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## ACHIEVED LEVEL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA – THE CASE OF SPA DESTINATIONS

### Abstract

*Sustainable tourism is a dominant theoretical paradigm and the most acceptable solution to the challenges of modern tourism development. The main goal of the paper is to examine the achieved level of development of sustainable tourism in the Republic of Serbia on the example of spa destinations. Spa destinations are one of the three most developed forms of tourism in the Republic of Serbia with a long tradition of development. The paper analysed the most developed and recognizable destinations: Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja, Vrdnik Banja, Palić Banja, Bukovička Banja and Koviljača Banja. To assess the achieved level of sustainability, indicators developed by the European Union were used: economic, ecological, social, cultural and indicators of tourist satisfaction with the destination. The research results show that the achieved level of development is not aligned with sustainable development. The paper provides recommendations on how to improve the development of tourism and harmonize it with the principles of sustainable tourism.*

**Keywords:** sustainable tourism, spa destinations, development, Republic of Serbia

**JEL classification:** Z32, O11

## ДОСТИГНУТИ НИВО РАЗВОЈА ОДРЖИВОГ ТУРИЗМА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ – СЛУЧАЈ БАЊСКИХ ДЕСТИНАЦИЈА

### Апстракт

*Одрживи туризам је доминантна теоријска парадигма и најприхватљивије решење изазова развоја савременог туризма. Основни циљ рада је да се истражи достигнути ниво развоја одрживог туризма у Републици Србији на примеру бањских дестинација. Бањске дестинације су један од три најразвијенија обли-*

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*ка туризма у Републици Србији са доста дугом традицијом развоја. У раду су анализирани најразвијеније и најпрепознатљивије дестинације: Врњачка Бања, Сокобања, Бања Врдник, Бања Палић, Буковичка Бања и Бања Ковиљача. За оцелу достигнутог нивоа степена одрживости, коришћени су индикатори које је развија Европска Унија: економски, еколошки, социјални, културни и индикатори задовољства туриста дестинацијом. Резултати истраживања показују да достигнути ниво развоја није усклађен са одрживим развојем. У раду су дате препоруке на који начин унапредити развој туризма и ускладити га са принципа одрживог туризма.*

**Кључне речи:** одрживи туризам, бањске дестинације, развој, Република Србија

## Introduction

In the last 70 years, tourism represents one of the fastest growing industries, with particularly pronounced economic effects in the period 2000-2019, where it has profiled itself as one of the leading economic branches of many national economies (Koseoglu, Rahimi, Okumus & Liu, 2016). The key reasons that led to such tendencies are numerous (Page & Connell, 2009):

1. Greater internationalization and globalization of tourism;
2. Changes in technology and the legislative environment;
3. Increasing political recognition of tourism's economic impact;
4. Emergence of new consumers and changes in products;
5. Development of marketing, research and information.

In addition to economic effects, tourism also has a significant socio-cultural impact on the destinations where it is developed, which increases its value as a developing economic branch (Bošković, Vujičić & Ristić, 2020). Also, the development of tourism leads to changes in the environment, particularly the form of consumption of resources or their pollution, so the environmental impact of tourism is also evident (Milićević, Bošković & Lakićević, 2021). In accordance with the above, it is necessary continuously monitor the effects of tourism development and support the development of those forms that ensure the simultaneous satisfaction of the economic, ecological, social and cultural components (Landorf, 2009; Peattie, 2010; Grujić, 2019; Krstić, Petrović, & Stanišić, 2015).

The paper analyses the achieved level of sustainable tourism in spa destinations of the Republic of Serbia. Spa destinations were chosen because spa tourism is one of the three developed forms of tourism in the Republic of Serbia, as well as because water resources, which are key attractions for the development of spa tourism, are one of the most challenging resources for sustainable development. The paper analysed 6 spa destinations: Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja, Vrdnik Banja, Palić Banja, Bukovička Banja and Koviljača Banja, which account for over 77% tourist arrivals of all spa destinations in the Republic of Serbia. During the analysis of sustainability, 11 indicators were used, which were systematized into 5 groups: economic, tourist satisfaction, cultural, social and indicators of the state of the environment.

