism, the subject is the possibilities for its development in Bulgaria. The purpose of the development is to present a model of the logistics chain of bee tourism on the basis of a theoretical study and, on this basis, to derive the features of its structure and the role of the participants in the context of sustainable development. The goal is achieved by the implementation of the following research tasks:

- Showing the nature and features of bee tourism.
- Synthesized model of the logistics chain of bee tourism.
- Presentation of the role of participants in the logistics chain.

### **1. Peculiarities of bee tourism.**

Bee tourism or Apis tourism, (the name comes from the Latin name for the honey bee Apis). It is a form of tourism that is associated with the culture and traditions of rural communities and regions and can be considered one of the most sustainable ways of development and niche tourism. Bee tourism is related to beekeeping as a traditional profession and to bee products in an ecological, nutritional and medical aspect. Activities related to bee tourism include visits to open-air bee museums and bee museums, where tourists have the opportunity to observe the work of the beekeeper. To learn about the method of honey production, its properties and specifics. Including tasting of different types of honey and getting to know other bee products (pollen, wax, bee bread, royal jelly

and others). To observe how bee families, live, to recognize the ecological relationship between man and bee. Bee tourism can be developed on the basis of the already existing open-air bee farms in the forest in nature. But above all, the product can be formed by the owners of apiaries, bee farms, agro and ecotourism farms with home apiaries. Another variety of bee tourism is bee therapy (api therapy). Api therapy also called bee therapy is a natural therapy that uses products produced by honey bees for medicinal or health benefits. These products include honey, beeswax, royal jelly, pollen, propolis and bee venom. Api therapy may use a combination of these products depending on the problem they are treating. The development of api tourism is an opportunity to activate rural areas, to create new jobs and to promote the region's culture and tradition. A country that is a leader in the apitourism market is Slovenia, where bee tourism has become one of the branches of tourism that is very attractive to both domestic and foreign tourists. In the last 5 years, the dynamic development of this type of tourism has been registered in Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine and Spain. From everything described above, we can derive some more important elements of bee tourism:

- Bees (bee families);
- Bee products;
- A professional beekeeper who takes care of the bees;
- Beekeepers and their beehives must be registered as organic beekeeping farms. In this way, the location of the bee colonies will be in nature in the forest;
- Tour operators and travel agents;
- Suppliers of machines and consumables needed for raising bee families;
- Tourists, users of the service and products derived from bee tourism.

Nature and honey plants can be added to the elements of bee tourism, without which bees will not be able to function and therefore bee tourism cannot develop and exist. More generally, it can be said that nature without bees and bees without nature cannot exist. As for important animal species, they top the list. They pollinate 70 of the 100 or so crops that feed about 90% of the earth's population. Their disappearance will lead to the loss of all plants that bees pollinate. This means that a world without bees would have a hard time feeding its 7 billion people. Supermarkets would only have half the amount of fruit and vegetables we have now.

We can tell that bee tourism relate to the specialized types of tourism. Specialized tourism can be considered and defined in a broad and narrow sense.

- In a broad sense, it is the definition known by D. Engel of "applied tourism", corresponding to specialized tourist market niches and focused on the assessed needs and interests of a certain group of tourists. Such a definition expands the group of specialized tourism and any type of tourism that is not conceptual can be referred to it, including mass sea tourism and mass mountain tourism.
- In a narrow sense, specialized tourism is understood as a trip subject to determining the assessed interests of the client. And this basis constitutes a specialized trip in terms of the means of transport, accommodation and dining facilities, entertainment facilities, age and ability of the users, etc<sup>1</sup>. In this case, the group of specialized tourism is reduced to varieties of hobby tourism such as yacht tourism, ornithological tourism, hunting tourism, bee tourism, etc. (Marinov, 2011)

Recent studies have shown great interest in the pollination service provided by bees, as they generate intangible goods and services. This increased interest in bees is due to the fact that multifactorial causes are leading to a global decline in the number of pollinating insects, including bees of various species. Pollination is critical to ecology, economy and society, and is of critical

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<sup>1</sup> Marinov, S. Modern types of tourism. Varna: Science and Economics 2011, p.47.

importance to crop productivity. In this context, there are still benefits generated by bees that are not recognized because they are clearly intangible and remain to be explored. The main benefits generated by honey bees and beekeeping can be grouped into three main blocks: environmental, socio-economic and socio-cultural. These blocks are mainly studied individually; however, it has become necessary to study them in a related way, as some of these utilities can be viewed from a triple point of view, thereby increasing the synergies they produce individually.

## **2. Logistics chain model of bee tourism.**

The logistics chain of bee tourism starts with the bee farm and ends with, in this case, we will call it the api-tourist. But let's look here at what stages the formed tourist product goes through to reach the so-called api-tourist. The beekeeping with its production capacity and number of hives forms the tourism product. In turn, this product is formed by the tourist services it can offer, which can be:

- Specific tourist services (STS).
- Main tourist services (MTS).
- Additional tourist services (ATS).

In turn, specific tourist services can be:

- Demonstrations of how to extract honey.
- Demonstrations of how bees are kept.
- Visits to bee museums, listening to a lecture about the life of bees.
- Watching movies about bees.
- Getting to know and tasting the different bee products.
- Api-therapy with bee products and bees.

The main tourist services can be:

- transport to the bee farm and back.
- accommodation in and near the apiary (farm).
- feeding in the bee farm and proximity to it.
- tour guide.
- and other.

Additional tourist services can be many and most diverse. Trade in bee products may fall under these services. Currency exchange, various entertainment and entertainment during the stay in the apiary (farm, complex).

