Modelling of Tourism Region: Case of Novi Sad Gravitational Zone

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Abstract

Significant tourist centers are inseparably linked with their gravitational zone, which together make up a tourist destination, or tourist region. The tourist region is a complex spatial unit, composed of a number of elements, such as primary, secondary and tertiary tourist centers, then gateways of tourist flows, intraregional network of roads, as well as directions that make tourist flows to the region of the tourist region. Therefore, the formation of a tourist region model on previous element and ideas must be the basis for the development of tourism in each tourist center, which has predispositions to be primary. The subject of this work is the modeling of the tourist region of Novi Sad, where the spatial coverage of work is limited to the gravitational zone of the city. The task of the paper is to determine the level of the centrality of tourist sites within the Novi Sad tourist region.

Keywords: *Tourist region, Modeling, Level of centrality, Gravitational zone, Novi Sad.*

Introduction

Many authors (Laws, 1995; Hollway, 1989; Gunn, 1994; Heath, Wall, 1992; Jovičić, Ivanović, 2006; Bakić, 2002; Dulčić, 2001) have dealt with the notion of tourism destination, its size, elements, planning and significance for tourism development. Present is a great disagreement between authors on the question what tourism destination entails, that is, the spatial level to which the notion is applied. Thus, Hollway (1989) is an advocate for the integral concept of conceptual definition. This is because, according to his understanding, every aim of travel is implied under this notion, regardless to its hierarchical position in space. That means that destination can be a facility in which hospitality services are offered, a tourist place with a rounded tourist offer, a tourism region which includes several tourist places, but also one whole country. Gunn (1994) is on a different side by defining destination as a complex of different recreational and social content, which are found at one locality. Locality is, by definition, a narrow space which can include one or more facilities organized into spatial and business system.

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A good example for this would be an apartment complex, camp, but also a hotel with annexes, apartment blocks or bungalows and the area around them.

World Tourism Organization is more determined in solving this argue, by taking into the account the widest possible opinion of the most of the scientific community in the areas of tourism and developing a special pattern in which academic institutions and organizations of destination management are included. 'Local tourism destination' is thus defined as physical space which includes tourism products, such as necessary services, attractions and tourism resources. It has physical and administrative borders, defined manager, as well as pictures and perceptions of its market competitiveness. Thus, local destinations represent the key component in providing tourism products and tourism policy implementation (WTO, 2002). Legislation of the Republic of Serbia was directed by the same logic with the newest Law on Tourism adopted in 2009, that very briefly and clearly defines tourism destination as a tourist travel destination, which is equipped to enable the reception and stay of tourists (Law on Tourism, 2009). This definition is not precise when it comes to the formulation of destination's spatial boundaries, but its content and meaning indirectly points to the conclusion that it refers to the classic tourist place, recognized by many authors (Heath, Wall, 1992; Laws, 1995; Bakić, 2002; Štetić, 2003).

From the notion of tourism destination, the notion of tourism region started to develop, as its gravitational area on which it claims the right and interest to draw natural and social resources from, so as to meet the needs of its tourists and thus prolong their stay and increase consumption. Lew and McKercher (2006) discus about tourism region in mentioned context, while they are dealing with the way tourists move in a destination and within tourism region, while spending leisure time. They state that within the tourism region space, and outside central tourist place, there can be different tourist attractions which affect the greater attractiveness of the destination itself and the spatial model of tourist movement. On the other hand, Wu and Cai (2006) discuss recreational belt around the metropolis which can, depending on the city size and traffic infrastructure, spread up to 250km in radius. It is about a large number of accommodation and recreation facilities, complexes and zones in the metropolis gravitational zone, which by themselves represent tourism destination. Čomić (1988) has a similar opinion when he deals with the concept of central tourist place. This author defines the criteria for determining central tourist place and defines all places of lower hierarchical rank in region which are in an interdependent position in relation to the functions that the central tourist place possesses. Bakić (2002) takes over the concept of regional tourism development which is based on the relation between the primary and secondary tourist places, which are found in its surroundings. A few authors (Gunn, 1993; Leiper, 1990; Miossec, 1976) have dealt with the patterns of nodal structures, which are based on the same ideas about the existence of tourism region. They also talk about coverage around the primary nodal structure, in which lower rank nodes are placed. The model of tourism destination design, by author Dredge (1999), emerged as a result of theoretical understanding and thinking about the need for the existence of a specific, common, uniformed concept of destination development, that is, tourism region, through its planning, shaping and designing, and based on the possible components beforehand established and theoretically defined.