The paper is divided into three logically related units. The first part gives an overview of the relevant literature in the field of sustainable tourism. It shows

the extent to which theory in this field has evolved and how sustainability issues are becoming crucial for the development of tourism in different types of destinations. Special emphasis is placed on spas as tourist destinations. The second part explains the methodology applied in the paper and introduces the spa destinations to be analysed from the aspect of sustainable tourism. The third part presents the results of the achieved level of sustainable tourism in spa tourist destinations in the Republic of Serbia, as well as certain recommendations how to make the development of tourism more sustainable.

## 1. Literature review

The embryos of the concept of sustainable tourism originate from the 70s of the last century in the research of Miller (1978), who studied the possibilities of tourism development in national parks. According to the results of his research, it is possible to develop tourism while simultaneously preserving the natural characteristics of protected areas.

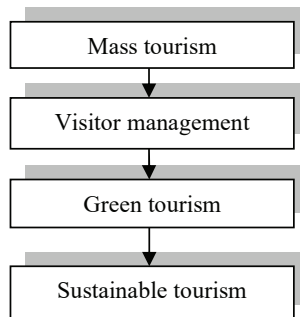
In economic theory, issues of sustainable tourism have been analysed by numerous authors and from different aspects. Earlier research on sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Hunter & Green, 1995) aims to present it as a new paradigm that solves the complex relationships between participants in the tourism market and the way to solve the perceived problems. This attitude is also accepted by Lu & Nepal (2009), who define the relations between the increasingly numerous stakeholders of tourism development in one destination in order to overcome conflict situations. The results of the research show that the development of tourism in one destination is possible in the long term if the needs of all participants in the tourism market are met: creators of the tourism product (tourism industry), consumers (tourists) and the local population. This can be achieved through the sustainable use of tourist resources, as key drivers of tourism development in the destination. Special emphasis is placed on the preservation of natural resources. The parallel between the preservation of natural resources and the development of tourism is obvious, because the largest number of tourist movements takes place in destinations that are rich in natural resources (Qu, Zhou, Guo & Yang, 2023). The development of a tourist destination must ensure the fulfilment of four key goals (Kunst, 2012, 106): effective protection of the destination's resource-attractive base; permanent preservation of the socio-cultural potential of the destination; improving the destination infrastructure, and ensuring the constant growth of living standards.

In the period of mass tourism, it can be pointed out that there are no elements of sustainability, because mass tourism is exclusively a short-term economically oriented form of tourism (Crouch & Geoffrey, 2011). As a partial response to the perceived negative effects of mass tourism, the concept of visitor management was introduced (Nicholas & Thapa, 2010), which was supposed to limit the activities of tourists in terms of reducing the negative effects on the destination's resources. The results of such solutions were partially sustainable, i.e. they reduced to a certain extent the negative effect on the destination's resources, but did not lead to tourist satisfaction, because they were designated as the main limiting factors of tourism development. For this reason, turn was made towards green tourism (Popović, Cvetkovic & Avramović, 2023), which emphasizes the conservation of the destination's resources in the foreground, which, in

the situation of relegating economic effects to the background, significantly limited the possibilities of tourism development. From an ecological point of view, this concept is acceptable in the short term, but it cannot exist in the long term, because the problem of financing the sustainability of resources arises, if economic activities are excluded.

In response to previously observed shortcomings, there was a need to introduce sustainable behaviour of all participants in the tourist market (Seočanac, 2022). When we talking about sustainable tourism, it should not mean some new form of tourism, but any form of tourism that tends to exist in a certain area in the long term must be sustainable (He, He & Xu, 2018).

