

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM BANJA LAKTASI

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***Abstract:** Of all sectors of the economy, the importance and development of tourism is in the highest dependence on quality and attractive natural and social values. Specific value in tourism in the Republic of Srpska has thermal waters, which are the basis of spa tourism. This area is rich in thermal waters, as well as a preserved and healthy environment. Sustainable tourism is an economic model of development that needs to satisfy, on the one hand, a tourist demand while at the same time improving the living conditions of the local community and maintaining the quality of the environment. From this aspect, the concept of sustainable tourism development implies a balance between the ecological, economic and social development of tourism.*

***Keywords:** development, tourism, thermal waters, concept of sustainable development*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism has a very high economic and social significance and is a significant driving force of economic development. In the process of tourism development, attention is paid to its sustainable development (Vojnovic, 2011).

Observed through the historical prism of origin and development as a business, it is noted that tourism "in its development has experienced a series of very important (internal and external) transformations: it has assumed different forms of appearance, served various means, expanded the scope in a spatial and quantitative way, changed its features and structure, enriched itself with new motifs, gained new functions, influenced differently and served different goals and, in doing so, never lost its economic significance" (Gligorijevic & Stefanovic, 2012).

Economic development or economic development is a prerequisite for any development of tourism (Vujovic et al., 2011).

The territory of the Republic of Srpska (RS) is abundant with natural resources, which are a great potential for tourism development of this entity.

Sustainable tourism development of Banja Laktasi, should be considered in the context of general tourism development in the region of Republika Srpska. In addition to numerous tourist resources that make the territory of the Republic of Srpska abundant, there is a problem of insufficient tourist valorization of these potentials. The Republika Srpska has a number of affiliated tourist centers, among which the Banja Laktasi tourist and balneological complex has its place and importance in the future development of healing tourism in the Republic of Srpska.

Thanks to the enormous natural wealth and healing properties of Laktaški thermal waters, tourism in Laktaši has a long tradition. Out of the total of nine spas in the Republic of Srpska, there are as many as two famous and famous ones in the Laktaši municipality (Banja Laktaši and Banja Slatina). In addition to the healing properties of the spa waters, the other factors mentioned contributed to the full affirmation of Banja Laktasi in local regional frameworks. Banje Laktaši complex is one of the most famous in the Republic of Srpska, and this place owes a rich variety of offer and tradition. Banja Laktaši has an excellent level of attendance, all thanks to the well-organized work and development of Banja and its tourist offer. This tourist-balneological complex is located in the municipality of the same name at 125 meters above sea level in the valley of the Vrbas River (Official Gazette, 2001). Bearing in mind that Spa in Republika Srpska has a share of around 30% in total tourist traffic, it is clear that they represent the most important tourist potentials and are the subject of interest and study. To this end, the guidelines and perspectives of its future development should be noted. The development of tourism is of great importance both for the overall economy of the Republic of Srpska and for the promotion of sustainable development in the developed and less developed areas. In order to prevent negative impacts on the work of tourist organizations, as well as the development of tourism, there is great responsibility in terms of sustainability of natural resources (Hamovic et al., 2009).

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Today, the concept of sustainable tourism development dominates, which implies the development of tourism that meets the needs of current tourists, tourist destinations and all participants in tourism, while preserving and increasing the potential for using tourist resources in the future, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Premović et al., 2011).

Research shows that, before the tourism industry and all institutions in the field of tourism, the task of sustainable and responsible development is set in order to preserve the environment as a resource of a tourist product (Radosavac et al., 2013).