Based on the previously considered literature and discussions, it was suggested that the model of designing tourism regions is to be adopted, because the model is given in concise form, quite clearly and without burdening and limiting elements and in that sense it can be applied to different destination types and areas of different sizes. The aim of this model was to represent the dominance of tourism region in relation to the real tourists' needs and not those whose travels are linked to work, health or visiting friends and relatives. In that sense, three

main assumptions were identified and they act as basis for model development. First assumption is based on the fact that generating tourism markets and tourism regions are perceived as separate geographical entities. Second assumption is based on the idea that numerous aspects of tourism region demand is more flexible hierarchical structure, more adjustable to a variety of different locations, spatial coverage and market characteristics. The third assumption is fundamental and it is based on the planning and model design, which includes central (primary) tourist place, its gravitational zone, tourism generating markets, nodes, districts, circulatory routes and gates, as possible components of other tourism regions.

Defining spatial scope of the research

Novi Sad is the capital of Vojvodina, the Northern Province in the Republic of Serbia. According to the last census in 2011, 300.000 citizens live in this city. When the gravity zone of Novi Sad is talked about, that is, about its functional area, in general all authors who have dealt with these problematics refer to the same space, more or less. Of course there are certain discrepancies which are the consequence of different understanding of some authors, but also the time in which they made the conclusions, which settlements are located within the gravitational zone of Novi Sad, considering that Novi Sad as a city grew, with which its functions grew as well, but also its economic and social influence on the space which surrounds it. Still it should be noted that all authors are in agreement that gravitational zone of Novi Sad, in addition to city area, includes Bački Petrovac, Bačka Palanka, Vrbas, Temerin, Srbobran, Titel, Žabalj, Bečej, Sremski Karlovci i Beočin (Đurđev, Ćurčić, 1998). Moreover, Bukov believes that Bač, Irig and Ada belong to the gravity zone (Bukurov, 1970). Though Đurić agrees with Bukov about Bač and Irig, he adds Odžaci and Kula to the functional area (Đurić, 1970). Ilić suppliments the gravity zone of Novi Sad just with Bač (Ilić, 1970), while Đere includes Inđija and Irig (Đere, 1984). On the other hand, a somewhat newer document of the space mentioned, which all authors equally treat as the gravity zone, includes Bač, Irig, Inđija and Stara Pazova (Spatial Plan for the Republic of Serbia, 1996).

However, in the most recent time, Bubalo-Živković (2003) has comprehensively dealt with the problem of determining gravitational zone of Novi Sad while writing her PhD thesis. By looking at numerous relations and occurrences which exist in the observed area, this author has isolated three zones of influence of Novi Sad as an urban center. First zone refers to the area which includes the city of Novi Sad, which implies settlements such as Veternik, Futog, Begeč, Kać, Budisava, Kovilj, Čenej, Kisač, Rumenka, Stepanovićevo, Petrovaradin, Sremska Kamenica, Ledinci and Novi Sad. The border of the third zone includes settlements: Bačka Palanka, Boćane, Bogojevo, Sivac, Bačka Topola, Bačko Petrovo Selo, Novi Bečej, Elemir, Zrenjanin, Perlez, Stari Slankamen, Stara Pazova, Ruma, Jazak i Neštin (Bubalo-Živković et. al, 2009). The border of the second gravity zone is somewhere between the previous two, but that is not of crucial importance to this paper. The previously mentioned border, the third gravity zone of Novi Sad will actually be used in the writing of this paper. Thus, in the territorial sense, the research subject will be the following municipalities: Bačka Topola, Zrenjanin, Novi Bečej, Kula, Odžaci, Apatin, Sombor, Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Bečej, Vrbas, Žabalj, Novi Sad, Srbobran, Sremski Karlovci, Temerin, Titel, Irig, Inđija, Ruma and Stara Pazova, Sremska Mitrovica, Šid i Pećinci.

