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## **Ski and spa tourism as local development strategy – the case of Krynica Zdrój (Poland)**

### **Abstract**

The socio-economic, cultural and technological transformations, characteristic features of the globalization era, result in altering the ways in which tourist and recreational services are rendered, leading to the formation of the so-called mega-tourism trends. At present, tourism has become one of the fastest developing economic branches in many countries around the world. This dynamic development includes, among others, SPA and wellness and outdoor physical activity sectors. Slowly giving up their therapeutic functions, spa resorts aspire to expand their tourist and recreational infrastructure through the organization of ski lifts and slopes and development of other sport facilities. The intention behind this study is to analyze the theoretical assumptions pertaining to health tourism and active recreation in Poland, where the potential of such economic activities is still not fully used. The impact of natural factors on the development of health and mountain tourism and accompanying activities was presented on the basis of Krynica Zdrój located in the Małopolska province. Having reviewed the local development strategy, the impact of tourism on the activation of the city and region economics was determined.

**Key words:** Krynica Zdrój; local development; ski; spa tourism

### **Introduction**

In view of economic, social, technological, and cultural transformations, many ideas of leisure activities are being revalued. Today, demand and supply of tourism and recreation services are changing and undergoing the process of global unification. Now we can observe the so-called mega trends in tourism, understood as global trends noticeable in recent years in the tourism market around the world. Special place in modern transformations of tourism is taken by active leisure and services aimed at the regeneration and preventive health care (spa and wellness type services). A feature of the modern leisure and tourism, and also the direction of their development is health and its various aspects. Particular attention is paid to trends in physical activity in the open air. An important aspect of this global fashion is to use the advantages of the geographical environment in the tourist offer and to move away from passive recreation. These trends affect the whole

society, both older and younger. Older people usually need services related to the improvement of health and regeneration of physical strength. Young people look for mental rest and relaxation in addition to services improving their appearance and health, as well as an opportunity to test their abilities and demonstrate their strengths (Olchowik, 2006). Also, due to greater prosperity and mobility of the inhabitants of developed countries, general access to specialized equipment and a wide range of leisure services in the market, tourist services are now egalitarian, creating the phenomenon of mass tourism. Today, segmentation of qualified tourism is no longer as clear as a dozen or so years ago (Preisler, 2011). An example could be an expedition to the highest peaks of the world or a trip around the world, available to almost every moderately wealthy European. Contemporary tourism is therefore a multifaceted phenomenon combining social, economic and cultural aspects. Tourism is now one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the economy of many countries in the world and it has an increasing impact on local development by creating economic growth and increasing employment (Krupa, Wołowiec, 2010). In addition, the development of active tourism is possible both in areas surrounding large cities and in rural and peripheral regions. It even seems that non-urbanized areas, after investments in the necessary infrastructure are made, are predisposed to the development of this type of activity due to the specific characteristics of the natural environment (Lehto, Oksa, 2004). In this regard, areas most predisposed to the development of active medical tourism seem to be spa towns in the mountains. Therefore, spa tourism, cooperating closely with the tourism sector, takes a special place among tourist services. Spa tourism services were seen for a long time as social and medical services, and their importance for the development of cities and regions was ignored (Krupa, Wołowiec, 2010). Today, the concern for health and for maintaining physical fitness is an important purpose of tourists visiting spas. Globally, it is estimated that the value of medical tourism will grow from 40 trillion US dollars in 2004 to 100 trillion US dollars in 2012 (Herrick, 2007). This trend should be seen as development prospects for Polish spas. Therefore, spas should expand and improve their offer and they should develop an even more abundant set of attractive products in medicine, culture, and active recreation. Spas should form the so-called tourism clusters, combining both medical treatment and active leisure tourism (Nordin 2003, Mańczak, 2010). However, this implies the presence of developed tourist and recreational infrastructure, such as ski lifts and ski slopes, fitness trails, sports facilities, swimming pools, etc. (Wojnarowski, Wołowiec, 2008), especially that nowadays there is a tendency to move away from typical health resort treatments to wellness and SPA services. In case of Poland, this is mainly caused by people's inability to spend 2–3 weeks in a sanatorium and their growing interest in health resorts services for healthy people, wanting only to improve their health and well-being. Therefore, weekend trips and stays for a few days are most common. The purpose of this article is to present the theoretical assumptions about the development and operation of services related to health tourism and active

recreation, and their role in local development. The analysis presents the prevailing trends in spa industry and in active winter tourism and their role in creating local economic growth. These considerations refer to actions taken by the local government of Krynica Zdrój, a well-known health resort and an important place on the Polish ski map.

### **Tourism and local development**

The theoretical assumptions of local development based on local tourism resources can be found in classical theories of regional development. According to Butowski (2010), theoretical basis for tourism development programming may include: theories of endogenous development – identifying the potential of tourism; theories of network development – the construction of tourist products; theories of export base – the commercialization of tourist products. Endogenous resources forming the basis for development based on tourism services include the presence and popularity of local tourist attractions, tourism management (tourism infrastructure), and transport accessibility. An important element of this theory is the involvement of local authorities mainly with regard to territorial marketing (information, promotion, advertising) as well as to technical and institutional infrastructure, determining and supporting the development of tourism. Social relationships (entrepreneurship, openness) may also be of some significance. It should be pointed out that if we analyse local development factors, an increasing importance is attributed to human resources. Therefore, it seems that the aspect of attitudes of local authorities can be complemented by the leadership factor and the theory of “capital attracting models” highlighting the active role of local government. Also social relations, such as pro-tourist and entrepreneurial attitudes of the population can be related to the theory of “production cycle” in which economic development is associated with the development of innovation in tourism product. Therefore, development is most common in tourist areas, where the demand created by tourists stimulates innovation (competitiveness) development, implemented with the use of intangible assets such as attitudes of the inhabitants of the region.

With regard to the theory of network development it should be referred to the concept of tourism product (Więckowski, 2010). Local tourist product is created with the participation of a network of different actors interacting in a given territorial space (Soliński, Krupa, 2006; Zdon-Korzeniowska, 2009). The characteristics of a network tourism product (brand) include: the fragmented structure of entities and tourist facilities, but with a common concept of their operation and their common determinant, interaction between partners for further economies of scale and for developing high quality solutions, as well as the reduction of administrative barriers by collaboration of public and private entities. Also high level of tourism services can have an impact on the positive assessment of the tourists (Winiarczyk-Rażniak, Raźniak, 2010).

Tab. 1. The impact of tourism on the local economy

Traditional elements of tourist attractiveness	Tourism values	Artefacts and cultural and historical values
		Natural values
	Tourism infrastructure	Accommodation
		Catering facilities
	Accompanying infrastructure	
Elements of territorial marketing	Promotion and tourist information	Carried out by public authorities with the participation of the private sector
	Creation and commercialization of tourism product	Implemented by public and private sectors
Selected elements of technical infrastructure	Transport infrastructure (accessibility)	External
		Internal
	Environmental infrastructure	
Socio-economic, cultural and political conditions	Attitudes of the local community	Social relations, command of foreign languages, etc.
		Entrepreneurship
	Actions of public authorities	Public policy objectives, investment incentives for the tourism sector
		Ensuring security
	Protecting the environment and historical heritage	