Modern approach to planning and development strategies rests on integral planning, and includes three dimensions of development: space-ecological, economic and social. The preserved and healthy natural environment is a precondition for the development of different forms of tourism, on the other hand, tourism has a significant impact on the environment. With this in mind, environmental sustainability is the preservation of natural wealth, whereby the use and exploitation of natural resources must be taken into account in the sustainability of the environment. Sustainable development is an extremely important part of the strategy, which is of particular importance given that spa tourism is the basic form of tourism in the Republic of Srpska. Thermomineral waters represent a significant natural and developmental resource. They are an integral part of the natural environment, with an increasing and significant use value. When it comes to development, we must keep in mind that only sustainable development, the development that is thinking about the future, is actually a real development. Sustainable is considered any type of tourism that permanently contributes to the promotion and protection of the environment, cultural values, natural and social resources and the integrity of the local communities.

Tourism has been consistently shown to have an impact on the quality of air and water, erode soils, create noise pollution, expand the built environment, increase transport networks and disrupt species behavior in a number of ways (Fennell & Ebert, 2004). The application of the concept of sustainable tourism presupposes minimizing the negative and maximizing the positive impacts of tourism on the environment and the available resources (Maksin-Micic, 2007).

According to Weaver, 2006, the implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism implies a more restrictive strategy in planning and managing the development of those areas that have relatively preserved natural and social tourism resources and significant or limited natural resources, in order to prevent their degradation due to the negative impacts of tourism development.

Harmonized economic growth implies a moderate exploitation of natural resources. Tourism is the driver of active protection based on the rational use of resources (Milenković, 2009).

A healthy environment implies sustainable development, which also means the sustainability of tourism. Encouraging such development means

the development of an adequate relationship with the environment. Such a development has enormous value because tourism has both positive and negative sides of its activity. Throughout the development process, viewed from the spatial aspect of tourism, inevitably there are inevitably more or less environmental consequences. Responsible attitude towards basic values and healthy environment implies improvement of the quality of living space. Such an approach creates a precondition for the development of sustainable tourism. Development encompasses the social and economic sphere, as well as aspects of protection and improvement of the environment and space. Here are some specific responsibilities and tasks of the local community, especially local government authorities. Tourism as a non-production branch of the economy is a significant component of the sustainability of the economic system. Sustainability of development implies environmental sustainability and all economic and non-commercial functions in the tourist area. Tourism is not an activity for itself because it involves and connects various branches of the economy through joint provision of tourist services (traffic, accommodation, food, etc.). Experiences and trends confirm the complementarity of tourist and recreational and health functions of spa sites that are aimed at animating clients, especially younger with attractive content, in order to improve general health and the prevalence of various diseases (Jovičić, 2008: 11).

In order to achieve sustainability through tourism (improving the quality of life), some forms of sustainability are important:

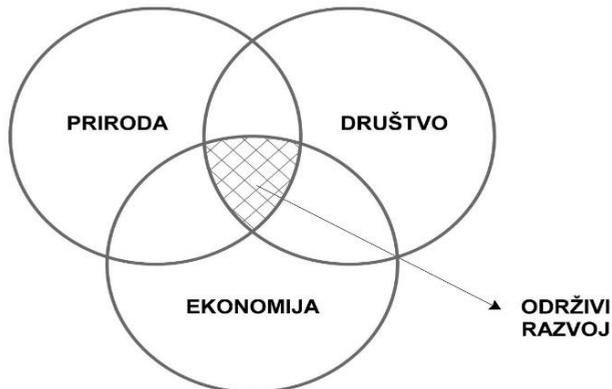
- ✓ ecological sustainability; that development be compatible with the maintenance of basic ecological processes,

- ✓ economic sustainability; ensures that development is economically efficient, that it can support future generations, socio-cultural sustainability; it ensures that development increases the control of people over their own lives and the strengthening of the identity of the community.

Based on these forms of sustainability, it is noted that sustainable tourism meets the needs of current tourists, tourist destinations and all other participants in tourism.

The sustainability of the tourist destination is a tendency for achieving competitiveness in the tourism market while maintaining the quality of its natural, social, cultural resources (Popesku, 2006). In order to develop the tourism of Banja Laktasi, care must be taken of the equitable exploitation of natural and anthropogenic resources. In accordance with sustainable development, activate measures for protection of waters and springs, as well as other natural values (air, land) and cultural heritage.