Therefore, there is no doubt that Novi Sad is an important gravitational center and that it represents a functional center of a wider area in the geographical sense. As far as tourism goes,

it should be said that Novi Sad is the second city in the Republic of Serbia in regards to its realized tourist traffic (in 2017 number of tourists/overnight stay = 195.054/496.625) and as a tourist place, only behind Belgrade, Zlatibor, Kopaonik and Vrnjačka Banja. Looking in relation to AP Vojvodina, Novi Sad participates in the Provincial tourist traffic with 31,7% overnight stays and 39,3% tourists, which clearly proves its significance as a tourist center within the Province. In that sense, there is a need to create a functional model of tourism region on the area of its widest gravitational zone, so that functional links and relations between tourist places of different level of centrality would be established, and which would contribute to the total visibility of tourism products and services, and likewise the increase in the number of realized overnight stays.

Data and Methodology

During the research process several different methods were used: (1) Cabinet research, (2) The qualitative method of centrality, (3) model application of planning and designing tourism destination place (Dredge, 1999).

Cabinet research

Cabinet research implies studying primary and secondary sources (Xie, 2006). Through this method, data that were collected are about gravitational area of Novi Sad, its characteristics, attractive values and service-material base which nodes have in the area covered by the research.

The qualitative method of the centrality

In practice, the qualitative method is most often used to determine the centrality level within the space of tourism destination (Čomić, 1988). The qualitative method should identify different levels of service qualities and functions, which central tourist places possess and in that way perform ranking according to centrality level. It is logical that the services and functions of higher quality are present in tourist places of higher degree of centrality and vice versa. The model is set in such a way that there are four levels of centrality, according to which tourist functions and services are ranked which are represented in a tourist place, such as accommodation, nourishment, sports and recreation, culture and entertainment, traffic infrastructure, commerce or some other function, which represents an important characteristic of the tourist place. The place which collects the most points according to every observed function has the highest level of centrality, and centrality ranking according to the following scale:

- Level of centrality I: ≥ 201 points;
- Level of centrality II: 101-200 points;
- Level of centrality III: 51-100 points;
- Level of centrality IV: 01-50 points.

A – accommodation function: A1 – hotel of the first category; A2 – hotel of the second category; A3 – hotel of the third and fourth category; A4 – motels, bed and breakfasts, hotels of the fifth category; A5 – camps, rental rooms and vacation homes; B – nutrition function: B1 – restaurants of the first category; B2 – restaurants of the second category; B3 – restaurants of

the third and fourth category; B4 – self-service restaurants and fast food restaurants; B5 – taverns and inns.

C – sport and recreational functions: C1 – golf, sports hall, indoor pool; C2 – outdoor pool, horse riding, water sports; C3 – mini sports courts, miniature golf, shooting range, organized bathing area, marina; C4 – bowling alley, cycling and trim tracks, bathing area with wild beach; C5 – walking paths, billiards. D – cultural and entertainment functions: D1 – traditional massive festivals, archaeological park; D2 – theater, local museum, organized archeological locality; D3 – summer theater, art colony, smaller museum, regional character manifestation, monument of great significance, cultural center; D4 – local character manifestation, memorial house; D5 – cinema, gallery. E – Traffic: E1 – airport; E2 – combined station (bus and train station within the same facility); E3 – local bus or train station, river port or port; E4 – stop within the settlement; E5 – stop on the road or tracks outside the settlement.

Table 1. *Qualitative model for determining the central tourist place*

Functions of the center	Points				
	5	4	3	2	1
A	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
B	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
C	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
D	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
E	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5

Source: Čomić, 1988: 185.

Data collection aimed at determining the level of centrality was carried out between April and July 2018.

Application of the planning and arrangement of the tourist destination – region

The tourist region is a wider space that a person chooses to visit and spend at least one night in it, in order to experience some of the ways of spending free time, whether it is entertainment, relaxation or recreation (Leiper, 1990). It is spatially, natural-geographically and physiognomically defined geographical entity (Jovičić, 1980) , in which highly attractive natural and anthropogenic goods prevail (Prikryl, 1972) , with tourism as a planned (Piha, 1979), one of or a dominant and unifying activity, in which case the geographical figure is a consequence of the high quality of these goods, and in later stages of the development and the consequence of tourism as a major activity (Vasović, 1971; Blažević, Pepeonik, 1979), in which objects, regardless of their origin, are in constant mutual interdependence (Čomić, 2005), which also causes constant changes among them (Plavša, 1997; Plavša, Garača, 2017).

