

# ADVANTAGES OF COMBINED APPLICATION OF SEA WITH ESIA IN STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Whereas standard SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) methodologies aim to assess the impacts of certain activities solely on environmental quality, new tendencies in spatial and environmental planning are directed towards the application of environmental social impact assessment (ESIA), which implies assessment of the impacts on the quality of life, as well as on natural and cultural heritage. In the ESIA procedure, identification and assessment of direct, indirect and cumulative effects of tourism-related and other different activities are of key importance. The paper presents two case studies of ecologically vulnerable tourism destinations to explore whether the application of SEA/ESIA to strategic planning helps control, minimize or avoid negative effects of tourism; in addition, the case studies are analysed to check the efficiency of SEA/ESIA as instruments for coordination between spatial and tourism planning for sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations. The results/findings of the analysed case studies show that the application of combined SEA and adapted ESIA methods contributes to better understanding of the specific problems related to sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations, and provides support to the planning options and solutions aimed at addressing these problems in a more ecologically and socially justifiable manner.

**Key words:** tourism destinations, sustainable territorial development, strategic environmental assessment, environmental social impact assessment, controlling and coordinating role.

## INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is one of the instruments for achieving sustainable development, in particular, the spatial planning that can offer an integral view of future territorial development. The implementation of a holistic approach and coordination between spatial, sectoral and environmental planning is crucially important for an integrated strategic planning for sustainable territorial development.

Tourism destinations should be the first to adopt the strategic planning and management with the aim to achieve the sustainable territorial development, and by this the competitiveness as well. In order to achieve sustainable development of tourism at a destination level, different concepts and tools need to be combined and integrated, as they cover specific areas and contribute to

different aspects of achieving sustainable development at destinations (Lee, 2001; Schianetz *et al.*, 2007). The outcome of comparative evaluation of assessment tools and concepts for sustainability implementation (Schianetz *et al.*, 2007) is that environmental impact assessment tools (EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment and SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment), as well as most site-specific assessment tools, have difficulties when dealing with cumulative impacts. The evaluation of negative cumulative tourism effects on a territorial development is of particular importance in ecologically vulnerable areas, such as protected areas with natural heritage, and in socially and economically depressed areas which contain resources for tourism development.

Practiced in many countries around the world, SEA is a systematic decision-making support process designed to help ensure that the environmental and sustainability aspects are adequately considered in the process of preparing

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policies, plans and programmes (Fischer, 2007; Bragagnolo and Geneletti, 2012; Fischer, 1999; Dalal-Clayton and Sadler, 1999). The SEA Directive 2001/42/EC has been effective since July 2004. Therefore, since tourism plans fall within the scope of the SEA Directive, they are to be subjected to the SEA procedure (Lemos *et al.*, 2012; Fischer, 2007). This legal framework and its requirements raise methodological questions with regard to the manner in which SEA should be adapted and integrated into sectoral planning - tourism planning (Lemos *et al.*, 2012). Whereas standard SEA and EIA methodologies aim to assess the impacts of certain activities solely on environmental quality, new tendencies in spatial and environmental planning are directed towards the application of ESIA, or some elements of social impact assessment, namely evaluation of impacts on the quality of life (Fischer *et al.*, 2010), as well as on natural and cultural heritage. The application of SEA and EIA in tourism planning does not follow any established procedures or methodologies, nor are there specific legal provisions to regulate it. The assessments are often more sociologically-oriented and concerned with the quality of life/tourist stay rather than the quality of air, soil, etc. According to Lemos, Fischer and Souza (Lemos *et al.*, 2012), there is no such thing as a predefined, generic set of criteria which are suitable for reviewing SEA or EIA practices in tourism planning. Thus, there is a need for establishing a new type of assessment, similar/derived from environmental social impact assessment (ESIA). In the socially and environmentally oriented assessment, identification of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of tourism-related and other activities on quality of environment and life are of key importance (Lemos *et al.*, 2012; Gunn, 2002). This paper indicates the differences between socially-oriented assessment methodologies on the one hand, and the standard SEA/EIA methodologies prescribed by the EU directives, on the other and gives new type of methodology which is conglomerate of SEA and ESIA methods.