One of the most important tourist resources that needs to be protected is space. Its use, both as a living and tourist area, should be guided by the principles of sustainable development. The volume of tourist traffic in different spas of the RS is different. This is a consequence, above all, of the available accommodation possibilities. Accommodation capacities in all spas of the Republic of Srpska, except Banja Vrućica, are very modest and are the main obstacle to larger tourist traffic. Banja Laktasi does not meet the need for accommodation capacities in terms of tourist products. This is, on the one hand, a shortcoming in satisfying tourist demand, and on the other, real and realistic opportunities to accommodate and accommodate the appropriate number of tourists. Controlled development should monitor the possibilities and needs, otherwise it may result in the destruction of the resources that represent the basis of the development of tourism in Banja. In terms of further development, a strategy for tourism development should be developed at the municipal level in order to protect both the living space and the economic significance. Sustainable tourism is the one that minimizes the environmental impact and contributes to the development of the local community. Local communities can benefit from tourism if it is sustainable in the long run.



**Figure 1.** Schematic view of sustainable development

Source: Jovičić, , 2000.

Spa tourism is based on the use of thermal, mineral and mineral waters, for the purpose of: treatment, rehabilitation and recreation. In addition to health, sports, recreational, excursion and manifestation tourism are also present. In this way, the tourist season is extended throughout the year. Today, tourism, one of the strongest "industries" in the world, is an important export product and employment generator for many countries. In spite of the crisis in the world economy and various events that have undermined the global stability of the countries, tourism has shown

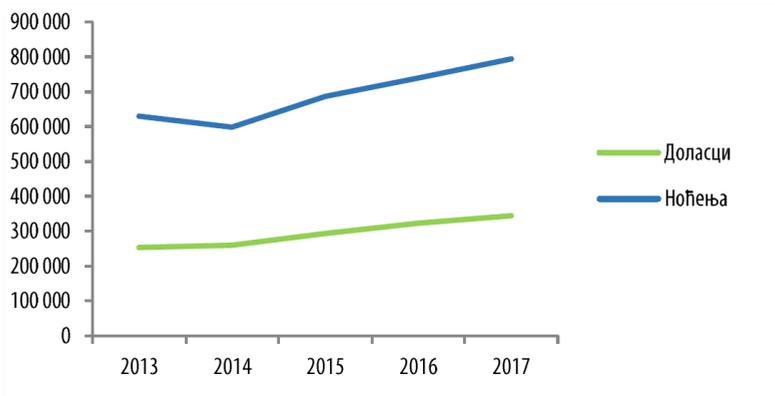
fascinating resistance to changes in the economic and social environment, except in 2009, when a decline in tourism traffic was observed as a result of the global economic crisis that began in October 2008. years. International tourism in the world is on a steady pace, and according to the long-term vision of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 2020, it is expected to have 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals. The largest volume of traffic in the period 2003-2008. According to the data of the Statistical Office of Banja Luka, measured by the number of overnight stays, it was realized in spa resorts, followed by other tourist resorts, and on the third are mountain tourist places.

After global recovery in 2010, the growth of tourist arrivals continued, and in 2011, it was recorded by 4.4% more compared to the previous year and slightly above the long-term average. From the very beginning of the monitoring of tourism development in the Republic of Srpska in 2017, the share of foreign overnight stays exceeded 50% of the total number of overnight stays (Statistical Yearbook, 2017).

Tourist arrivals in 2017, compared to the observed period in 2016, increased by 6.4% and tourist nights by 7.3%. According to statistics, of the total number of overnight stays of foreign tourists from the region, the highest was from Serbia with 26.5%, then from Croatia 24.0%, Germany 12.89%, Austria 11.56% and 9.1% from Slovenia. Tourists coming from these countries are mostly staying in the territory of Republika Srpska, the reasons for their arrival are different (vacation, business, family visits, events, etc.). According to the records at the border crossings, travelers coming from the countries of Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) are mostly in transit through the Republic of Srpska because their primary destination is the Adriatic Coast. Also, statistics show a trend of growth in arrivals and overnight stays in the Republic Serbian. Namely, in 2016, 323 908 arrivals and 740 601 tourist nights were realized, which is an increase of 9.9% compared to the previous year (of which the number of domestic tourist arrivals increased by 4.7%, while for foreign guests it was recorded growth of 15.9%). Research and market segmentation activities will continue in 2017.

