



Sustainable Tourism in the Western Part of Kosovo

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ABSTRACT

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The western part of Kosovo is one of the most frequented by tourists. On one side lies the Dukagjin Plain, and on the other, the mountainous part of the Albanian Alps. In the mountainous part lies the National Park, with many beauties to visit in all seasons of the year. The number of tourist subjects in the area and the number of tourists visiting this area is always increasing. The area is rich in attractive values that leave an impression on every visitor. This space has developed many forms of tourism, which have created a very attractive landscape physiognomy. The paper will also present the part of the development of tourism that has increased the value of the western part of Kosovo. The western area has also given importance to the development of tourism. This is the reason why the western area of Kosovo is called the western tourist area or otherwise the tourist region of the Albanian Alps. Many interesting forms are found in the mountainous part of the western part of Kosovo. The part consists of two parts such as 1) The low part of the Dukagjin Plain and 2) The mountainous part of the Albanian Alps. All tourist and hotel facilities are also present in the Lower part, especially in the city of Peja. But most of them lie in the mountainous part such as Rugova. Thirteen settlements are part of the composition of each. Throughout the year, in all seasons of the year, there are conditions for the Western Region of Kosovo to be visited by visitors from all over the world. Based on the methodology, many potential and important tourist resources have been found in this area. It is really about important tourist attractions for visitors.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper presents a study of Sustainable tourism in the Western part of Kosovo. Sustainable development is a process issue that is characteristic of every transition process, rooted either in the more general discussion of equilibrium or in a discussion of Sustainable development as a transition with a set of specific targets to be achieved.

Sustainable development, as an economic issue, relates to the maintenance of capital assets. And it is a development issue, dealing with resource allocation in programs [1].

The western Kosovo localities of Peja, Gjakova, Klina, Junik, Deçan, and Istok have a particular potential for tourism growth. The cities located in this area are surrounded by mountains, lakes, rivers, bridges, and a unique cultural and historical legacy, which speaks to the region's depth of history and culture. The most salient features that set these cities apart and serve as symbols are their geography, history, culture, traditions, and undiscovered natural beauty [2, 3].

Tourism, art, and cuisine may all be profitable sources of income for nations that use traditional or natural resources.

Kosovo's western area ought to take advantage of this chance as well. The advantages of cultural heritage include investment, the creation of jobs, and sustainable alternatives to business models that support the growth of the economy and tourism while taking the necessary precautions to protect the

environment. Cultural legacies are unique and valuable [4-6].

This part is distinguished by numerous touristic potentials and resources. In the four seasons of the year, it is visited by various tourists who both visit the tourist attractions and stay in this area. The western part of Kosovo, including the Cursed Mountains National Park, represents an important tourist destination with a high potential for sustainable development [7-9]. With attractions that attract visitors during all four seasons of the year, the region is known for its natural beauty and the variety of forms of tourism, such as mountain, winter, and camping tourism.

Visits and overnight stays in this area have shown steady growth, reflecting the growing interest of tourists in local attractions and stunning scenery. Furthermore, efforts to preserve nature and a clean environment are important elements that support the perspective of sustainable tourism.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the paper, field research was done by visiting the tourist subjects. The notes received have been processed and analyzed using scientific methods. The results are extracted for each tourist activity. For detailed research, comparisons were also made between the results and the parameters used. In some cases, we have also been served with auxiliary literature in

order to give the paper the desired approach so that the results are as concrete as possible. This study was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Primary data were collected through surveys conducted with 100 tourists visiting the western region of Kosovo during the period 2018-2022, randomly selected to represent different demographic groups and travel purposes. In addition, 20 interviews were conducted with tourism operators and representatives of local institutions to assess their perceptions of the sustainability and tourism potential of the area.

Secondary data were collected from reports of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics and academic literature on tourism [10, 11]. Data analysis was conducted using statistical techniques to identify trends and patterns of change over the years, while thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative interviews.

The paper deals with the data that give us the desired indicators in the way that in areas and destinations tourism is developing every day and more. Based on the methodology used in the work, the value of the work has increased with the processed data, which has given us a clear overview of the results. Only with this research, we have approached the most important region for the development of tourism, such as the western part of Kosovo, otherwise known as the tourist region of the Albanian Alps.