Figure 1: **The development of the concept of sustainable tourism**



*Source: Authors*

The most important category of resources for the development of tourism is water resources. Water availability in adequate quantities and qualities is a fundamental requirement of tourist destination (Rico-Amoros, Sauri & Olcina-Cantos, 2013). In a recent and comprehensive review on the relationships between tourism and water use (Gössling, Peeters & Hall, 2012), it was argued that changes in global precipitation trends could increase water stress in certain important tourist destinations, and that purposeful management was needed to overcome the effects of dwindling water supplies in these destinations. It is now a well-recognized fact that water is a finite and vulnerable resource, and it must be used efficiently and in an ecologically sound manner for present and future generations (Li, Deng, Peng & He, 2023).

Since water resources belong to the category of renewable natural resources, in the coming period the importance of indirect use of water resources is stimulated, as well as the minimization of those economic activities that pollute water resources, i.e. the concept of sustainable use of water resources is promoted. This clearly indicates the fact that the development of tourism is best integrated into the concept of sustainable use of water resources, which in the case when the largest number of water resources is polluted or severely damaged, represents a significant comparative advantage of tourism over other economic branches.

Travelling to areas rich in thermal mineral waters is one of the oldest forms of tourism (Jenner & Smith, 2000). A similar situation exists in the Republic of Serbia. Historically speaking, in the period of medieval Serbia, spa places are mentioned, as well as in the period of the Turkish rule. Remains of spa places from those periods are visible in today's spa destinations in the Republic of Serbia (Pavlović, Radivojević, Lazić, 2009).

## 2. Material and methods

Observing the reached level of tourism development in the Republic of Serbia in 2022, it can be concluded that spa destinations are one of the three developed forms of destinations. According to the number of arrivals, spa destinations achieved 703,972 arrivals, or 18.20% of total arrivals. On the other hand, according to the number of overnight stays, spa destinations are in second place, with 3,054,744 overnight stays, which represents 25% of the total number of overnight stays by tourists in 2022.

Table 1: Basic tourism parameters per destination type in Serbia, 2022

Type of destinations	Tourist arrivals		Overnight stays	
	Number of tourists	% of tourists	Number of nights	% of nights
Urban destinations	1398862	36.15	3742039	30.56
Spa destinations	703972	18.20	3054744	24.96
Mountains destinations	804235	20.79	2800358	22.86
Other tourism places	786725	20.33	2061544	16.83
Other places	175441	4.53	586928	4.79
All destinations	3869235	100.00	12245613	100.00

*Source: Authors' calculations, based on data published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2023), Statistical Yearbook. Retrieved from <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/pdf/G20232056.pdf>. Accessed on 10 January 2024*

There are 43 spas in the Republic of Serbia, 19 of which are categorized as tourist destinations. The paper analysed the 6 most important spa destinations, considering attendance, as well as national and international recognition. These are: Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja, Banja Vrdnik, Banja Palić, Banja Bukovička and Banja Koviljača. Together, they participate with 77.63% in the total number of tourist arrivals, i.e. with 68.4% in the total number of overnight stays in all spa destinations in the Republic of Serbia.

Table 2: Basic tourism parameters in selected spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