Source: Butowski, 2010: 6

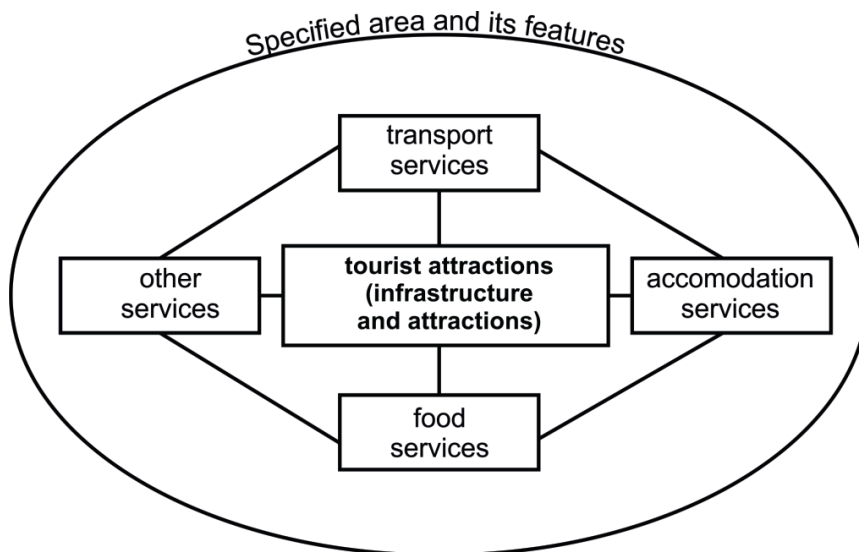


Fig. 1. The structure of tourism product in the “mesh” concept

Source: Butowski, 2010: 8

Horizontal and vertical structure of tourism product is particularly important in a network approach. In horizontal construction, emphasis is put on the similarity or relationship between services and goods offered to tourists in order to create a homogeneous (recognizable) product. Vertical construction of tourism product includes tourist attractions and material infrastructure both in objective terms (tourist services) and subjective terms (service providers, administrators), with close cooperation of all stakeholders.

However, in an attempt to refer the concept of economic base to local development based on tourism services, we must distinguish the key (competitive) tourist industry of the area. This “specialization of tourism form” will form the basis for “exporting” the tourism product and it will create local demand for goods and services linked to and associated with the key industry (the multiplier effect). Similarly, the theory of the basic product relating to regional specialization and export activities can be successfully transposed to local development in the context of tourism development.

An important theory of regional development in the context of local development based on tourism can also be the theory of location (Kožuch, 2011). In this approach, local cultural and historical values take on particular importance (e.g. Rome, Paris, monuments, music festivals, battlefields, traditional products, etc.) because they are unique and do not have competition. Similarly, the values of the natural environment (the highest mountain peaks, north and south poles, relict and endemic species, etc.) create the uniqueness of the place and can provide local strategic resources.

In contrast, the concept of polarization and the theory of cumulative causation by Myrdal and the theory of “core and periphery” are based on the state of disequilibrium that drives the development process, leading to an even greater diversity (Churski, 2004). The premise of these theories is the claim that economic development, both sectoral and local, can take a course in an unsustainable way (centre and periphery). In this approach, tourists choose destinations of their trips by the occurrence of natural assets (mountains, sea, forests, lakes) and anthropogenic attractions (monuments, tourist infrastructure) (Wosiek, 2009). So there are two types of areas. Underdeveloped areas often have natural values that are of interest to tourists from more developed areas. Therefore, tourism can be one of the factors stimulating the development of peripheral regions. On the other hand, there are areas where tourism is continuously one of the most important functions. In these popular tourist areas, tourist offer is continuously expanding and improving. Such activities will be characterized by “innovation”, acting as the local “growth centre”. These theories explain the reasons why certain areas maintain the leading position in the tourism market. On the other hand again, tourism can serve as a motor for economic development not only in tourist centres, but also in peripheral areas (Christaller, 1964).

Finally, we can refer to Marshall’s industrial districts (Amin, 2003). Local specialization leads to economic growth by resources of skilled workers,

development of support and ancillary industries and the possibility of work-sharing between companies and the use of specialized infrastructure. Also, with regard to tourism as local specialization, there is an accumulation of expertise and know-how within the territorial production systems and the creation of an innovative environment, the so called *innovative milleaux*. Development of local knowledge networks of businesses and their employees and other institutions consists of collective learning process. Strong emphasis is put on soft factors such as entrepreneurship, trust, extra-industrial interdependence, shared vision of leadership. The most important factor, then, is the ability of local authorities to cooperate with businesses and professionals. It creates favorable conditions for the exchange of information and ideas. In this respect, the geographical proximity of the cooperating companies becomes important (Pietrzyk, 1995). The development of territorial production systems depends to a large extent on historical, social, demographic and political circumstances. However, the key role is played by social (relational) capital. Relational capital refers to the relationships that exist between enterprises operating in the area and public institutions and business environment. These relations are both material – regarding the market, and informal – regarding the phenomenon of reciprocity, that is, the exchange of information and services beyond the purely commercial transactions. In the presented approach, we find a located production system characterized by an interplay of social, economic and cultural factors in a given area. To create such system the population inhabiting the area must have a strong sense of identity, which enables them to notice, in addition to economic benefits, also the advantages arising from social relationships. These features can be found in local communities focused on tourism services. People living in regions with a long tradition of tourist services, such as the region of Podhale or in towns that are known health resorts such as Krynica Zdrój or Szczawnica depend on tourism not only economically. There are also noticeable differences in their mentality, urban culture of residents and actions taken by the local authorities, compared to similar towns and regions. Tourism specialization is mostly reflected in the infrastructure, both in terms of functionality and architecture as well as in entrepreneurial activities of the inhabitants. The tradition of “accommodating holiday-makers” in these towns dates back as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, which had an impact on the formation of tourist infrastructure and social capital of these towns.

Referring to theoretical models of the evolutionary development of tourist areas and health resorts, the authors used the two most popular concepts according to Szromka (2010) explaining the mechanism of the changes taking place in tourist areas, that is concepts by Plog and Butler. According to the concept of Plog created in the late 1960s<sup>1</sup>, there are two personality types of tourists: allocentrics and

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<sup>1</sup> Theory of Plog met with criticism by Szromek (2010).

psychocentrics<sup>2</sup>. Allocentrics are people who are active and courageous, looking for new sensations and experiences, innovation and uniqueness. They are customers who choose new and innovative products and services regardless of the cost. They are full of energy, assertive and confident, trusting in their own judgement, open and friendly. In contrast, psychocentrics are conservative, they do not tend to take risks, they have no desire to search for new sensations and experiences. They prefer to spend time in a passive way. They are thrifty, they opt for proven products; they make decisions guided by mentor opinions or they mimic actions of public figures. Allocentrics travel more often than others and their stay lasts longer, they spend more money, choose the unknown and uncharted territories, accept the discomfort associated with travel. In contrast, tourist of psychocentric type travel less and for shorter time than others, they spend less money, choose proven destinations with well-developed tourist infrastructure and entertainment offer. Tourists of those two types affect the local environment (social and spatial) in different ways. Evolutionary changes of tourist areas correspond with types of tourist visiting them. Undeveloped tourist areas are first visited by allocentrics. After returning home, they share their experiences with their friends, among whom are para-allocentrics. Because of the information received, para-allocentrics decide to visit the described location. There are more para-allocentrics than allocentrics, so this tourist area will be visited now by many more tourists than before. Thus, a new, demanding group of tourists will initiate the development of both infrastructure and tourist services in the area. The increased popularity of the place attracts the attention of the mass media, which publicize the information about interesting places, increasing their popularity. However, with the development of infrastructure, the area is becoming less attractive for allocentric tourists. In contrast, the area with increased standards of services and increases diversity of attractions attracts tourists with psychocentric characteristics. This results in shortening of the average length of stays, smaller profits recorded by companies, higher customer expectations, etc. The new group of tourists' style of spending holiday affects the positive trends in employment, turnover and income of the entrepreneurs, and in the tax income and the satisfaction of the local population. Therefore, the optimal thing to do for local authorities is to maintain the phase, in which the dominant group of tourists are para-allocentrics, for as long as possible. The main pillars of local development are the distinguishing features of the tourist area and the way they are perceived by travellers. The best results can be achieved by protecting those features that attract tourists, and at the same time, by making them prominent through marketing. As for tourism businesses, they should focus on the appropriate configuration of the tourism product.

Another example of a concept explaining the evolution of a tourist area is the model by Butler (referred to in the literature as TALC, which is the abbreviation of

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<sup>2</sup> Plog also lists three intermediate groups: near-dependables/near-psychocentrics and near-venturers/near-allocentrics and centrics/mid-centric.