3. THE MOST IMPORTANT TOURIST FACILITIES IN THE AREA

An important part is the tourist facilities, which occupy an important place, hosting a significant number of guests in all seasons of the year. There are a total of over seventy tourist and hotel facilities in the area. The tourist offer of the area also includes thirty-four facilities for the preparation of food for guests who visit this destination. Twenty-eight tour operators and tourist associations are also present in the region. Thirty-seven Traditional Local Organizations are also present [5]. Of all the tourist subjects, most of them in the mountainous part are spread in Rugova. While the lower part is more widespread in the city of Peja, which is also the largest city in the western region [12]. The region has important potential and resources to visit [8, 13, 14]. To identify the specific resources and potentials of a region, they can be divided into natural resources and cultural resources. Here are some common examples for different regions [5, 15, 16]:

Natural Resources:

Mountainous landscapes: Mountains like the Albanian Alps, the Bjeshkët e Nemuna or the Korabi are popular destinations for hiking and adventure.

Rivers and waterfalls: Rivers like the Drini, Buna, and the Vjosa, which is known as the last wild river in Europe, are important resources.

Lakes: Lake Ohrid, Prespa and Shkodra have ecological and tourist values.

Beaches and sea coasts: Riviervas like the Ionian Riviera in Albania or the Adriatic coast are famous for tourism.

National Parks: Thethi, Valbona, Divjaka-Karavasta and Llogaraja are protected areas with great values for biodiversity and natural tourism.

Caves and natural formations: Pirates' Cave, Pellumbas Cave or Gadima Cave in Kosovo are unique attractions.

Cultural Resources:

Historical Monuments and Architecture:

Castles such as Kruja, Gjirokastra and Rozafa.

Museum-cities such as Berat and Gjirokastra, part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

Archaeological Sites: Butrint (UNESCO), Apolonia and Durrës are ancient settlements of historical importance.

Traditional Villages: Villages such as Dardha, Voskopoja, or Thethi offer a unique cultural experience.

Traditions and Festivals: The Gjirokastra Festival, the Beer Festival in Korça, or activities such as local fairs and festivals promote local culture and art.

Traditional Cuisine: Unique dishes from the region such as pies, japraku or desserts such as baklava and kadaifi.

Development Potential:

Ecotourism and rural tourism: Development of agrotourism including guesthouses and traditional experiences is an opportunity.

Sports and adventure tourism: Sports such as rafting on the Vjosa River, mountain climbing in the Alps, and mountain biking.

Historical and cultural tourism: The region could be further developed for visitors seeking cultural and historical experiences.

Most of the hotel and tourism entities deal with accommodation services, catering services, food services in the facility, with mountain sports and recreational activities in nature, with traditional handicraft products from Bjeshka, with cultural tourism [13, 15, 17]. Some of them are associations for tourism. All of them are for visitors, where most of them stay and eat. Based on the research done in the field, it results that the majority of tourist entities are tourist businesses. A smaller part of them are Non-Governmental Organizations that deal with the development of tourism in the destination. A smaller number of them are farmers. Based on the research done in the field, it results that from the type of service they offer according to the classification, they are as follows: Hotels, Motels, Inns, Restaurants, Tour operators, Tourist villages, Accompanying tourists in the mountains- Mountain guides, Agriculture, Associations for tourism, traditional crafts, etc. Of the total of 93 accommodation units in the western region, there are 1235 rooms with 2327 beds in them. All these tourist entities are maintained with the number of employees who occupy an important place for this activity. Employed a total of 493 persons. 130 of them are employed under the age of forty. A total of 193 people are employed according to the female gender at the age of forty. While the employees according to the female gender are 170 persons. This means that 493 people are employed in some of the tourist activities in the western region, which is a significant number of employees. For a more detailed analysis, see the following Figure 1.

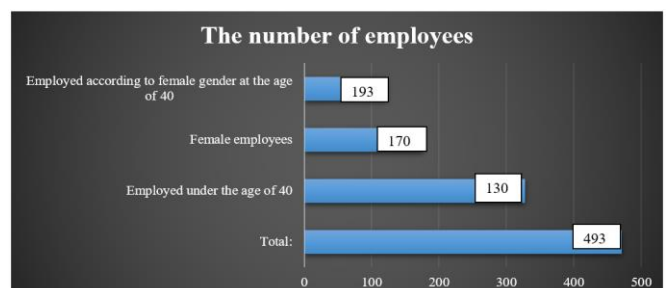


Figure 1. Number of employees in the western part of Kosovo in tourism activities
Source: Authors- Field research

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The role of female employment in the tourism sector is very important, as this sector offers numerous opportunities for women, contributing not only to economic development but also to strengthening gender equality [7, 18]. To maximize benefits, it is necessary to have supportive policies and initiatives that address the challenges women face in this sector, including opportunities for training, improved working conditions, and advancement to leadership positions.