Therefore, it is a complex formation, composed of a series of elements located in space, which are more or less interconnected and interdependent. It is a central or primary tourist place or node with its secondary, tertiary and quaternary places, tourist districts/zones, a network of interregional and intraregional communications and gates.

Nodes

Nodes represent the base of a tourist circulation of each tourist destination. Depending on their importance, size and attractiveness, they conceptually encompass different formations from the tourist site to the tourist center. Nodes consist of two basic components, which are most often interdependent and that relate to an attractive complex and service components. An attractive complex is any content that tourists visit, which can be one or more individual attractions, locations or facilities that make the place significant (Leiper, 1990). In the area of a tourist region, the service component includes variously ranked contents, such as accommodation, restaurants, retail and all other services necessary for tourists (Smith, 1992).

Districts

Districts or zones represent a spatial formation within the tourist region, which combines two or more nodes, whose tourism is based on the same type of attractiveness. This is a spatial entity, which has a similar or the same form of tourist motive. The existence of such districts supports the idea that each tourist region is capable of meeting different tourist needs (Dredge, 1999).

Communication network

Communications are extremely important for the existence of tourism as a phenomenon, both in terms of connecting generative areas of tourists and tourist destinations, as well as in terms of linking service and attractive complexes within a single node, and connecting different nodes within the same tourist destination (Prideaux, 2000; Kaul, 1985). The communication network is classified into main tourist corridors, i.e. interregional communications, which serve to receive tourist flows in the area of a tourist region and into intraregional network of communications which, within the tourist region, enables the movement of tourists between nodes of different hierarchical levels (Pearce, 1995).

Gates

Gates are either entrances or accesses to a destination and are located along interregional routes / communications. Although often unmarked, these gates have an important physical and psychological role to indicate arrival to a certain destination or to help in the orientation of tourists. Gates often represent an expression of welcome to a tourist destination or region, so they should be given importance during the planning and arrangement of a certain destination. The appearance of these entrance gates can be differently experienced by different market segments, which is why attention should be focused on the construction of the most suitable gates, taking into account the characteristics of tourists, who will probably use a certain gate for their arrival or departure (Dredge, 1999).
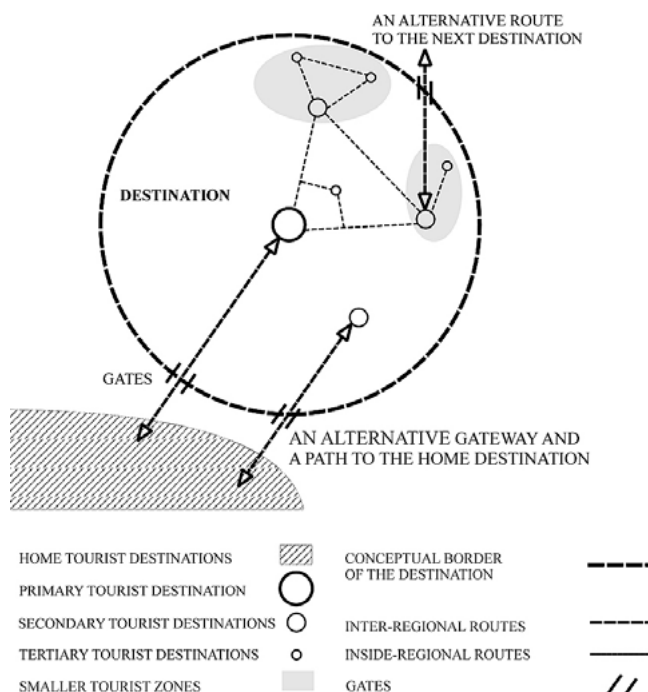
Figure 1. Schematic representation of the structure of the
destination region
Source: Dredge, 1999.

Research results and discussions

Within this part of the paper the findings obtained by cabinet research and statistical data processing are presented. These are data on (1) the content of the tourist region of Novi Sad, (2) the centrality of nodes within the tourist region of Novi Sad and (3) the model of the tourist region of Novi Sad.

