

WELLBEING TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN BALKAN (BULGARIAN EXPERIENCE)**Krasimira Staneva**University of Forestry, Sofia, Bulgaria, bagg.ks@gmail.com

Abstract: The idea of sustainable development of Wellbeing tourism in Balkan region is relating to well-balanced using of nature tourism resources, establishing of national vision about Wellbeing tourism development and branding of authentic Wellness programs, belonged to specific national recreation traditions. The main prerequisites for sustainability development of this tourism product are green environment, thermal springs, clean mountain and recreation potential of the climate and landscape. On the other hand, the high qualified personnel is a big advantage in the managing process. **The aim** of investigation was to test different geomedical indicators that are successfully applied by the World Tourism Organization for measurement of Sustainable Tourism Development and to find applicable ones for Bulgarian Wellbeing tourism. 20 SPA /Wellness hotels, located in regions with different environmental characteristics were examined. The objects were divided into four examined group: EG1- hotels in urban area, EG2- mountain environment area, EG3- Black Sea area, EG4 (Control group): mountain areas in Austria (Vorarlberg land) and Black forest (Germany).

Some geomedical characteristics of environment were applied as indicators for sustainability development of Wellbeing tourism: quality of mineral waters, underground waters and soils, ergonomic audit of hotels equipment and Delphi study of Manager's opinion about environment quality. Results: Comparing the chemical composition and healing effect of the mineral waters from Belchin, Devin, Pomorie and Velingrad since 2007 to 2014 year, we can conclude there is a sustainability of quantity and quality characteristics of mineral springs. Comparing the main touristic sources in Bulgaria with the resources for recreation of Alpine Wellness and Nordic Wellbeing we can describe the **architectonics of presented Wellbeing model**. Obviously, Wellbeing does not have to be costly. It is very simply to offer recreation in fresh nature and healthy home-made food. But it is not enough for develop a successful and sustainability tourism product. We need realize our vision: Healthy from the Nature, but with respect to environment and human health.

Keywords: Wellbeing tourism, geomedical indicators, development concept

INTRODUCTION

Wellbeing tourism is a new approach for recreation. The main prerequisites for sustainability development of this tourism product are green environment, thermal springs, clean mountain and recreation potential of landscape. On the other hand, the high qualified personnel is a big advantage in the managing process. Bulgaria is situated in very attractive part of Balkan region- there are suitable conditions for development and promotion of successful tourism products in the area of soft health tourism: thermal, medical SPA, SPA and Wellbeing. In addition, the well-developed tourism infrastructures can become a main factor for successful Wellbeing destinations management [1].

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of investigation was to test some different geomedical characteristics as indicators of Sustainable Wellbeing Tourism Development according to World Tourism Organization experience.

- **Research network:**

- ✓ Bulgarian-Serbian Cross Border region: Dolna banja, Belchin, Varshetz, Sofia, Kjustendil- thermal SPA resorts, forest recreation;
- ✓ Devin, Bansko and Velingrad (Rhodopes mountain)- thermal SPA resorts with forest recreation possibility;
- ✓ Sunny Beach and Pomorie (Black Sea) – thalasso-therapeutic tourism, sea tourism and thermal SPA resorts.

- **Study objects:**

Some well-developed SPA and thalasso-therapeutic tourism destinations located in famous Bulgarian resorts with different environment characteristics and quality were tested for development of Wellbeing tourism. 20 SPA /Wellness hotels, were chosen. The objects were divided into four examined group: EG1- hotels in urban area, EG2- mountain environment area, EG3- Black Sea area, EG4 (Control group): mountain areas in Austria (Vorarlberg land) and Black forest (Germany).

- **Methodology**

The main geomedical indicators are: indoor and outdoor environment audit including quality of air, water, soil and mineral waters; implementation and management of environmental technology – green energy, waste management, HSSR (Healthy Safety Security Risk Assessment) for clients/personnel; ergonomic audit of professional equipment, implementation of Quality Management System (QMS); electromagnetic pollution screening and geopathic stress analysis.

- **Laboratory tests**

The chemical investigation of underground water and soils included analysis of contents of Cu, Zn, Pb, Cd, Mn, SO₄, BTEX and TPH. The analysis was done at Certificated Laboratory INTERGEO Umwelttechnologie und Abfallwirtschaft GmbH, Salzburg, Austria.

- **Delphi Study (joined to Balkan Delphi Study-Balkan Wellbeing Project)**

The questionnaire's screening joined 32 Medical SPA Managers, 18 members of Medical SPA Associations and 60 clients (2012-2017).

RESULTS

The main laboratory results showed good quality of underground water, soils and mineral waters in mountain objects. The quality of using mineral resources for tourism is quite good. All of mineral springs managed by local Municipalities: Dolna banja, Kjustendil, Sofia, Bansko, Velingrad and Pomorie. The Municipality's responsibility for management of mineral springs are very helpful for creation of sustainability Wellbeing destinations.

The electromagnetic pollution (EMP) and geopathic zones were no detected in the mountain resorts. Some environmental problems with quality of the underground waters and soils and high values of non-ionized electromagnetic field were obtained in urban hotels in Sofia, Sunni beach and Kjustendil.

Comparing the chemical composition and healing effect of mineral waters from Belchin, Devin, Pomorie and Velingrad since 2007 to 2014 year, we can resume that there is sustainability of quantity and quality characteristics of mineral springs [1, 2].

The Ergonomic Audit obtained deficiency of main ergonomic standards and comfort for healthy and safety workplace in most of the studied hotels and recreation centres.