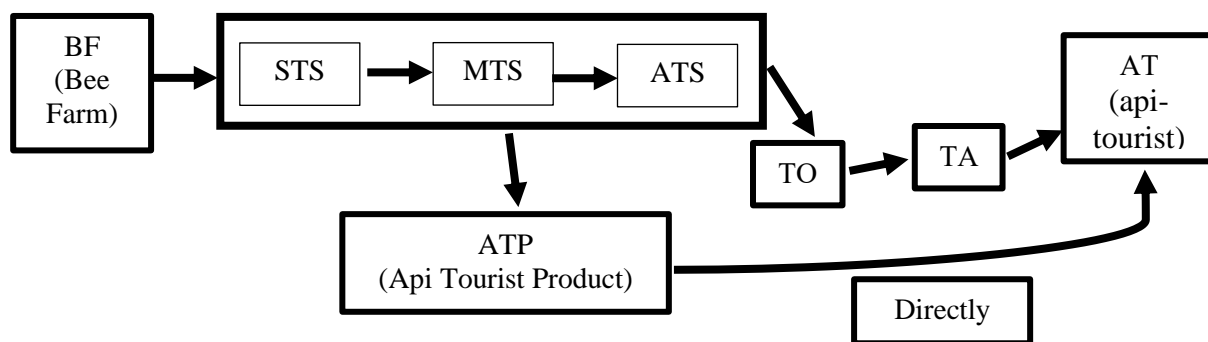
Here, after the tourist product is formed, comes the role of the tour operator (TO), who prepares organized group or individual tourist trips with a total price. This is also where the tour agent (TA) appears, who offers the prepared tourist trip to potential customers, or as we called them above, api-tourists.

In turn, we can divide tourists into two types. Those who will visit bee tourism for educational purposes. And tourists who will visit it for health purposes, to be treated with bee therapy. We can also divide tourists according to the following criteria:

- motivation.
- behavior.
- gender
- age
- and others.

Besides through tour operators and travel agents, bee tourism can be directly offered to the api-tourist. Through internet advertising. Farm website, social media, flyers, network marketing, and other direct marketing methods.

The logistics chain model would look like this.



*Figure 1. Logistic chain model of bee tourism  
Source: figure compiled by the author*

### 3. Role of participants in the logistics chain of bee tourism.

In order for bee tourism to reach the api-tourist, each of the participants in the logistics chain of bee tourism must play their no less important role. In this way, the finished tourist product is obtained which is offered to tourists.

Let's start with beekeeping where honeybees and beekeeping belong to a large enterprise, where the managers are the beekeepers, the workers are the bees, and the products generated are ecosystem goods and services that are tangible and intangible. Bees play an important role in beekeeping, without which we would not have sweet honey, propolis, royal jelly and other bee products. But let's not forget that bees also pollinate 70 of the 100 or so crops that feed about 90% of the earth's population. And here comes the important role of people, and more specifically beekeepers, who play the role of managers in beekeeping. It is up to them to develop and grow the farm and to protect the bees. But not only beekeepers, all people should think about the fact of how important bees are and their conservation.

When we have a working bee farm, after it follows the tourist product, service. As already mentioned, they can be specific, basic and additional tourist services. All these services can form organized group or individual tourist trips with a total price. Here comes the role of the next participant in the logistics chain, the tour operator or tour agent. The tour operator works with the tourist product offered by the bee farm, adds additional tourist services and in a way prepares an organized trip with a total price. Which trip can include a variety of things such as:

- export to and from the apiary.
- visiting other tourist attractions on the way to the bee farm.
- nutrition.
- tourist service, tour guide.
- and other additional services.

Next in the logistics chain is the tour agent. It offers the api-tourist the trips (excursions) organized by the tour operator through its pages and sites on the Internet. It also takes a direct approach like fliers.

The last role in the logistics chain of bee tourism is that of the Api-tourist. Tourists may have different motivations for visiting this type of tourism. You may want to visit it for educational purposes, to learn more about bees and their products, how important a role they play in the earth's eco system and other interesting facts related to beekeeping, bees and nature. One of them is that pollination is critical to ecology, economy and society, and is extremely important to crop productivity. The other motivation of the tourist may be to visit bee tourism, it may be for the purpose of api-therapy, that is, health reasons.

Apitherapy is treatment with bee products (honey, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, wax, bee

venom). It is widely used all over the world as a natural method of healing the body. Such therapy is used by many people who wish to be cured of serious diseases, and also simply to increase their immunity. The method of stinging the problem place of the body by bees is the most universal and fast effective treatment of various types of deviations from the normal state of health. Apitherapy has a positive effect on the whole organism. When treating a mental illness, the patient's self-esteem improves in general, the mood improves, the immune system improves, and also his activity and vitality. In children, treatment methods using bee products are recommended for the purpose of harmonizing the mental state.

### **Conclusion**

Logistics plays an important role in the planning, organization and realization of services in the field of rural tourism and agritourism. To provide a tangible and intangible basis for tourism services to households and other users in the supply chain. The analysis of logistics flows, processes and activities in the supply chain is important both for the purpose and achievement of business benefits of tourism service providers and in the context of optimizing logistics flows in rural areas developing their tourism offer and economy. Rural and agritourism are actively developing and gaining importance, but logistics research in these areas is very scarce, although the effectiveness and efficiency of tourism services depend on the effectiveness of logistics processes and activities in the realization of flows of people, goods and information. Therefore, it is very important to prepare and choose a good bee tourism logistics chain model.

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