Based on the tourist activities that are carried out in the western part of Kosovo, many tourist activities take place in this area. Based on the research done on tourist activities, it results that the majority of tourist facilities develop the activity of food and accommodation, about 39 hotel facilities. Following from the part of restaurants with 23 objects. Then tourist services with 18 tourist facilities. While other tourist activities in the western area are represented by 5 to 8 tourist facilities. For more detailed analysis, see the following Figure 2.

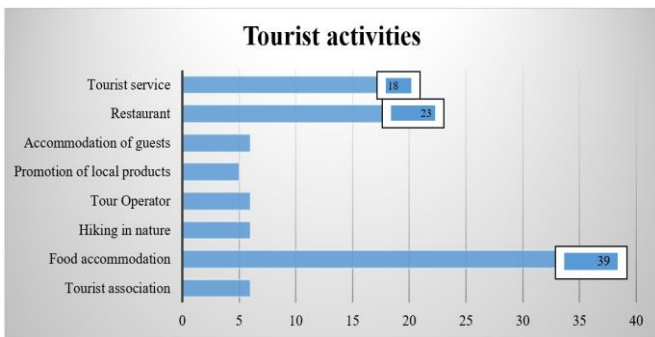


Figure 2. Activities with which the tourist entities deal in the western part – Kosovo
Source: Authors- Field research

The western region of Kosovo offers a diverse spread of tourism activities, including [8, 19, 20]:

- i. Mountain and nature tourism: The Cursed Mountains and the National Park offer trails for hiking, camping, and other nature activities.
- ii. Winter tourism: Rugova is a center for winter sports such as skiing.
- iii. Cultural tourism: Attractions such as the Peja Monastery and local festivals promote cultural heritage.
- iv. Summer tourism: Waterfalls and rivers like the Drini i Bardhë are ideal for summer recreation.
- v. Ecotourism: Sustainable approaches are on the rise, including eco-lodges and educational activities on biodiversity.
- vi. This diversity makes these attractions accessible and attractive all year round, contributing to the development of sustainable tourism and the local economy.

5. LOCAL AND FOREIGN VISITORS AND THEIR STAYS IN THE WESTERN REGION

The development of tourism and tourist product in the western tourist area of Kosovo can be confirmed by the participation of tourists in the tourist movements and circulations in the area. To prove this, we are based on the data from the Statistics Agency of Kosovo. First, the data on the number of local visitors and their online stays for the period 2018-2022 were obtained. According to the data, the number of visitors has had a relative movement due to the COVID-12 pandemic. In 2018 there were 42228 visitors, in 2019 there were 37661 visitors, in 2020 there were 28279 visitors, in 2021 there were 38935 visitors, while in 2022 there were 31428 visitors. During this period, the movement of the growth of visitors was relative, always with an upward trend. While the number of net stays in this part is greater. Which in 2018 starts with 66,781 nights of stays until 2022 with 101,468 nights of stays. Even in the part of net stays, we have a relative increase, which was most pronounced in 2022 (ask.rks-gov.net/) [21]. The period 2018-2022 was selected to analyze trends due to the significance of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted the global and local tourism sector. This time frame allows for a comparison between the pre-pandemic period, its impacts, and the recovery phase [22, 23]. To analyze in more detail, the results are given in Table 1.

When it comes to external visitors and their stays in the western region, it was found that their number was almost similar to local visitors and their stays. Following from 2018 with 32924 visitors, in 2019 with 27438 visitors, in 2020 with 14242 visitors, in 2021 with 33646 visitors and in 2022 with 42594 visitors. Even in the number of external visitors, we have had a relative increase in their number. While the number of foreign stays has been greater than the number of visitors. In 2018, we had 64,173 nights of stays, while in 2022, we had 121,212 nights of stays (ask.rks-gov.net/). This results in relative growth. As an indicator, there is an increase in the number of stays during this period. To analyze in more detail, you can use the following Table 2.