The content of the tourist region of Novi Sad

Based on natural-geographic and cultural-historical values and material base of tourism they have at their disposal, certain sites and localities have been identified. These localities could get the status of a node, i.e. a tourist place of the appropriate centrality and thus become part of the model of the tourist region of Novi Sad. In that regard, the following localities are suggested: Zrenjanin, Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Bečej, Sremski Karlovci, Bačka Topola, Vrdnik, Bačka Palanka, Temerin, Inđija, Stara Pazova, Vrbas, Apatin, Iriški Venac, Fantast, Ečka, Ruma, Titel, Stari Slankamen, Beška, Novi Bečej, Kula, Bač, Junaković, Melenci, Čurug, Kulpin, Šid, Pećinci and Karađorđevo.

The centrality of the nodes of the tourist region of Novi Sad

By using the qualitative method for determining the centralities, significant results regarding the hierarchical levels of nodes in the Novi Sad tourist region were achieved. When it comes to

Novi Sad, this procedure has not be implemented, because it is rather clear that this city represents a tourist place with the highest degree of centrality in its own gravity zone. It was therefore important to establish nodes, i.e. tourist sites of the second, third and fourth level, as a lower network of tourist services.

Table 2. *Tourist places of second order within the Novi Sad tourist region*

Town / Function	Accommodation	Nutrition	Recreation	Culture	Traffic	Amount:
Zrenjanin	17	33	37	27	6	120
Sombor	16	39	28	65	6	154
S. Mitrovica	8	21	26	49	9	113
Bečej	11	18	29	37	6	101

Table 2 shows the places within the tourist region of Novi Sad, which, on the basis of a qualitative analysis of the contents and functions that these sites possess, are ranked as secondary tourist places, which exceeded the limiting value of 100 points in the total sum regarding the evaluation of the existing functions. Sombor stands out as a place that has the richest contents which can play a role in the development of tourism, while Bečej, in its functional sense, has barely reached the entrance point into the group of secondary-level destinations.

Table 3. *Tourist places of the third order within Novi Sad tourist region*

Town / Function	Accommodation	Nutrition	Recreation	Culture	Traffic	Amount:
S. Karlovci	14	9	10	30	4	67
B. Topola	8	3	18	30	6	65
Vrdnik	32	4	17	14	2	69
B. Palanka	11	6	19	28	3	67
Temerin	4	14	11	30	2	61
Inđija	6	15	15	26	6	68
S. Pazova	11	9	11	14	6	51
Šid	4	9	18	15	6	52
Vrbas	2	6	27	23	6	64
Apatin	8	10	19	12	3	52

Previously presented table 3 gives data on places classified as a group of third-level tourist places, which ranged between 51-100 points, based on valorized functions of accommodation, nutrition, recreation, culture and traffic. Stara Pazova, Šid and Apatin achieved limiting values, while Vrdnik, as a place of a specific type of tourism (spa tourism and recreation) achieved the highest points, although not enough to reach the places of the second level. Table 4 shows places that, according to the functions they hold, are classified into the group of fourth-level tourist sites, which means that in the total sum of functionality they achieved less than 50 points. In this sense, Ečka and Melenci are the lowest ranking places, while Fantast, Ruma, and Titel are on their way of becoming tourist places of higher levels regarding tourist functions they possess.

Table 4. *Tourists of the fourth rank within the Novi Sad destination region*

Town / Function	Accommodation	Nutrition	Recreation	Culture	Traffic	Amount:
Venac	4	4	14	12	1	35
Fantast	8	3	19	12	0	42
Ečka	4	4	9	3	0	20
Ruma	6	6	11	13	6	42
Titel	4	6	10	15	5	40
S. Slankamen	4	10	13	10	2	39
Beška	6	8	9	9	5	37
Pećinci	3	4	8	6	2	23
Bač	4	5	10	13	3	35
Junaković	3	3	22	3	1	32
Melenci	3	3	11	2	1	20
Čurug	2	5	8	6	3	24
Kula	4	5	10	9	3	31
Karađorđevo	3	5	15	5	1	29
Kulpin	2	2	8	11	1	24
N. Bečej	3	5	11	16	3	38

Model of the tourist region of Novi Sad

Based on the previously published data it was possible to create a model of the Novi Sad tourist region, which should be seen as the basis for further development of tourism in the analyzed area that could further bring benefits to Novi Sad, as a primary tourist place, and to tourist places of lower levels of centrality.