In terms of resourcing tourism, it is one of the generators of the development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Srpska. The spa has a number of functions, primarily health, but increasingly touristic, within which the growing demands in the sphere of sports, congress, ethno, manifestation, etc. are being realized. types of tourism (Đervida et al., 2014). The precondition for development and the economic impact of tourism is a clean, preserved and healthy environment. The intensive

development of tourism can have a negative impact on the environment. That is why tourism planning and arrangement of tourist areas is important to implement with high ecological standards, eliminating the harmful consequences for the environment, and making tourism sustainable.



**Graph 1.** Tourist arrivals and nights by year in RS

Source: RS Statistical Office

## DEVELOPMENT AND POTENTIALS BANJA LAKTAŠI

Spa tourism is the basic form of tourism in the Republic of Srpska. Tourism, in relation to other types of tourism, has the largest volume of tourism traffic and has a growth week. Thanks to the enormous natural wealth and healing properties of Laktaški thermal waters, tourism in Laktaši has a long tradition. Kompleks Banja Laktaši is one of the most famous in the RS, and this place owes a rich and, above all, a diverse offer, but also a tradition. Bearing in mind that Spa in RS has a share of around 30% in total tourist traffic, it is clear that they represent the most significant tourist potentials.



**Picture 1.** Banja Laktaši

Source: [www.laktasiturizam.org](http://www.laktasiturizam.org)

What makes a key component of the local tourist position of Banja is good traffic connection with the environment. The only international airport in the Republic of Srpska is located in the municipality of Laktaši. The tumultuous history of the Laktaška municipality left behind numerous archaeological sites that usually follow the valley of the Vrbas River, which extends along the entire municipality and divides it into two parts. The position of Banje Laktaši as a balneological-tourist center as part of the overall tourist offer of the Krajina region also includes the consideration of a comparative advantage and the possibility of supplementing the tourist offer with another tourist center. This refers to Banja Slatina, Mlječanica, Balkan, Srpske Toplice, Bardača and others. We should also mention the proximity of the Bardača natural reserve, which is 32 km from Laktaši, as well as the Kozare Mountains whose slopes extend in the territory of Laktaši. Based on all this, it can be said that the Laktaši municipality has a favorable tourist-geographical position both for the development of the domestic (near the largest emitting center of R. Srpska) and for the development of foreign transit tourism (traffic position). These spa-tourist offers of the Krajina have real assumptions for contributing to the development of the tourism industry in this region.

In 2001, the Institute for Rehabilitation (Balneoklimatology Service) from Belgrade carried out the analysis of mineral water in the Slatina Spa (Complete physical-chemical analysis of mineral water from the bath in the Slatina Spa). In its physical and chemical properties, it belongs to the category of calcium-magnesium hydrocarbonate, sulphate carbonic acid hypertherms. The presence of dissolved carbon dioxide gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) in an amount (1 g / l) is significant. In addition to carbon dioxide, the high quality of this water is its temperature of 41.5 ° C (hypertherm), which is important for the treatment of certain diseases.

For the purpose of valorisation of the hydro-potential of the site and the surrounding area, it is necessary to look at Bardača. Bardača is a bar-lake regime with a characteristic ecosystem. This ecosystem provides the basic tourist-geographical component with the richness of various types of birds, and it is good to find it within the framework of the balneological-tourist offer of Banja Laktaši. Bearing in mind the water temperatures of the Laktaši and Slatina spa, in addition to the balneotherapeutic value, the region of Laktaši municipality can be supplied with heat energy. Together with other natural, ecological and anthropogenic values, these thermomineral waters are one of the most important development factors of the municipality of Laktaši, that is, the development of spa tourism in the RS.