For more detailed research, we can use the data on local and foreign visitors and their stays. The data were obtained for the period 2018-2022. In the database, the largest number is of overnight stays compared to external visitors. In 2018 there were 75151 visitors, in 2019 there were 65099 visitors, in 2020 there were 41519 visitors, in 2021 there were 72581 visitors, in 2022 there were 74022 visitors. This means that the number of visitors due to Corona has a relative decrease, with a tendency to increase. On the other hand, the number of overnight stays was analyzed, which is significantly higher compared to the number of visitors. In 2018 there were 130954 nights of stays, in 2019 there were 149083 nights of stays, in 2020 there were 95056 nights of stays, in 2021 there were 161033 nights of stays and in 2022 there were 222680 nights of stays (ask.rks-gov.net/). This indicates that the values of the number of residences in the western region are always increasing. This park tends to increase the development of tourism in this area (Table 3).

Table 1. Local visitors and their night-stays

| | Year 2018 | | Year 2019 | | Year 2020 | | Year 2021 | | Year 2022 | |
|----------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights |
| Western region | 42228 | 66781 | 37661 | 74708 | 28279 | 62668 | 38935 | 81580 | 31428 | 101468 |

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

Table 2. External visitors and their web-stays

| | Year 2018 | | Year 2019 | | Year 2020 | | Year 2021 | | Year 2022 | |
|----------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights |
| Western region | 32924 | 64173 | 27438 | 75095 | 14242 | 34453 | 33646 | 79452 | 42594 | 121212 |

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

Table 3. Local and foreign visitors and the night - their attitudes

| | Year 2018 | | Year 2019 | | Year 2020 | | Year 2021 | | Year 2022 | |
|----------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights |
| Western region | 75151 | 130954 | 65099 | 149803 | 41519 | 95056 | 72581 | 161033 | 74022 | 222680 |

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

For a clearer overview of the Western Region of Kosovo, a table with data on visitors and their stays for guests according to the countries from which they come to Kosovo has been analyzed for the period from 2018 to 2022. First, the number of visitors was analyzed according to the countries from which they come to visit Kosovo. In 2018, we had the largest number of visitors from Albania with 37141 visitors, then Germany with 17178, followed by Turkey with 14848 visitors, then Switzerland with 13151 visitors. While the smallest number of visitors was Poland with 503 visitors, followed by Spain with 650 visitors and so on. While in the largest group of visits after Albania, third countries enter with 29035 visitors (ask.rks-gov.net/).

In 2019, Albania had the largest number of visitors with 34,720 visitors, followed by Germany with 18,482, followed by Turkey with 14,796 visitors. Other countries follow with 24,779 visitors. While the countries with the smallest participation of visitors this year were from Poland with 978 visitors, followed by Spain with 996 visitors and so on.

In 2020, the number of visitors will decrease compared to the previous year. The leading countries with the number of visitors are Albania with 30,977 visitors, followed by Germany with 8,422 visitors and so on. While the countries that had the fewest visitors are Poland with 287 visitors, followed by Spain with 292 visitors, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina with 369 visitors.

In 2021, the number of visitors continues to increase. In the first place in terms of visits, Albania leads with 55,591 visitors, followed by Germany with 25,671 visitors, followed by Switzerland with 24,719 visitors. As well as from other countries, the figure follows with 22,195 visitors. On the other hand, we have the countries with the lowest number of visitors this year. As are Bosnia and Herzegovina with 1395 visitors, followed by Poland with 1448 visitors, followed by Spain with 1453 visitors.

In 2022, the number of visitors has increased compared to the previous year. Albania had 64,237 visitors, Germany with 34,751 visitors, Switzerland with 28,395 visitors, the United States of America with 13,288 visitors (ask.rks-gov.net/). While the countries that had the most visitors this year were Bosnia and Herzegovina with 2101 visitors, followed by Spain with 1856 visitors, then Greece with 2274 visitors. From the data it is implied that there is an increase in the number of visitors during the period 2018-2022.

In addition to the number of visitors, the number of overnight stays in the Western Region of Kosovo is also important for the development of tourism and tourist traffic. For detailed research, the data for the period 2018-2022 were analyzed. Starting from 2018, the countries from which he had the most nights of stay are: Albania with 53669 nights of stays,

followed by Germany with 28668 nights of stays, then Turkey with 23928 nights of stays, then the United States of America with 21862 nights of stays and so on. While other countries with 50,431 nights of stays. The countries with the smallest number of visitors are: Poland with 891 nights of stays, Spain with 2059 nights of stays. While all other countries have 50,431 nights of stays.