The Managers opinion about impact of environmental status on quality of Wellbeing including SPA services were too different and depended on geographical situation of examined object and professional expertise of employers. A very hot idea was marked about landscape recreation potential of mountain objects [2]. Some of responds declared their enthusiasm about development of the new tourism landscape trials in Stara planina mountain (Bulgarian-Serbian crossborder area) and Rhodopes mountain also.

We achieved clarity on the clients need of specific environmental information, data of healthy risk assessment and ergonomic audit of building, recreation centres and equipment also [3].

All obtained Delphi Study results for Bulgaria are corresponding to final Balkan Wellbeing projects results (fig. 1)

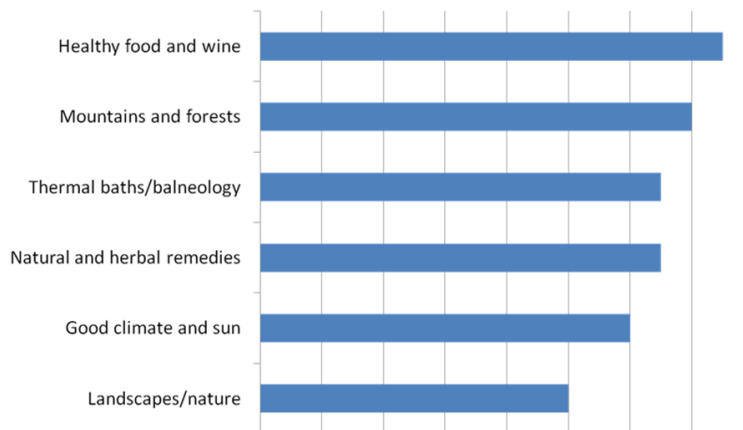


Figure 1 Customers selling tourism products propositions

Source: Project KTIA_AIK_12-1-2013-004, 2013

DISCUSSION

Some trends for sustainability Wellbeing destinations management in Balkan (Bulgarian area)

In accordance with obtained research results and an economical estimate of situation in Bulgaria we can present a very new concept idea for implementation of some geomedical characteristics as sustainability development indicators. They can describe as a local indicators which impact on main planning process, Risk Analysis and development of Wellbeing destinations.

The core of presented idea is suitable combination of Black Sea, green mountains and well-developed SPA resorts which should be the focus of our new recreation tourism products. Their contents should be developed like gastro-heritage, traditional cuisine, authentic wellness programs (geo-wellness) and geomedical tourism. The very attractive product can be forest recreation tourism with forest outdoor bathing. Obviously, Wellbeing does not have to be costly. It is very simply to offer a recreation in the safety nature with healthy home-made food. But it is not enough for the successful and sustainability tourism product development. We need realize our geomedical friendly vision: Healthy from the Nature, but with respect to the environment and human health.

In line with Balkan Wellbeing concept, Bulgaria is very attractive and suitable place for Wellbeing tourism development with different products lines (fig. 2).

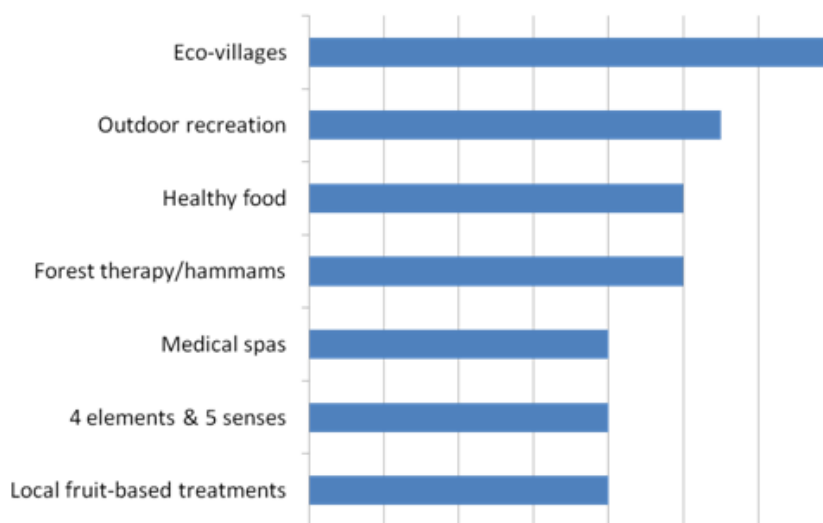


Figure 2 Suggested Main Sources for Wellbeing Product Development

Source: Project KTIA_AIK_12-1-2013-004, 2013 with author's changes

Comparing the main touristic resource in Bulgaria with those needed to develop of the Alpine Wellness and Nordic Wellbeing [4, 5, 6], we can describe the **architectonics of presented Bulgarian Wellbeing model:**

- *Preliminary development level*
 - An identification of Wellbeing and SPA resources;
 - An indoor and outdoor assessment of environment;
 - An electromagnetic pollution (EMP) screening and geopathological investigation [7, 8];
- *Main development level*
 - Development, marketing and branding ideas creation
- *Postdevelopment level*
 - Monitoring of geomedical indicators- data collection;
 - Evaluation of Geomedical indicators and analysis.

CONCLUSION

We obtained some advances of chosen geomedical indicators in Bulgaria: most of them are corresponding to the European Environmental Agency rules and Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water also. Some of the tested geomedical indicators are used in the risk analysis, risk assessment and risk planning in SPA and Wellbeing tourism management plans.

In additional the collected and analyzed geomedical information can apply for the improving of quality of life and Health prevention of local population. Obviously, we presented a multifunctional complex of environmental

characteristics, ergonomic comfort and geopathological assessment which are oriented to Wellbeing comfort of the clients. [9,10].

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