Tourism Area Life Cycle) based on the theory of product life cycle, which involves phase development of a phenomenon or object (Butler, 2011). In this model, six phases of the evolution of a tourist area were distinguished: exploration, introduction, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline or revival. Evolution phases of the area were distinguished on the basis of the number of visitors who come to the area in a fixed period (usually in a year). The first phase is appearance of a few individual tourists, who are attracted mainly by natural or cultural values of the area. The second phase is the increase in the number of tourists and the creation of tourism services in the area. When tourism is becoming one of the main sources of income in the area, and the number of tourists is equal to or exceeds the number of permanent residents, it is the phase of development. The consolidation phase is the full development of tourism function and slower rate of increase in the number of tourists, with tourism remaining the dominant local economy sector. In the urban space, the medical and tourism functions are separated from residential functions. The phase of stagnation is when the growth in the number of visitors is inhibited, and then the number drops. Economic, social and ecological problems arise. The last phase of the cycle is the post-stagnation phase, in which there is a decrease in the number of tourists, unprofitable tourist facilities are closed, and the offer of services is reduced. This phase may result in total or partial loss of tourist function in the area. The area may, however, enter the phase of revival, by increasing the attractiveness of the area. There are two proposed solutions: introducing new attractiveness, independent of local resources or exploitation of previously unused natural resources.

Kapczyński and Szromka (2008) distinguish two cycles with regard to Polish health resorts. The first one, covering the period 1949–1984, is the development of health resorts based on traditional spa treatment products (balneology and physical medicine). The second, lasting from the mid-1980s and 1990 was the development of the so-called modern spa product, which is a combination of traditional health resort treatment and modern forms of wellness (spa and wellness). In the evolution of Polish spas, we can also distinguish cycles, one of which ended in the early 1990s. Also, relating to the concept of Plog, it may be presumed that the increase in the number of para-allocentrics may be due to the ageing of the population. On the one hand, this fact combined with the increase in wealth of the society that already reached a certain degree of prosperity, can bring more profits, but on the other hand it results in the change of recreation style.

Universal conditions for tourism development should be also mentioned here. There are 4 basic features. The first one is the global nature of tourism reflected in tourism investment location and globalisation of the labour market, as well as the extension of tourist services into the sphere of information technologies. The second feature is the shortening of product life cycle and the acceleration of technological change, which results in high demands regarding the staff. Modern economy is a knowledge-based economy, which means that the importance of highly qualified



staff and of innovation in the development and activities aimed at competitiveness is increasing. Also, the advancing specialization of services means increasing dependence on partners and contributes to the growing quality of goods and services (Kozak, 2008). Today, areas with the best chance for development based on tourism are areas that are able to gain a competitive advantage by introducing technological, organizational or product innovation.

### **SPA and ski tourism**

Health tourism is one of the types of tourism, adopting health as the objective of tourists. Health tourism is the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from the travel and stay of people whose main motive is to preserve or improve their health (Fig. 1). A special type of health tourism is wellness and spa tourism. These services are primarily intended for people who want to only improve their health condition, mood and appearance. Such a wide range of services can be implemented mainly in the towns with health tourism functions or in tourist-and-spa resorts that offer such services as medical and cosmetic services, relaxation, active recreation and entertainment and catering services.

Also, health tourism has two functions: curative function and tourism. We can distinguish different types of health tourism: therapeutic tourism, which refers to the traditional form and regards sick people, and (taking into account the tourism function) spa tourism, which refers to the modern trends and regards preventive health services based on spa and wellness that do not need to be carried out only in health resorts (Hadzik, Hadzik, 2008).

It can therefore be assumed that traditional methods of medical treatment based on natural resources in health resorts have expanded recently to include new services related to *remise en forme* (regaining form) and providing good mental and physical condition and appearance. The spa and wellness tourism in health resorts is seen as the future of recreation. It is a combination of active rest with health care, use of cosmetics and treatments based on natural raw materials found in medical spas: mineral waters, moor muds etc. Even now most of the products offered in spas in Western European countries are based on spa and wellness programs, which also form a lifestyle that allows the contemporary man to achieve psychophysical balance (Dryglas, 2009).

Development of spa and wellness tourism falling under health resort tourism can have many beneficial effects on the town and the region in which it takes place, in economic, social and environmental terms (Spivack, 1998). Health tourism and active recreation can be the most important factors in increasing the competitiveness of a region and even of an entire country (Müller, Kaufmann, 2000; Pehoiu, 2010; Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011). On the other hand, development of spa tourism poses great challenges for the region, in particular for the local government (Henderson, 2003). Towns providing health tourism services are competitive only if they are

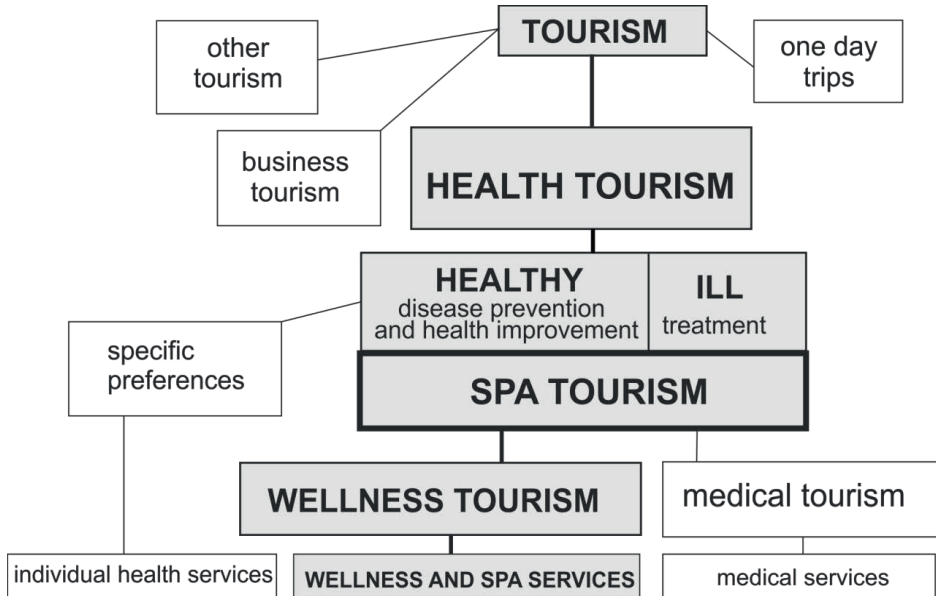


Fig. 2. The position of wellness and spa tourism in health tourism

Source: own study based on Hadzik, 2009

able to expand their offer and diversify the base of the services provided mainly in the area of health and sports (Woolf, 2008). Additionally, there is a need to provide accompanying services, related with accommodation and customer service (bars, parks, ATMs, etc.), and with customers activity (trainers, nutritionists, consultants, services and sports equipment rentals, etc.). Another important challenge for modern spas is to provide clean natural environment and to maintain balance between economic interests and environmental requirements (Jurinčič, Bojnec, 2009). Another barrier to the development of spas is the specific legal situation of health resort municipalities. In Poland, there are legislative restrictions related to the requirements of the Ministry of Health and mining laws (exploitation of natural resources such as mineral waters) (Wołowiec, Duszyński, 2003). There are also legal barriers associated with the location of health resorts in protected areas and in areas of high natural value. These limitations regard the development of infrastructure for recreation and sporting activities and they pose another important problem to the authorities of spas and to interested investors (Zawilińska, 2007).