The year 2019 is also evaluated, so to speak, at the same rate as the nine attitudes. Albania is rated with 61803 nights of stays, Germany with 40092 nights of stays, Switzerland with 24542 nights of stays, Turkey with 23448 nights of stays. While from other countries, 44,380 nights of stays. While the countries that had fewer nights of stay are: Poland with 1518 nights of stays, Spain with 1964 nights of stays, Bosnia and Herzegovina with 2957 nights of stays.

The year 2020 is estimated with a decrease in the number of net stays in a relative way. Albania leads with 48,448 nights of stays, followed by Germany with 18,203 nights of stays, followed by Switzerland with 24,719 nights of stays (ask.rks-gov.net/). While the countries that had at least nine stays are: Bosnia and Herzegovina with 575 nights of stays, Poland with 916 nights of stays. While from all other countries, 22,195 nights of stays have taken part.

The year 2021 is estimated to have the largest increase in the number of stays. Albania had 75887 nights of stays, Germany with 52435 nights of stays, Switzerland with 40193 nights of stays, Turkey with 19094 nights of stays. While the countries with the fewest nights of stay were: Bosnia and Herzegovina with 2127 nights of stays, Spain with 2492 nights of stays and Poland with 2547 nights of stays.

While the year 2022 is the year with the largest increase in the number of net stays where there is a significant increase. Albania participated with 109,481 nights of stays, followed by Germany with 70,094 nights of stays, Switzerland with 50,017 nights of stays and so on. While the countries with the fewest nights of stay are Spain with 1856 nights of stays, Poland with 3635 nights of stays, Bosnia and Herzegovina with 4457 nights of stays and so on (ask.rks-gov.net/). While 112,022 night stays are participants from other countries.

Based on the analysis, we come to the result that starting in 2018, we have a total of 192,761 visitors. While in 2022, we have 297,588 visitors, which for this period of time means an increase in the number of visitors. Based on the research, we also have the number of overnight stays where in 2018 we have 321308 overnight stays, while in 2022 we have 544701 overnight stays (<https://www.unwto.org/>) [24]. That this means an increase in the number of Visitors and also in the number of stays. To analyze in more detail, see the following Table 4.

Table 4. The number of foreign visitors and their night stays, according to the countries from which they come to Kosovo 2018-2022

| Western Region Country | Year 2018 | | Year 2019 | | Year 2020 | | Year 2021 | | Year 2022 | |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights | Guests | Nights |
| Austria | 5076 | 8809 | 5216 | 8657 | 1754 | 2444 | 6787 | 11169 | 8087 | 13699 |
| Belgium | 3156 | 6034 | 3393 | 5768 | 1595 | 2604 | 3827 | 7635 | 4541 | 7684 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 3360 | 5231 | 1715 | 2957 | 369 | 575 | 1395 | 2127 | 2101 | 4457 |
| Great Britain | 6428 | 10113 | 5075 | 9134 | 1517 | 2864 | 5197 | 7772 | 7914 | 13619 |
| France | 4496 | 7184 | 4114 | 6970 | 1802 | 2515 | 3664 | 5687 | 5736 | 9135 |
| Germany | 17178 | 28668 | 18482 | 40092 | 8422 | 18203 | 25671 | 52435 | 34751 | 70094 |
| Greece | 2593 | 9448 | 1768 | 7996 | 1050 | 5628 | 1723 | 2569 | 2274 | 5055 |
| Netherlands | 3107 | 5564 | 2722 | 4644 | 523 | 1020 | 1726 | 2946 | 3258 | 5773 |
| Ital | 6292 | 10253 | 6723 | 11036 | 2165 | 5759 | 5625 | 15108 | 8327 | 20242 |
| Croatia | 5926 | 10421 | 5223 | 10168 | 1996 | 3277 | 9128 | 18417 | 6704 | 13131 |
| Montenegro | 3901 | 6843 | 3732 | 6966 | 1422 | 1873 | 3595 | 5763 | 5639 | 8136 |
| Macedonia | 7842 | 12544 | 7253 | 10948 | 3389 | 5578 | 8874 | 12545 | 12055 | 17358 |
| Poland | 503 | 891 | 978 | 1518 | 287 | 916 | 1448 | 2547 | 2259 | 3635 |
| Serbia | 7475 | 12222 | 5824 | 9850 | 3587 | 5929 | 8006 | 13459 | 9695 | 15868 |
| USA | 13857 | 21862 | 10370 | 19295 | 2946 | 5282 | 8433 | 13500 | 13288 | 24882 |
| Albania | 37141 | 53669 | 34720 | 61803 | 30977 | 48448 | 55591 | 75887 | 64237 | 109481 |
| Slovenija | 6690 | 13394 | 5422 | 9446 | 1139 | 2409 | 2878 | 5233 | 3685 | 6054 |
| Spain | 650 | 2059 | 996 | 1964 | 292 | 1234 | 1453 | 2492 | 1856 | 5895 |
| Turkey | 14848 | 23928 | 14796 | 23448 | 6380 | 9388 | 10907 | 19094 | 17638 | 28462 |
| Switzerland | 13151 | 21741 | 14030 | 24542 | 6494 | 10745 | 24719 | 40193 | 28395 | 50017 |
| Others | 29035 | 50431 | 24779 | 44380 | 7107 | 16061 | 22195 | 4127 | 55147 | 112022 |
| In total | 192761 | 321308 | 177332 | 321581 | 85215 | 152753 | 212843 | 357800 | 297588 | 544701 |

Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, a global trend in tourism has been a shift towards natural destinations and sustainable experiences, as travelers seek more open spaces and connections with nature. This shift has been driven by the need to avoid crowds and increased awareness of the environmental impact of tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there has been a steady increase in destinations offering natural experiences and outdoor activities. Investments in sustainable infrastructure and natural destinations have proven successful, especially in regions that promote ecology and authentic experiences. In the Kosovo context, attractions such as the Cursed Mountains National Park fit this global trend, offering opportunities for sustainable and nature-based tourism. This development, in line with international trends, can be used to attract more visitors and investment in the tourism sector.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From the analyzed data, we can reach the development path of tourism in the western part of Kosovo. This third includes the region of Dukagjin as well as the region of the Albanian Alps, the part in Kosovo. Municipal and urban development plans, as well as other strategic documents, identify tourism as one of the areas with potential for development and generation of new jobs in the western region of Kosovo [11, 25, 26]. The branches of tourism identified are mountain tourism with sports and recreational elements, mainly in Peja, Deçan, Junik, Gjakova and Istog. Cave exploratory tourism (speleology) is developed in Peja, Gjakova, Deçan and Klina. Health and wellness tourism, starting from the thermal mineral waters in Istog and other suitable places for the development of rehabilitation centers throughout the region. This region has places with rich landscapes and active rural life, and also of particular importance is cultural and heritage tourism. Despite this potential for the development of tourism and the development of hospitality services, which will support and

enrich the tourist offer, what has been achieved so far is still far from realizing the full potential of this sector. An important supporting role and direct involvement is seen from tourism information offices. In the region there is a regional tourist center in Junik and the tourist information office and visitor center in Peja and the municipal tourism office in Gjakova which supply tourists and visitors with tourist materials and information. Mountain tourism is a branch with the greatest potential for development in the western region, but this type of tourism with sports and recreational elements and appropriate hospitality buildings, for which the greatest potential is in Peja and Deçan and in certain parts of Gjakova and Istog, requires investment capital that local companies cannot cover. Therefore, this sector should be promoted as suitable for direct foreign investment, including the implementation of a feasibility study and appropriate legal and administrative preparation for investment facilitation. In addition, health and wellness tourism is a suitable sector for general tourism investment. The statement that "Health and wellness tourism is a suitable sector for general tourism investments in Kosovo" can be supported by drawing on successful practices in other similar regions and the natural and cultural resources that Kosovo offers. Natural Resources: Kosovo has untapped thermal springs such as those in the Peja and Istog regions, which could be developed as destinations for thermal tourism and wellness treatments.

Cultural and Natural Heritage: Combining wellness centers with natural landscapes and activities such as hiking in Rugova or relaxing in Germia could attract tourists seeking holistic experiences. According to a report by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), wellness tourism increases revenues by 53% more for international tourists compared to regular tourism, demonstrating the economic impact of this sector.

This proves that Kosovo, with its resources and climate, has similar potential to develop a sustainable wellness tourism sector, attracting investment and increasing competitiveness in the region [9, 18, 27]. In this way, tourism will be developed

by increasing the number of visitors and the development of real tourist destinations.

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