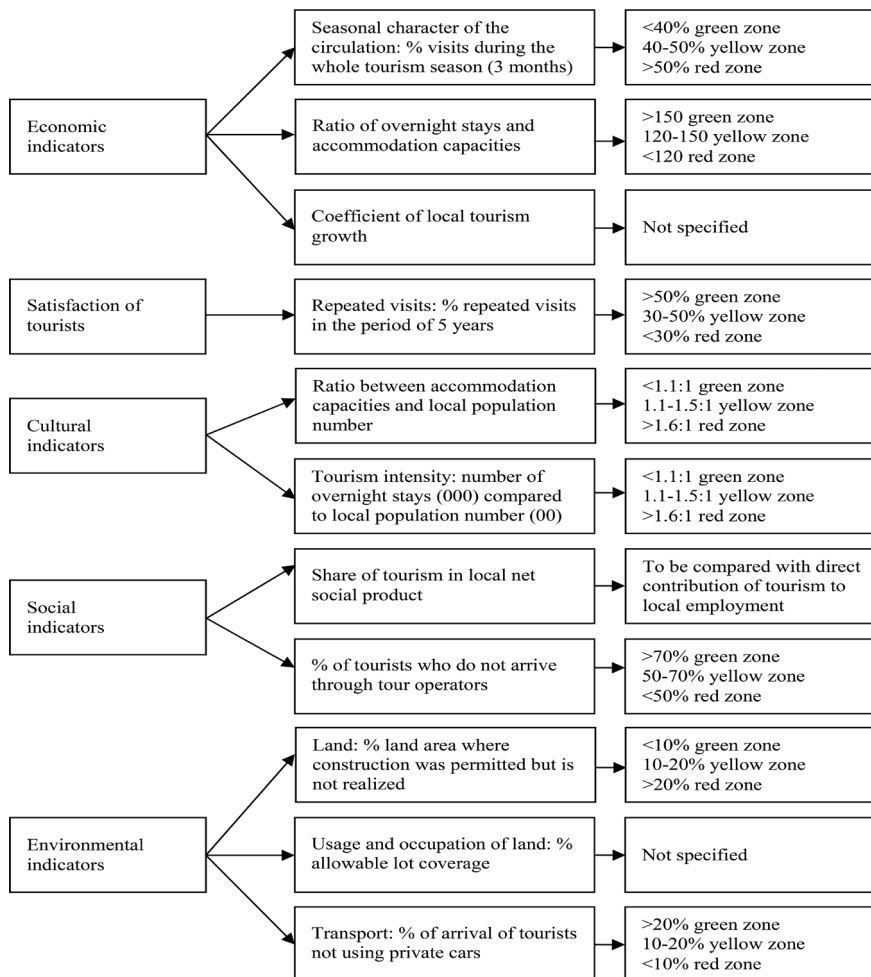
Spa destinations	Tourist arrivals		Overnight stays	
	Number of tourists	% of tourists	Number of nights	% of nights
Vrnjačka Banja	207559	29.48	756142	24.75
Sokobanja	160509	22.80	767725	25.13
Banja Vrdnik	79372	11.27	201872	6.61
Banja Palić	47628	6.77	122156	4.00
Bukovička Banja	26509	3.77	62034	2.03
Banja Koviljača	24872	3.54	179662	5.88
Other spa destinations	157523	22.37	965153	31.60
All spa destinations	703972	100.00	3054744	100.00

*Source: Authors' calculations, based on data published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2023), Statistical Yearbook. Retrieved from <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/pdf/G20232056.pdf>. Accessed on 10 January, 2024*

In accordance with the defined research subject, as well as theoretical analysis, in order to assess the achieved level of sustainable tourism in spa destinations, a methodology based on the analysis of sustainability indicators developed by the European Union was used in the paper (Figure 2). The indicators are classified into five groups: economic indicators, tourist satisfaction, social indicators, cultural indicators and environmental indicators.

Certain sustainability zones are given for most of the indicators, whereby: the red zone shows that the reached level of tourism development is unsustainable; the yellow zone shows that the achieved tourism development is a sustainable solution in the short term, and the green zone shows that the achieved level of tourism development is in line with sustainable development.

Figure 2: Indicators of sustainable tourism destination



Source: Miličević, S., Bošković, N. & Lakičević, M. (2021) Sustainable tourism development in mountain areas in Šumadija and Western Serbia. *Journal of Mountain Science*, 18(3), 735-748

### 3. Research results and discussion

In order to determine the achieved level of sustainable tourism in the selected spa destinations, it is necessary to look at the basic indicators of the achieved development of tourism in them (Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3: Numbers of tourist arrivals per month in selected destinations in Serbia, 2022

	Numbers of tourist arrivals per month											
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Vrnjačka Banja	9561	11095	11789	19376	17667	19425	19616	26587	24591	23548	15350	8954
Sokobanja	3774	4892	6622	10047	10856	12365	19397	32524	26135	19643	9327	4927
Banja Palić	1795	1795	2494	4409	5236	4920	6258	6205	4636	4512	2375	2351
Bukovička Banja	1546	1655	1468	1950	1888	2431	3171	3511	2570	2403	1923	3489
Banja Vrdnik	4669	6074	5470	6806	6318	7136	8164	9306	6720	7219	6573	4917
Banja Koviljača	1262	1332	1266	1672	2305	2055	2242	3437	3201	3189	1803	1108