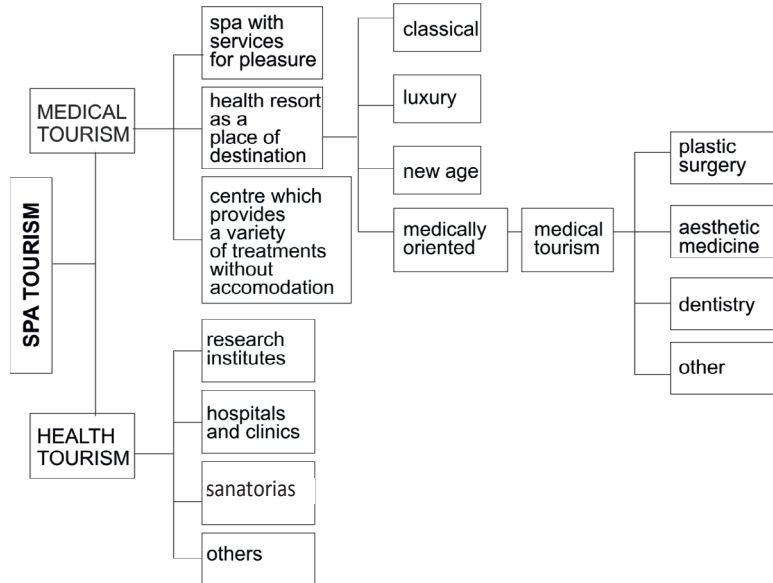


Fig. 3. Model of spa types and their breakdown by services provided

Source: Dryglas, 2009, based on Spivack, 1998

In view of the described trends in tourism services, modern enterprises operate in two intersecting sectors: the tourism sector and the public health sector. In order to maintain the viability of the spa tourism product in the rapidly changing environment, it must be characterized by innovation, competitiveness, complementarity and synergy. In view of the new challenges in creating the spa tourism product and in an attempt to “heal the health resorts”, we must consider the necessity of their transformation into multi-functional centres for health, tourism, recreation, sports and culture, offering a diverse program of services for patients and visitors. This results in new functions of spas. Spas should operate as: places with therapeutic functions based on local medical assets, health centres, “holiday” resorts, places with leisure services, places concentrating leisure and sports activities, centres of education and culture, places associated with running a business – conference and training centres (Krupa, Solina, Bajorek, 2011).

In Poland, tourism and recreation belong to the economic sector, the potential of which is still not fully used, both in terms of tourism assets and resources of the country and services based on these values. The development of tourism industry depends to a large extent on the creation, development and modernization of facilities for tourism such as road infrastructure and tourism products, the creation or development of new tourist attractions, or the development of tourist information system (Żywicka, 2011).

In Poland, you will find that tourism takes a special place in development strategies of an increasing number of municipalities, which is an opportunity for

their economic recovery. An important factor in the development of tourism and associated services, particularly in the areas of health resorts is the appropriate attitude of local governments towards this form of entrepreneurship. It should be noted that nearly 50% of visitors in Polish spas are spa guests paying the full cost and tourists, and their share is always increasing in relation to the number of people coming to the resorts for medical treatment. It is assumed that tourists in Polish health resorts, on average, account for 18% of visitors (Niemiec, Trzcińska, 2011). The promenade and the pump room is no longer sufficient for contemporary patients and tourists. What is needed is a specialized infrastructure: a tennis court, an aqua park, restaurants, etc. Therefore, close cooperation between local governments and health resort owners is necessary.

Nowadays tourism economy (tourism industry), from a local perspective, can be regarded as a specialization of the region. From an economic point of view, a tourist region is an area with tourism demand and supply. The individual characteristics of tourist supply and demand interact to form a synthetic image of tourist economy sector. In tourist areas there is in fact a clash of mobility of tourism demand with spatial concentration of supply (Cudowska-Sojko, 2011). Tourist traffic is directed mainly to places where there are well-known tourist attractions, which are the main force attracting tourists and determining the location of tourist facilities. The demand from tourists coming to the region is cumulative – it occurs in the form of

Tab. 2. The impact of tourism on the local economy

Positive impact	Negative impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– inflow of cash</li> <li>– increase in employment and development of entrepreneurship</li> <li>– stimulation of investment and capital inflow</li> <li>– development of technical, transportation and social infrastructure</li> <li>– attractive image of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– price increase</li> <li>– inhibiting the growth of other types of economic activity – the alternative cost of development</li> <li>– overinvestment, overloaded infrastructure, commercialization</li> <li>– the risk of dependent development</li> </ul>

Source: Cudowska-Sojko, 2011

a cluster of needs for an entire package of goods and services. In order to fully satisfy the demand from tourists, there must be a coexistence and interaction of many individual goods and services produced by different manufacturers. The tourist economy as a whole is therefore heterogeneous and complementary. However, temporary fluctuations in demand (seasonality) and the inflexibility of supply make tourism economy unstable and associated with high risk.

Considering the impact of tourism on local development we should take into account a number of aspects. First, tourists visiting the region activate the local economy by declaring demand for certain goods and services and by bringing and spending money. Profits are recorded by both direct providers of tourist services

and companies cooperating with them (the so-called multiplier effect). It is assumed that 100 jobs created in the health tourism generate more than 200 new jobs in other areas of economy (Niemiec, Trzcińska, 2011). This also boosts revenues of local governments in the form of tax revenue. The increasing tourist traffic stimulates local employment market in the region by creating new jobs, professional diversification and the inflow of capital – also foreign capital (Kruczek, Zmyślony, 2010). However, it is important to be aware of the negative phenomena associated with the development of tourism. It is mainly the degradation of natural and cultural resources of the regions and the intensification of negative phenomena such as: transportation problems, increase in the cost of living, noise, increasing pressure of construction projects, environmental pollution, etc. However, compared with other sectors of the economy, tourism is considered to be a factor of great importance for sustainable economic development by generating jobs and income, stimulating investment and other (Simion, et al., 2010).

Due to the increasing financial capacity of inhabitants of developed countries and due to scientific and technological progress, there has been a change in lifestyle, in which the organisation of leisure time is now becoming one of the most important attributes of quality of life. In this aspect, there is a noticeable growing demand for sports and recreation, including skiing<sup>3</sup>. The increased interest in winter physical activity as well as a growing number of businesses that meet these needs mean that this sector plays an increasingly important role in the economy of many regions.

Today's ski tourism, because of its mass character, is one of the main factors supporting the socio-economic development of many towns in mountain areas (Kurek, 2004). Experiences from skiing resorts in Europe and in the world indicate that investments in down-hill skiing infrastructure pay off relatively quick. At the present time in Poland, investors as well as local authorities show strong interest in the creation of new or modernizing existing infrastructure for this form of tourism (Chudy-Hyski, 2005).

The development of skiing was the result of Poles adopting the western system of holidays, which consists of two holiday trips per year. The first one takes place in the summer for recreational purposes or sightseeing, the second trip is in the winter for active leisure. The survey by TNS OBOP (Report on winter tourism [www.wiadomosciturystyczne.pl](http://www.wiadomosciturystyczne.pl), 05.11.2012) shows that on average, every fifth Pole can ski or snowboard. A Polish skier goes for a skiing holiday usually twice a year (38%), and his stay in the mountains lasts no longer than a week (54%). Although in Poland, tourists' interest in winter holidays is still relatively small (approximately 18% of Poles), ski trips are a regular part of the offer of most tour operators. Ski holiday offers are addressed primarily to the wealthy client, who uses it as second holiday trip, in addition to the summer holiday. In Poland, recreational skiing services are still prestigious goods. Therefore, their consumption very often satisfies the needs

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<sup>3</sup> In this text, the authors understand skiing services as services provided to skiers and other persons practising winter sports such as snowboarders.

for a demonstration of the material status of the buyer. This effect increases with the price of the purchased goods. The increase in prices of ski services can therefore sometimes also contribute to an increase in demand for these services (Puciato, 2010).