Thanks to the richness of flora and fauna, the area of Laktaši municipality has a perspective for the development of hunting and fishing tourism. What needs to be emphasized is that in the valorization of hunting and fishing tourism, attention should be paid to exploitation and attention to control hunting and fishing, protecting forests and waterways. It should be based on projects and work on the development of sustainable tourism through sustainable development programs, in order to enable the long-term development of this type of supply.

The long history of Banja Laktasi is confirmed by various material traces found in this area. These material remains testify to the use of the thermomineral water of Banja Laktasi in the period of the reign of the Romans. The Municipality of Laktaši is abundant with cultural and historical monuments that make up the richness of the tourist offer. These cultural features are the result of intense life in these areas dating back to the younger Palaeolithic (40,000-10,000 years before the new era) until today.

Among the many sights and attractions of this area, Roman public baths, terme, stand out. The 1998 researchers confirmed their existence dating from the 1st to the 4th century. The foundations of the former Roman bath, the so-called. Balneum, are located in the center of Laktaši. Roman public baths were not only used to maintain physical hygiene, but they also had rooms in which visitors could exercise and have fun. Nowadays it is considered that the thermal baths were the precursors of the modern Wellness and Fitness Centers.

Sacral tourist values are churches, monasteries and other religious buildings that are representatives of spiritual, construction and historical value. Tourists rarely are the only motifs they visit, but since they are often surrounded by rich landscapes, they make a unique tourist offer.

Various events are held in the municipality of Laktasi. The aims of manifestation tourism are well-organized and pre-arranged plans for the maintenance of manifestations and tourism branches that are favorable for development. A well-planned planning can also provide an indicative number of tourists which is very suitable for the use of spa accommodation capacities. Ideally, each month of the year would be characterized by some kind of tourism, so tourism is developing all year round. Visitors to Banja would have always had such affirmation and organization of the tourist organization, and the reason for coming to Banja.

Banja Laktaši is located in a peaceful and attractive natural surroundings, surrounded by lush vegetation. The spring warm mineral water is rich in radon and other minerals, as it rarely spills in our country,

even in Europe. Termomineral water Terme Laktasi is known for its healing properties and positive effects on human health since ancient times. Archaeological findings suggest that healing water has been used even in Roman times. It has a very long tradition in the use of spa water, and for tourists and other spa guests, a complete medical treatment is available, which includes a series of therapeutic procedures conducted by highly qualified and highly qualified staff.

### **Conclusion**

Existing spa facilities point to realistic assumptions that spa tourism has predispositions to the progressive development of Banja Laktaši. The central tourist motives, around which the entire tourist offer of Laktaši municipality should be based, are thermo-mineral resources, which this municipality abounds. Valorize and utilize all the natural and social values that Banja offers. The tourist potential of the municipality of Laktasi should not be viewed in isolation, but within the tourist zone Bardača with the Vrbas Valley as well as other tourist zones in the RS, such as the proximity of the Bardaca NK Kozara National Park, the political-cultural-administrative center of Banja Luka and others.

Improve the conditions, renovate and increase accommodation capacities, modernize and modernize services in line with European and world standards and requirements of tourists, related to the field of health tourism. Enrich the offer with additional content and educate personnel in the tourism sector. Development should be based on the concept of sustainable tourism development, which, besides meeting the tourist demand, is to respect the ecological standards. In this case, primarily protection of terminal sources, as well as natural and anthropogenic values.

Strategic, strategic processing of the market is needed in order to develop tourism in accordance with the strategy of sustainable tourism development. Take all the necessary measures, involve the local community, set legal frameworks, define standards and provide some incentive investment incentives. The development strategy of Spa is aimed at the formation of unique eco-tourist zones with a special regime of protection, based on sustainable development.

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