Source: Authors' calculations, based on data published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2023), Statistical Yearbook. Retrieved from <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/pdf/G20232056.pdf>. Accessed on 10 January 2024

Table 4: Numbers of nights per month in selected destinations in Serbia, 2022

	Numbers of nights per month											
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Vrnjačka Banja	29113	29236	31811	52540	59342	70472	86028	122240	102885	91857	56245	24364
Sokobanja	11778	25190	24878	37063	48637	60638	95963	172075	141259	101714	45933	12597
Banja Palić	5700	7137	7640	10525	12987	11260	14681	15898	11876	12001	6774	5677
Bukovička Banja	3994	3902	2938	4136	4071	5132	8363	10381	6309	5395	3924	3489
Banja Vrdnik	10874	12874	11380	15085	15107	17820	23570	30011	20224	19414	15853	9660
Banja Koviljača	9192	9035	8409	9847	15768	15888	17841	23503	23285	22831	13957	10106

Source: Authors' calculations, based on data published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2023), Statistical Yearbook. Retrieved from <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/pdf/G20232056.pdf>. Accessed on 10 January 2024

In addition to the above, in order to calculate the values of indicators of sustainable tourism, it is necessary to specify the number of local population, as well as the number of accommodation capacities (Table 5).

Table 5: Number of local population and number of beds in selected spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

Destination	Vrnjačka Banja	Sokobanja	Banja Palić	Bukovička Banja	Banja Vrdnik	Banja Koviljača
Number of local population	9912	7982	7771	24797	3092	5151
Number of beds	7224	8270	1635	505	2174	1502

Source: Authors' calculations, based on data published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2023), *Statistical Yearbook*. Retrieved from <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2023/pdf/G20232056.pdf>, Accessed on 10 January 2024

A group of economic indicators of sustainable development evaluates the economic effects of tourism in destination. They are certainly the most important and represent the first group of indicators that we must analyse. Table 6 shows the obtained values of the three analysed economic indicators.

Table 6: Economic indicators for spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

Selected spa destinations	Economic indicator		
	Seasonal character of the circulation: % visits during the season	Ratio of overnight stays and accommodation capacities	Coefficient of local tourism growth
Vrnjačka Banja	36.00 green zone	104.67 red zone	Medium
Sokobanja	48.78 yellow zone	92.84 red zone	Medium
Banja Palić	37.16 green zone	74.71 red zone	Low
Bukovička Banja	34.91 green zone	122.84 yellow zone	Low
Banja Vrdnik	31.11 green zone	92.85 red zone	Medium
Banja Koviljača	39.51 green zone	119.61 red zone	Medium

Source: Authors' calculations

The seasonal character of the circulation shows the number of tourists in the period of the 3 most visited months in relation to the total number of visits during the year. The obtained values are acceptable from the point of view of sustainable tourism, because in all destinations, with the exception of Sokobanja, they are below 40%, and they are marked as a green zone-sustainable solution. These results show that spa tourism in the analysed destinations is relatively uniform throughout the year, without significant monthly fluctuations, which should be maintained in the future. Sokobanja shows the highest number of visits during the summer months (July, August and September), which is a consequence of the insufficiently developed tourist offer for the rest of the year. In order to make the value sustainable, it is necessary to diversify the tourist offer and create tourist products that will attract tourists in the period beyond the mentioned four months.



The results of the second analysed economic indicator - the ratio of the number of overnight stays and accommodation capacity - show completely opposite values. This indicator shows the degree of utilization of accommodation capacities, i.e. represents the relationship between the number of overnight stays during the year and the number of accommodation capacities. The obtained values are in all destinations, with the exception of Bukovička Banja, marked with a red zone, that is, completely unacceptable from the point of view of sustainable tourism. This clearly shows that the further development of tourism should not go in the direction of expanding accommodation capacities, but rather in better occupancy of the existing ones. This can be achieved by creating new tourist products.