In Poland in the last few years, there is a boom in the number of ski resorts and ski lifts. Currently in 2013, according to data from Tatra Voluntary Mountain Rescue (TOPR) and Voluntary Mountain Rescue (GOPR), there are about 181 ski lifts located mostly in the southern part of Poland in the mountainous regions of the Sudetes and the Carpathian Mountains. However, today lifts are also located in the lowlands (Pomerania, Warmia) and near large urban areas (e.g. Warsaw, Katowice, Poznan). The most general requirements for the development of ski and snowboard areas are listed according to the concept of the French (Kunysz, 2010). Winter sports centres should be spatially coherent (no barriers) and harmoniously developed. This regards mainly the aspect of ownership of the land used by skiers. Even small changes in ownership, and hence the possibility of the emergence of barriers on skiing routes may lead to the collapse of the entire resort (these difficulties are common outside the regions with the so-called white snow right). Another requirement for ski stations is the appropriate equipment of each individual ski area. Every slope and ski lift should have an appropriate infrastructure for services (e.g. catering). Also, harmonious combining of all areas into one recreational system will contribute to preventing unnecessary communication barriers (e.g. the introduction of ski passes) (Nowicki, 2010). Another recommendation is an appropriate equipment of the best (most attractive) slopes. Increased number of skiers requires wider ski runs, better preparation of routes, proper lighting and providing places for stopping and rest for skiers. An important element is reshaping the terrain, in order to facilitate skiing and to diversify the trails. Another important aspect of the operation of ski resorts is proper service for accompanying persons and tourists, which results in the diversification of services offered, such as sports equipment rental and maintenance, catering services, parking lots, etc. Another increasingly common requirement for ski lift owners is to provide playgrounds and recreation facilities for children (slopes for sledging, snow parks, the so-called nursery slopes) (Havrlant, 2011). Additionally, the offer of ski resorts is complemented by cross-country skiing trails and trails for skiing tourism, practiced also in Poland (Paśławska, 2010).

However, the primary factor enabling the development of winter sports is the right natural environment i.e. the presence of snow cover and its suitable thickness and durability, the length of periods with negative air temperatures and the terrain diversity (relief, slope, length, and exposure of slopes, land cover – vegetation, buildings). Currently ski stations may exist both in areas where natural environment creates favourable conditions and in areas where due to lack of these qualities, skiing conditions must be created by humans, as exemplified by ski runs in Muszyna in the Beskid Sadecki.

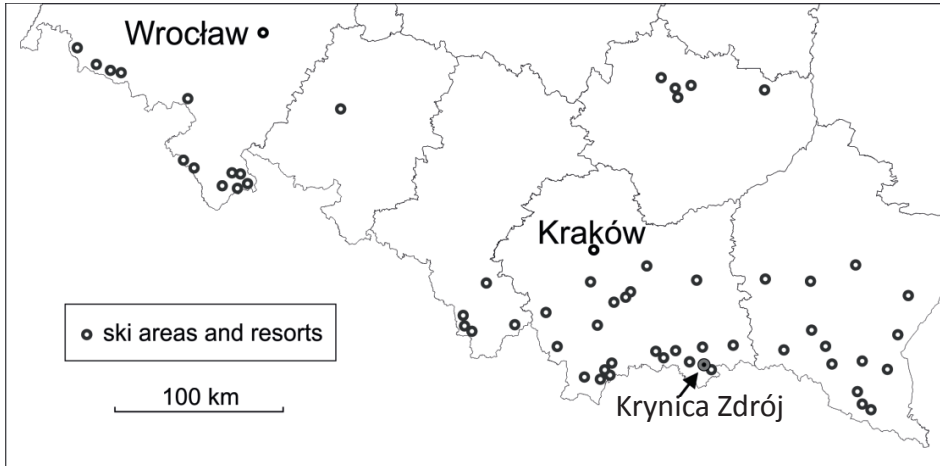


Fig. 4. Location of ski resorts in the mountainous regions of Poland

Source: own study based on data from the Internet

In addition, sports infrastructure enables the organisation of sporting events, which is an additional factor attracting tourists and generating economic growth (Candrea, Ispas, 2010). Organization of sporting events also has an effect on the image of the area and contributes to the popularity of the resort. Marketing activities lead to the formation of a tourism brand which is an important element for local development and for the identity of the area (Stăncioiu Teodorescu, Vlădoi, Baltescu, 2011). Both in Poland and in the world, ski resorts are still struggling with numerous problems, which include the said conflict regarding the status of legal ownership of leased ski areas, ecological limitations on investment in ski infrastructure, safety on ski slopes, shared use of the slopes by skiers and snowboarders, degradation of natural environment of the slopes (Mika, Krzesiwo, Krzesiwo, 2007; Madziková et al., 2011). Despite its seasonality and in analogy to the importance of health tourism for local economic development, ski tourism is one of the most important factors activating the development of mountain areas.

### Krynica SPA and ski resort

Krynica is located in the southern part of Poland in Małopolska Province. The health resort municipality lies on the northern side of the central part of the Carpathian Mountains, on the border between the Beskid Sądecki and the Beskid Niski. Most of forested mountains surrounding the resort rise to a height of 700 to 950 m above sea level, rarely exceeding 1000 m above sea level. However, the town itself is situated at the foot of the second-highest peak of the Beskid Sądecki, the Jaworzyna Krynicka with 1114 metres above sea level. This mountain range, almost 30 km long,

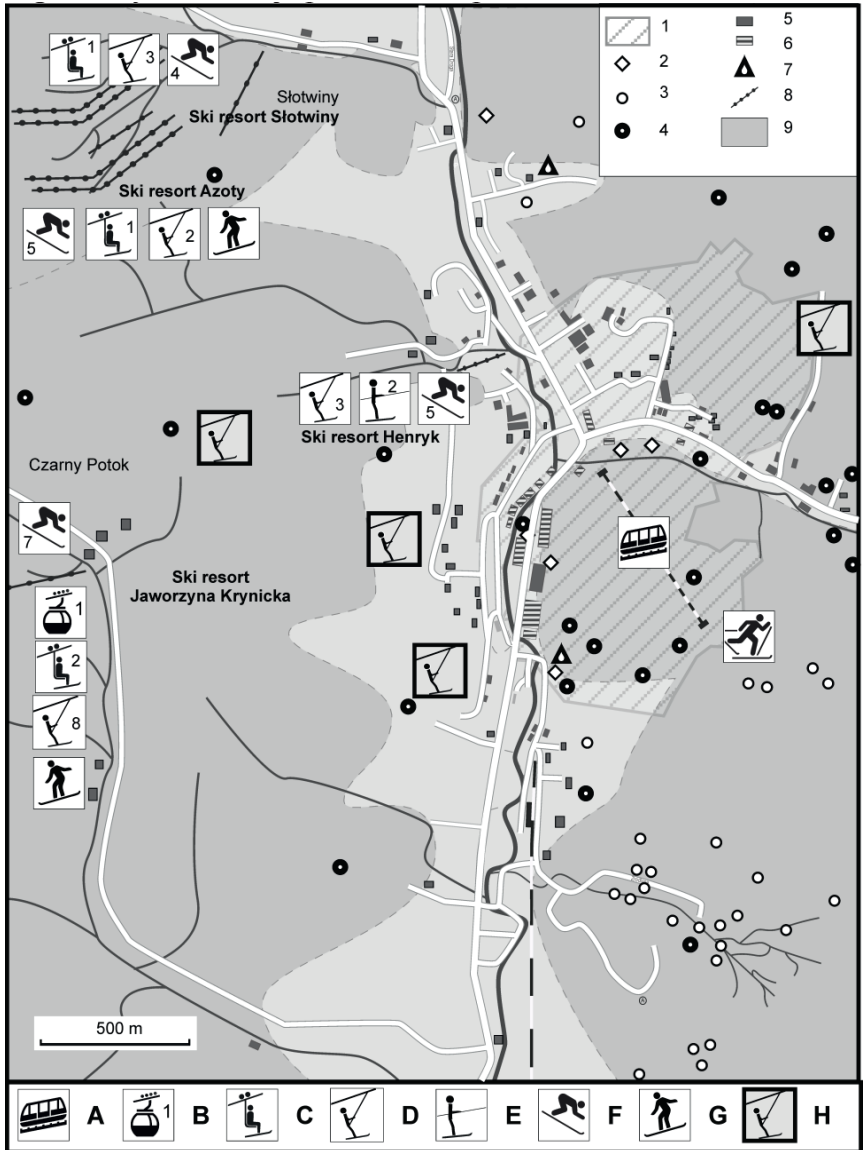


running from the northwest to southeast, due to its steeper slopes, has become a base for winter sports. This was mainly caused by the location of ski stations on the slopes of Jaworzyna Mt. in Krynica and of the ski station Wierchomla-Szczawnik on the slopes of Pusta Wielka (1061 m). The region of Krynica, including Tylicz – part of the municipality – and neighbouring towns Muszyna and Powroźnik, along with the whole area of Poprad valley, is one of the biggest balneological areas and centres of mineral water bottling in Poland (Figure 1). These resources, in addition to terrain that is suitable for tourism and skiing, favourable climate (mountain microclimate comparable with the climate of alpine valleys), and other natural assets (the Poprad Landscape Park, and the countrywide unique forest park at the Park Hill – Góra Parkowa – in Krynica), are crucial for the development of the resort.