Based on their geographical and tourist location, tourist functions and forms of tourism trends, which dominate in some tourist destinations, five different tourist zones / districts within the Novi Sad Tourist Region are identified: Potiska, Fruška Gora, West Bačka or Upper Danube, Transit zone E-70 and Transit zone E-75. By applying the model shown on Picture 1, conceptual tourist regions with corresponding structural elements which make up their constituent parts, emerged in the area of the wider gravitational zone of Novi Sad. As far as the conceptual model is concerned, the question is whether there are mutual relations, influences and connections between tourist sites of different levels of centrality within the same tourist zone, as well as in relation to Novi Sad as a primary tourist place. It should be mentioned that the gates in this model have been provisionally placed at the points of entry into the area of the Novi Sad tourist region, and that their planning and layout should be well thought out if one such concept and model of tourist design and development of space in the area of the wider gravitational zone of Novi Sad is to be accepted.
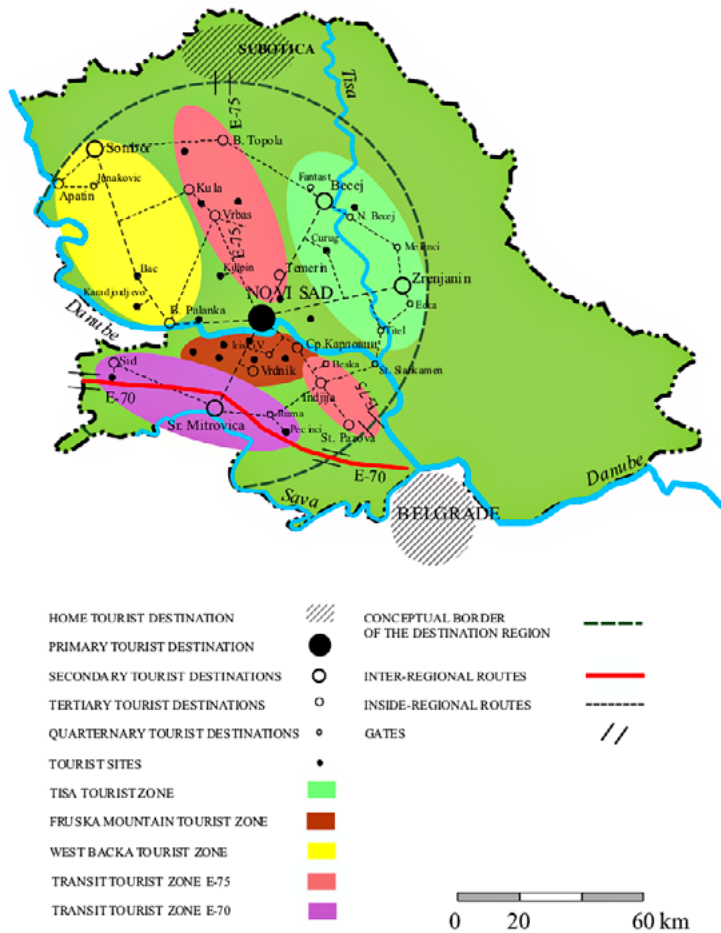
Map 1. Model of the destination region of Novi Sad with the presentation of tourist places according to the centrality

Conclusion

The model of the tourist region of Novi Sad was formed on the basis of the previous comprehensive research and analysis of functions and material base, which tourist sites in the area of the gravitational zone of Novi Sad possess. The model itself represents a conditional and theoretical setting of reality, which means that it is a rational and purposeful picture of the possible reality in the future period, i.e. the image to be pursued and which should represent the goal of Novi Sad tourist workers and space, which is defined by this research. The qualitative method of determining the centralities provided information on the basis of different contents and infrastructure, which in their capacity can have a tourist purpose as well; the fact which represents a positive basis and a predisposition for future development of tourism. What makes the highest contribution of this study is determining the centers of tourist sites based on previously defined criteria. That is how we obtained the image about the quality of the content of the infrastructure, which exists in the observed area and which can and must be used in the future for the purposes of tourism, i.e. for satisfying the cultural and recreational needs of tourists.

Acknowledgement

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