The coefficient of local tourism growth aims to indicate all the effects (direct and indirect) that the development of tourism has on the local economy. Looking at the contribution of the development of spa tourism to other economic branches, it can be concluded that no sustainable results have been achieved. A greater connection between tourism and other branches is needed, so that the effects are acceptable from the point of view of the development of sustainable tourism.

The degree of satisfaction of tourists with a certain destination is measured by repeated visits, where a period of 5 years is taken. This indicator is also important from the point of view of the destination's competitiveness, because the more repeated visits are, it means that the destination has positioned itself well on the tourist market and that the tourist product it offers is acceptable to existing tourists. Bearing in mind the relatively undeveloped competition on the domestic market and the specifics of the products that spa destinations offer to tourists, the values of this indicator are relatively acceptable in all analysed destinations.

Table 7: Satisfaction of tourists for spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

Indicator type	Indicator	Spa destination					
		Vrnjačka Banja	Sokobanja	Banja Palić	Bukovička Banja	Banja Vrdnik	Banja Koviljača
Satisfaction of tourists	Repeated visits: % repeated visits in the period of 5 years	75 green zone	65 green zone	40 yellow zone	45 yellow zone	60 green zone	65 green zone

*Source: Authors' calculations*

The cultural and social component is becoming more and more challenging in achieving sustainable development of tourism, because modern tourism implies a significant connection with the local population, but also with the cultural heritage of the area where the destination is being developed. The results of the groups of these indicators in the analysed spa destinations in the Republic of Serbia are shown in Table 8.

As for the first cultural indicator, the ratio of accommodation capacity and the number of local residents, it shows sustainable values in all analysed destinations. This is the result of a relatively larger number of local residents compared to accommodation units. With the further development of tourism, which will certainly lead to an increase in the number of accommodation units, the value of the indicator will probably move into the yellow zone, which will lead to a violation of the achieved level of sustainability. The intensity of tourism

development, as another analysed cultural indicator, shows the relationship between the number of tourist overnight stays (in thousands) and the number of local residents (in hundreds). The value of this indicator in the observed destinations shows diametrically opposite values. Unsustainable values were observed in the most developed destinations (Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja and Banja Vrdnik), while sustainable values of this parameter were achieved in the other analyzed destinations (Banja Palić, Banja Koviljača and Bukovička Banja). It has been proven that the intensification of tourism development, viewed through the number of overnight stays, inevitably leads to unsustainable values. In the coming period, it should be expected that other destinations will also follow the trend towards an unsustainable state.

Table 8: Cultural and social indicators for spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

Selected spa destinations	Cultural indicator		Social indicator	
	Ratio between accommodation capacities and no. of local population	Tourism intensity: no. of overnight stays (000) compared to local population no. (00)	Share of tourism in local net social product	% of tourists who do not arrive through tour operators
Vrnjačka Banja	0.73:1 green zone	2.09:1 red zone	Significant and growing	80 green zone
Sokobanja	1.04:1 green zone	2.01:1 red zone	Significant and growing	55 yellow zone
Banja Palić	0.21:1 green zone	0.61:1 green zone	Significant and stagnating	75 green zone
Bukovička Banja	0.02:1 green zone	0.11:1 green zone	Significant and growing	25 red zone
Banja Vrdnik	0.71:1 green zone	2.56:1 red zone	Significant and growing	85 green zone
Banja Koviljača	0.29:1 green zone	0.48:1 green zone	Significant and stagnating	25 red zone

Source: Authors' calculations

The participation of tourism in the local net product is the first social indicator. It shows the contribution of tourism to the creation of the social product of the area where the tourist destination is located. This indicator belongs to the group of qualitative indicators and has a significant share in all analysed destinations, which is quite understandable, because tourism is one of the most important economic branches of those areas. In most destinations (Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja, Bukovička Banja and Vrdnik Banja) that participation is simultaneously growing, while in Banja Palić and Banja Koviljača it is stagnant. The percentage of tourists who do not come through a tour operator is the second analysed social indicator. From the point of view of the social component of sustainable development, it is acceptable for a larger number of tourists to come individually or in smaller groups. Such a situation is present in Vrnjačka Banja, Banja Palić and Banja Vrdnik, relatively sustainable development of tourism (yellow zone) is in Sokobanja, while the unsustainable value of this indicator is in Bukovička Banja and Banja Koviljača.