The region of Krynica is an area extremely rich in natural mineral springs. The area of occurrence involves quite a compact space between Krynica Zdrój and Tylicz and Powroźnik and to Piwniczna in the north and to Bardejov in the south. In this area, mineral water is highly carbonated, it contains free carbon dioxide (over 1000 mg/1 litre). The chemical composition of water varies and depends mainly on the depth of the deposition. All “shallow” acidulous waters were created by saturation of atmospheric water with carbon dioxide that comes up from the bottom in the areas of cracks. This is evidenced by the large variation of CO<sub>2</sub> saturation and the chemical composition of water at a constant presence of calcium, magnesium, iron derived from the chemical composition of flysch formations (Świdziński, 1972; Lewkiewicz-Małyś, Macuda, 2007; Rajchel, 2009). Krynica Zdrój has a total of 23 water intakes: five natural springs and 18 wells. According to the list made in 2011 by the Ministry of the Environment, geological resources of water are estimated to be 57.40 m<sup>3</sup>/h and the working (exploitation) resources to be 33.66 m<sup>3</sup>/h. This makes Krynica the location of second biggest healing water resources in the Carpathian region, just after Muszyna (94.30 m<sup>3</sup>/h) and before Tylicz (48.43 m<sup>3</sup>/h). However, in terms of exploitation, Krynica Zdrój takes the third place with 51,980.90 m<sup>3</sup>/year, after Muszyna (188,489.90 m<sup>3</sup>/year) and Piwniczna-Zdrój (88,859.30 m<sup>3</sup>/year). However, regardless of changes in the volume of extraction and mineral water production in Poland, it is Krynica Zdrój that is called the “Pearl among the Polish health resorts”. Krynica mineral waters generated interest already in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The historically oldest Main Spring (Zdrój Główny – ZG) is the place where the spa history of Krynica began. The second half of 1850s saw a dynamic development of the resort and growing use of mineral waters in Krynica. In 1856, as part of the activities of the Austrian commission, the construction of new facilities begun, such as B&Bs (called villas), pump rooms, treatment facilities (baths, the Spa House) and park pavilions. In addition to mineral water treatments (balneology), in 1858, treatments were started using the locally extracted mud. This mud was recognized at the beginning of the twentieth century as one of the best in Europe in terms of quality (Skórczewski, 1904). Another important resource for the development of the health resort was exhalation of carbon dioxide. The use of endogenous carbon dioxide was initiated in the 1860s, when gas condensation was started (Ciężkowski,

2002). In 1873, gas baths were introduced in Krynica, which are still offered today. Gas was also used in the food industry. In 1858, the method of filling mineral water bottles with atmospheric carbon dioxide was patented in Krynica, which gave rise to the industry of mineral water bottling. In addition, during the post-war period (1944–1956), Krynica has become an important producer of liquefied natural gas and dry ice. Currently, the spa town produces annually about 200 tons of liquid gas, mainly for bottling industry and medicinal treatments (Ciężkowski, 2002). So in the second half of the nineteenth century, apart from being a health resort, the town was exporting a variety of products: mineral water, ferruginous therapeutic mud, spruce needle extracts, essential oils and other. After World War I, the Polish authorities took over the resort. At that time, some of the sanatorium facilities were renovated and many new ones built. Next to sanatorium infrastructure, new investments were made related to tourism and winter sports. A mountain hut was built on the Jaworzyna Mt. and a cable car on the Parkowa Mt., as well as a winter stadium, a ski jump and a toboggan run. Krynica, hosting many international sport events, has become a world centre for winter sports. In 1919, the health resort was visited by ca. 10 thousand people, while in 1938 this number increased to 40 thousand. After the war, there was an expansion of accommodation facilities, new spa resorts and a natural therapy centre were built as well as the main pump-room with a concert hall and other facilities. The nationalization of the spa industry meant that after 1945 there has been an increase in the number of tourists and patients (about 120 thousand persons using accommodation), while health tourism gave way to health resort function combined with recreation and leisure (Buczek, Quirini-Popławski, 2009).

Thus, considering the example of Krynica, it can be stated that the pre-war period of Polish spas development can serve as a model for the development of spa services, tourism, sport and recreation, and the important function of spas as cultural centers. The law of 1922 provided health resorts with a special legal and financial status, which allowed Polish spas to effectively compete with European resorts. The law distinguished between two types of spas: public and other. Spas of public service had the right to create the Treatment Fund (Fundusz Kuracyjny) supplied with curative tax (30% of the cost of patient's stay and fees charged to entrepreneurs). The functioning of Polish health resorts has been further "strengthened" in 1933 with the introduction of the term "health resort municipality of public service" in the Polish law. Unfortunately, in the post-war period these beautiful centres of cultural life were transformed into large spa hospitals with collective discipline and certain ways of behaving. Principles of health resorts' operation were established that were identical for every health resort in every aspect and in every area. When rules of market economy were introduced after 1989, it became clear that Polish spas are maladjusted to the new economic conditions. The disparities in the standard of medical infrastructure, accommodation and recreation infrastructure became evident (Wołowicz, 2003). Health resorts consist of not only sanatoriums, but also tourist infrastructure constituting about 18% of accommodation facilities in the country.



A) cable railways B) cable cars (gondola) C) chairlift D) platter and t-bar lifts E) handle tows F) ski runs (number) G) snowboard parks H) inoperative or closed ski lifts; 1. zone of strict protection of water in the health resort, 2. mineral water pump-rooms, 3. mineral springs, 4. intake of mineral water, 5. sanatoriums and hotels, 6. sanatoriums created in the nineteenth century, 7. mineral water bottling plants, 8. ski lifts, 9. forests

Fig. 5. Krynica Zdrój spatial development

Source: author's own study

Today Krynica Zdrój continues its economic development, mainly based on its natural potential, allowing the development of health tourism and mountain tourism (Lee et al., 2008). This development is based on three sectors: leisure industry – with extensive use of accommodation and tourist facilities (with a smaller role of spa medical treatment services and the growing importance of beauty and wellness services as well as training and conference tourism), active leisure (ski facilities) and bottling industry (mineral water bottling plants) (Ateneta-Płotkowiak, Swędzioł, 2006). Considering the number of nights spent by tourists in collective accommodation establishments in 2011, stays in spa resorts accommodation facilities accounted for 52% (out of 934,010 overnight stays). However, the bathers were only 26% (out of 158,294) of the total number of guests using the accommodation. It is also noticeable that the number of people using medical treatments is dropping. Mineral water is therefore now becoming raw material for industry and a tourist attraction rather than source of health. They are used both in the beauty spa and wellness services (Lecznictwo uzdrowiskowe w Polsce w latach 2000–2010), as well as in mineral water bottling plants. Despite the long tradition of mineral water bottling, it wasn't until the end of the twentieth century that the bottling industry started to flourish. In 2011, the bottled water market grew by 11% and it is expected to still increase by 15%. Water bottling in Krynica began in 1808, with production at that time reaching 20 thousand bottles (there was a factory opened in Krynica that was manufacturing stoneware bottles for shipping water). Water bottling industry has also developed in the interwar period. There were nine water bottling plants at that time in Poland. In 1935, Krynica health resort bottled about 400 thousand litres of water per year. Before the 1990s, when economic changes occurred in Poland, there were 17 state-owned water bottling plants, one of which was located in Krynica. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were about 150 mineral water and table water bottling plants in Poland, four of which are located in the town of Krynica, and further two in the municipality of Krynica Zdrój (Tylicz and Mochnaczka Wyżna). According to the Geological Institute, mineral water approved by the ministry is bottled by only 28 bottling plants in Poland, of which four are located in the municipality Krynica Zdrój (Spa Krynica-Żegiestów S.A., Mineral Complex Sp.z o.o., INEX s.c. (formerly Galatex), Coca-Cola HBC Sp. z o.o. (formerly Multivita) and a further nine in neighbouring towns (Powroźnik, Muszyna, Andrzejówka/Milik, Leluchów). Despite a decline in production of bottling plants Krynica, visible in the decreasing amount of extracted water from 50,806 m<sup>3</sup> in 2008 to 39,567 m<sup>3</sup> in 2012, it can be concluded that this industry is significantly contributing to the economy of the health resort and continues to grow, as evidenced by concessions granted for exploration and research of curative minerals. Water from Krynica is sent not only to the domestic market and Europe, but also to global markets such as China.

Another important factor in the development of the health resort is the sector of sports and leisure services. This term includes services that are created outside the accommodation and catering facilities and are open to everyone and require separate investments related to the construction of special facilities and maintaining

them in a functional state (Buczek, Quirini-Popławski, 2009). There are four ski stations in Krynica Zdrój, with the longest Polish gondola lift on the Jaworzyna Mt. Thanks to the favorable terrain, the municipality has 24 ski lifts with a total length of 15,180 meters and a total capacity of 23,249 skiers per hour. Ski slopes of a total length of 15.8 kilometers can be used by almost 17 thousand skiers per hour. As the result of the growing popularity of Krynica Zdrój as a winter sports centre, ski infrastructure has been developing also in the previously unused neighboring regions. These include the ski station “Dwie Doliny (Two Valleys)” in Wierchomla and Szczawnik (7817 m long ski routes) and the ski station in Tylicz (7430 m long routes). However, compared to neighboring centers, Krynica’s terrain is more advantageous, as evidenced by an average slope of routes averaging 19% (while it is 16% for Tylicz and Wierchomla-Szczawnik) and longer periods of snow retention. Ski lifts in Krynica are located on both the peripheral areas of the town (Czarny Potok and Słotwiny) and its centre (ski station Henryk). The need to diversify services offered by the resorts, especially in order for them to be operating also in the summer season, contributes to the development of other tourist services such as mountain biking, hiking, etc.

Tab. 3. Ski stations in Krynica Zdrój

Ski infrastructure	ski stations				Krynica (total)
	Jaworzyna	Słotwiny	Azoty	Henryk	
Number of ski lifts	11	4	4	5	24
The length of ski lift (m)	9650	2320	2190	1020	15180
The difference in levels (m)	2285	492	431	170	3378
lift capacity [persons/hour]	13200	4200	3449	2400	23249
Number of ski runs	7	9	4	5	25
The length of ski runs (m)	7328	5270	2190	1020	15808
ski runs capacity [persons/hour]	4990	6100	3450	2400	16940
the slope of the route (average %)	23	19	18	15	19

Source: author’s own study

Tab. 4. Ranking of selected ski resorts in the years 2010–2013

Ski station	Routes and ski lifts				Infrastructure				Comfort of skiing and skiers’ impressions				Sum of points				Position in the ranking			
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
Jaworzyna Krynicka	50	62	62	62	17	18	18	13	22	20	18	18	89	100	98	93	1	1	2	3
Białka Tatrzańska	55.5	55.5	70	80	16	18	18	18	16	17	17	17	87.5	90.5	105	115	3	2	1	1
Dwie Doliny	40	47	47	51	18	18	18	18	20	22	22	22	78	87	87	91	5.5	4	5	5
Krynica Azoty	21	n.d.	21	n.d.	12	n.d.	12	n.d.	18	n.d.	17	n.d.	51	n.d.	50	n.d.	29	29	35	n.d.
Tylicz-TopSki	n.d.	n.d.	30	32	n.d.	n.d.	10	14	n.d.	n.d.	15	16	n.d.	n.d.	55	62	n.d.	32	23	15

Source: own study based on data from [podroze.onet.pl](http://podroze.onet.pl) i [newsweek.pl](http://newsweek.pl)

The high position of Krynica Zdrój in the rankings of Polish ski resorts confirms the importance of ski tourism in this area. The table shows that both the ski station at Jaworzyna Krynicka and the neighboring station Dwie Doliny in Wierchomla and Szczawnik are important winter sports resorts comparable to the ski resorts of the Podhale region. A significant process observed in recent years is the growing importance of tourism regions in the direct surroundings of the health resort. An example might be the village of Tylicz, which reached the 15th position in the rankings of ski lifts in Poland.

### Local development strategy

Local development is a long-term process of purposeful change aimed at the improvement of the status quo. The concept of development should be associated with the expected, positive transformations of quantitative, qualitative and structural properties of a given spatial system. Thus, if the system is a socio-territorial unit equipped with a set of economic, spatial and cultural characteristics, then we can speak of development on a local scale (Wołowiec, Reško, 2012). Development in general terms is a positive transformation of quantitative and qualitative nature. It is a process based on endogenous and exogenous factors, which requires a comprehensive approach. Considering internal conditions, local development policy should therefore take into account such factors as geographical location, economic structure and its specific characteristics, the demographic situation and the local labour market, usable resources, natural environment, the characteristics of the local community, cultural background, etc. External conditions include the general trends in economy, politics, technology and society (PEST analysis – Political, Economic, Social and Technological analysis).

An important factor in stimulating economic development of regions is tourism. The particular importance of tourism results from its profitability and its ability to activate economic sectors associated with tourism services. However, local development based on tourism poses many challenges for local authorities referred to in the context of theories and models of tourism development. Krynica Zdrój, as one of few towns in the Polish Carpathians, prepared together with Muszyna, Piwniczna Zdrój and Stary Sącz common strategy for the development of an integrated tourist product (Więclaw-Michniewska, 2011).

This *Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Malopolska spa product for the years 2013–2018* based on the guidelines from the document *Trends of Tourism Development for the Malopolska Region for 2008–2013*, sets out 10 key directions for tourism development<sup>4</sup>. One of the most important directions indicated in the

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<sup>4</sup> Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Malopolska spa product for the years 2013–2018, Trends of Tourism Development for the Malopolska Region 2008–2013, Kraków 2008, <http://www.sgurp.pl/images/Strategia%20Rozwoju%20i%20Promocji%20MPU.pdf>; <http://www.malopolskie.pl/Pliki/2008/Kierunki.pdf> (18.05.2014).

document was to create a branded product – spa and health tourism of Malopolska province, which should be created by actions:

1. Improving the quality of services in health resorts in Malopolska,
2. Development of tourism infrastructure and accompanying infrastructure for visitors,
3. Expanding tourist offer in areas with health and spa tourism.

These objectives shall be achieved by the use and development of training and conference centres and leisure facilities including spa.

Branded tourist products in Krynica Zdrój indicated in the document are: health resort and spa, skiing, developed sector of MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conferences, Events) and recreation and cultural tourism.

The spa market is a very dynamically developing element of the hotel market. Tasks for Krynica indicated in the document include attracting new investments such as spa centres.

The target group of the developing health tourism are seniors. The increasing importance of this group is indicated by the newly created special term: “age-friendly” and by international programs supporting tourism of seniors aged 55+. These include “Europe Senior Tourisme – Calypso” and “TOURAGE – Support for Seniors Tourism in Peripheral Regions”, which are designed to contribute to the development of tourism of the elderly in the European Union<sup>5</sup>. Demographic trends entail changes in people’s needs and expectations.