According to many authors of the theory of sustainable development, the ecological component is the most important. The impact that tourism development has on the environment is evident. The values of environmental indicators are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Environmental indicators for spa destinations in Serbia, 2022

Selected spa destinations	Environmental indicator		
	Land: % land area where construction was permitted but is not realized	Usage and occupation of land: % allowable lot coverage	Transport: % of arrival of tourists not using private cars
Vrnjačka Banja	5 green zone	Excessive land development	15 yellow zone
Sokobanja	8 green zone	Excessive land development	25 green zone
Banja Palić	12 yellow zone	Adequate land development	15 yellow zone
Bukovička Banja	15 yellow zone	Adequate land development	25 green zone
Banja Vrdnik	17 yellow zone	Adequate land development	5 red zone
Banja Koviljača	15 yellow zone	Excessive land development	25 green zone

Source: Authors' calculations

The first indicator from this group is the percentage of land on which construction is permitted but not implemented. It represents the degree of missed opportunities for tourism development and quite logically the lowest value of this indicator is in the most developed destinations (Vrnjačka Banja and Sokobanja), which represents a sustainable solution. Other analysed spa destinations have higher values of this indicator (12-17%), which means that there is a significant part of unused space for tourism development. Land use and occupation shows how much land has been used for the construction of tourist facilities. This indicator belongs to the group of qualitative indicators and depends on the type of tourism in question. Analysing this indicator in spa destinations, we conclude that the destinations of Vrnjačka Banja, Sokobanja and Koviljača Spa are overbuilt, which is an unsustainable solution, while the other destinations have an acceptable value of this indicator. The percentage of tourists who do not come by private car directly affects the quality of the environment. The goal is to make the value of the indicator as high as possible. Sokobanja, Bukovička Spa and Koviljača Spa have sustainable values, which is a consequence of relatively good connections by public transport, but also the very structure of tourists who visit this destination. On the other hand, Vrnjačka Banja and Banja Palić have a relatively unsustainable value of this indicator (yellow zone), while Vrdnik Spa has an unsustainable value (red zone).

## Conclusion

Spa destinations represents one of the most developed forms in the Republic of Serbia. The current development of tourism in the analysed spa destinations was not in line with sustainable development. The insufficient use of accommodation capacities shown through the ratio of overnight stays and accommodation capacities as well as the

coefficient of local tourism growth show that economic sustainability has not been fully realized through the development of spa tourism. Achieving economic sustainability can be achieved by diversifying the tourist offer, introducing new products, as well as by better cooperation with other branches of the local economy. The values of cultural and social indicators, and in particular, tourism intensity and share of tourism in local net social product, show that there is a need for more significant involvement of the local population in the creation of the tourist offer, as well as the valuation of cultural heritage in spa tourism destinations. The group of environmental indicators shows relatively acceptable values. However, one should be careful because it is expected that the intensification of tourism development will lead to a deterioration of the value of these indicators. Special attention should be paid to the use of land, that is, excessive infrastructural construction should not be allowed in the most attractive areas of the destination. Also, the use of tourists' own cars should be reduced to an acceptable minimum.

Future forms of tourism that can be developed in spa destinations should be oriented towards the development of wellness tourism. Resource availability, along with built accommodation capacity, especially in Vrnjačka Banja, Banja Palić, Bukovička Banja and Banja Vrdnik represent a good basis for such development. With the built image of spa destinations and the development of health-remedial forms of tourism, it is possible to achieve sustainable development in the future period.

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