Another target group of developing health tourism are young people who spend a lot of time working and who expect rapid recuperation. This group forces a change in the approach to health resorts, going away from the traditional medical services towards wellness and spa services in health resorts. Curative stays are shortened, and the treatment is accompanied by active and cultural tourism. Weekend trips and stays for a few days are most common, allowing for regenerating psychophysical condition in a short time. The main customer of domestic spa hotels is a domestic tourist, a woman aged 35–45 years. Tourists from business group are interested in medical and beauty treatments as well as in the offer of spas, regenerative treatments, swimming pools and gyms.

One of the ways of creating development based on tourism services is the creation of a regional tourist product (Zdon-Korzeniowska 2009). There are four branded tourist products designated for Krynica Zdrój by the health resort authorities<sup>6</sup>:

1. **“Skiing/Winter”** is a product created on the basis of the high position of Krynica Zdrój in the ranking of ski resorts. In this case, the crucial factor was the presence of the cable car and ski runs on the slopes of Jaworzyna Krynicka, which are considered some of the best in Poland, and this offer is complemented by a number

<sup>5</sup> According to estimates by the World Health Organization, by 2025 there will be 1.2 billion people aged over 60 years, and by 2050 – nearly two billion.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.wrotamalopolski.pl/NR/rdonlyres/2F0FE15D-DBCA-4E7C-B494-79C419189F62/911760/Uch\\_115.pdf](http://www.wrotamalopolski.pl/NR/rdonlyres/2F0FE15D-DBCA-4E7C-B494-79C419189F62/911760/Uch_115.pdf) (13.05.2014).



of smaller lifts in different parts of the town and municipality. The tasks within this product include: Kolorowe Jarmarki Krynickie (Colourful Fairs in Krynica), ice rink on the promenade, ice sculptures competition, Poland's Championship in Skiing for Advertisement Industry, offer for children - winter in Krynica.

2. **"MICE"** is a product in which the most important event is the annual Economic Forum, establishing the reputation of the town as conference centre and setting the direction of development. In order to keep the Forum in Krynica Zdrój it is necessary to build a conference room for more than a thousand people in the next few years, which will create opportunities to attract other large and prestigious events to the city. In Krynica Zdrój Convention Bureau was established, which periodically collects the entire offer of conferences in the health resort and promotes business tourism<sup>7</sup>.

3. **"Health resort/spa"** is a year-round product, relatively resistant to the seasonality of weather conditions. Krynica has a strong reputation as health resort, although it is currently declining. On this basis build, Krynica Zdrój should create a strong brand as a leading spa resort by such actions as introduction on the market of cosmetics suggesting a link with Krynica.

4. **"Summer in the mountains"** is a diversified product, aimed primarily at families with children, and to a lesser extent, at groups of children and adolescents. It includes a number of tasks, such as the Krynica-Tylicz hiking loop, Letni Salon Małopolski (the Summer Salon of Malopolska), Krynica – Lemko heritage centre, offer for kids – summer in Krynica, Krynica Jogging, April weather in Krynica, Krynica weekend for half price, Kolorowe Jarmarki Krynickie (the Colourful Fair in Krynica).

The strategic principle of tourism products of Krynica Zdrój has been determined: *Krynica, here is the life!* [because] *"here you can touch and taste life in its various manifestations of health, fun, art, food, entertainment, sports and the risk of adventure."* The strategy places a strong emphasis on ordering of public spaces, removal of "plastic" elements, lighting of historic buildings especially those located on the promenade, the development of large and small architecture in accordance with the character of the area. It should be emphasized that Krynica Zdrój is one of the few towns in Poland that have approved their local spatial development plan regulating the direction of transformation and investment opportunities for the health resort. Due to its health resort qualities and the occurrence of medicinal waters in Krynica Zdrój, it was especially difficult to adopt this plan, as it had to be consulted with the District Mining Office in Krakow and with the Ministry of Health, which significantly extended the time, and limited investment opportunities. Preparing the so called health resort statement required much work aimed at documenting the medicinal properties of mineral waters, the state of the sanatorium infrastructure, and the designation of a protection zone for the health resort. This work involved long-term studies of air pollution, noise levels, the purity of water

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.krynicaconvention.pl/> (13.05.2014).

and mineral water sources and a detailed inventory of sanatorium and medical infrastructure. The document, very important for land use planning – the Statute of Krynica Health Resort, was adopted on the basis of the decision of the City Council by Resolution No. LII/364/2010 on 21.06.2010.

In spite of the fact that as a result of the financial crisis, Polish tourism industry recorded a decline in international arrivals, the forecast for the coming years of second decade of the twenty first century shows a dynamic development of the sector. Further intensification of sports and recreation activities in Krynica Zdrój requires further development of sports infrastructure. As for winter sports infrastructure, in 2012, there were ski lifts, a toboggan run, trail for classic skiing (Krynica-Tylicz), one indoor and one outdoor ice rink. According to the development strategy of Krynica Zdrój, the tourism sector will be strengthened, as the fundamental substrate of the municipal economy. Traditionally, the most important position in the report on tourism in the city is taken by health tourism. However, it was indicated that there is a need to stimulate business tourism and tourism associated with winter sports. Sports and culture are considered priority areas, the first ones to obtain funding<sup>8</sup>. In the spirit of today's popular ecological paradigm, health resort tourism and other kinds of tourism practiced in the municipality of Krynica Zdrój require closer connection with the idea of sustainable development. Therefore, tourism activities should be seen in a holistic and interdisciplinary way. The extensive tourist infrastructure of 12 thousand beds, the presence of ski facilities and spa infrastructure, conference and concert halls and numerous sports facilities, are considered to be the primary determinants stimulating the development of spa, leisure and commercial services. In the near future, Krynica Zdrój plans to enhance the recreational function in Góra Parkowa (Park Hill), and to create an ethnographic park on its slopes.

## Conclusions

For more than 200 years, Krynica has been developing mainly due to natural conditions and resources. In the early days, the major determinant of the development was the health resort function, stimulated by the presence of medicinal mineral waters. Later, medicinal function of the spa resort was joined by leisure and recreational functions developed due to favorable natural conditions (mountains, forests and climate). Today, the health resort develops using the principle of tourism cluster (or cluster of health and tourism) (Dąbrowska-Zielińska, Wołak-Musiał, 2012). The cluster involves the development of both medical services and tourism as well as sports, leisure, conference, educational and industrial functions. This approach also enables the use of natural resources of Krynica Zdrój. Mineral waters are used both in medicine and regenerative services (spa treatments) and in industry

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<sup>8</sup> Resolution of the Krynica Zdrój City Council number XLIV.252.2013 from 27 June 2013 on the adoption of the "Strategy for the Development of Krynica Zdroj municipality", Krynica Zdrój 2013, p. 67

and recreation (e.g. as a tourist attraction, in geo-parks, nature trails). However, we cannot forget that these resources were the main factors in the development of tourist infrastructure in the town and helped to publicize the health resort. Also today, they continue to be the main factors that attract tourists to Krynica Zdrój and the neighboring villages. Today Krynica Zdrój is in the big league among Polish health resorts and tourist resorts (in many rankings, it is listed in the first place even before such well-known cities as Krakow and Zakopane, for example, considering the number of sold accommodation nights per number of inhabitants). This situation is the result of both the abundant tourism infrastructure developed in this health resort since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rich tradition of leisure and holiday. However, the primary factor has always been the array of natural conditions discussed above. Today, due to technical capabilities and well developed accessibility, many of the services previously reserved only for health resorts and mountain areas are offered also in other places (due to the construction of artificial ski slopes, modern medical treatments and rehabilitation, etc.), which may result in limiting the number of guests in health resorts. However, better accessibility positively impacts the development of services in Krynica health resort, as exemplified by the rapid development of tourist infrastructure and accommodation on the outskirts of the town, for example in Tylicz located ca. 5 km away from Krynica (Dorocki, 2011). It therefore seems appropriate for Krynica Zdrój to continue its comprehensive development taking into account the diversified use of its natural resources.

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