The aim of this study is to contribute to increasing knowledge on the above issues by means of SEA/ESIA case studies in strategic planning of tourism destinations with natural and cultural heritage in Serbia. Different planning and institutional context, according to Lemos, Fischer and Souza, can be challenging for evaluating SEA and EIA practices in tourism planning in developing countries (Lemos *et al.*, 2012). This paper focuses on the implementation of new, adapted SEA/ESIA methodology and its controlling role in spatial planning for sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations. Case studies are used to explore whether the application of adapted SEA/ESIA in tourism planning helps control, minimize or avoid negative effects of tourism, and to check the efficiency of adapted SEA/ESIA as instruments for coordination between spatial and tourism planning for achieving sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations.

#### **THE ROLE OF ADAPTED ESIA AND SEA IN STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Strategic environmental assessment is envisaged to diminish or neutralize adverse effects of sectoral and spatial

planning on the environment, and to have a coordinating role regarding planning decisions, with a view to achieving sustainable territorial development. This should be applied to tourism destinations as well, since "tourism is an element in spatial plans and the extent of its coverage will frequently depend upon its significance and impact on the local economy" (Lemos *et al.*, 2012).

#### **Advantages of adapted ESIA over SEA and EIA**

Various development activities have both positive and negative implications for the environmental quality, the quality of life, and economic development of local communities and regional surroundings. For this reason, the evaluation of these activities must include all dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, social and economic dimensions of their impacts. Compared to the standard approach to the evaluation of effects of these activities on the environment applied in SEA and EIA, as prescribed by EU directives (Directive EC 2001/42/EC on SEA, Directive 2011/92/EU on EIA) and analysed and improved by many authors (Dalal-Clayton and Sadler, 1999; Stojanović and Maričić, 2008; Kuoa *et al.*, 2005), new tendencies in spatial and environmental planning for sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations are directed towards ESIA. While standard SEA and EIA methodologies evaluate only effects of certain activities on the environmental quality, adapted ESIA (developed for this specific research and partially based on standard ESIA process) has a wider scope. It takes into consideration the evaluation of all potential positive and negative impacts of activities on physical, geographic, biological, and socio-economic characteristics of space. The scope of this adapted ESIA is also extended by the evaluation of the mentioned effects on the quality of life of local residents, as well as on the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

In the adapted ESIA procedure, it is crucial to identify and evaluate direct, indirect and cumulative effects arising from tourism-related and other activities. These activities are compared with the so-called null alternative (meaning to say that these activities will not be carried out) in order to quantitatively and qualitatively determine their effects. Based on the evaluation of the effects of almost all activities, the final conclusions of adapted ESIA provide an insight into direct and indirect effects of planned activities, and enable the formation of a set of measures for offsetting or diminishing adverse effects.

This adapted ESIA should necessarily take into account both the existing state of the environmental quality (water, air, land, noise, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation) and the quality of life (the percentage of the local population and tourists exposed to the increased pollution of air, water, land, noise, then the percentage of the local population and tourists who consider the conditions in the environment they live in to be satisfactory/adequate, as well as the quality of jobs in tourism and those generated by tourism, the quality and availability of public and tourism infrastructure and services, etc.). It should also take into consideration the status and condition of the protected natural and cultural heritage, including the data on the manner and intensity of the use of space for tourist facilities, infrastructure

and activities (characteristics of tourist facilities and infrastructure, number of visitors and intensity of the tourist use of space at monthly and annual levels and during peak season, etc.). Also, tourism development in special purpose areas, such as protected areas, can be a major economic justification for their protection, but it can also pose a great risk (Lemos *et al.*, 2012).

This paper indicates the differences in methodologies used for adapted ESIA application compared to the standard methodologies for SEA and EIA applications prescribed by EU directives.

### Methodology for ESIA Application

While SEA is conceived only as an instrument for accomplishing environmental protection objectives, the protection of the quality of life and human health is increasing in importance, as well as the determination of socio-economic effects which activities can have on the investigated area. Since tourism development activities have significant recorded effects on the socio-economic development of tourism destinations, the assessment cannot be reduced only to the analysis and evaluation of negative and positive environmental effects of these activities. For this reason, the existing methodology for undertaking strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment necessitates improvement by including socio-economic parameters and goals, which are recognized as ESIA goals.

ESIA practice in spatial planning for tourism destinations and urban planning for tourist resorts has indirectly made this assessment an important instrument for controlling

and coordinating sectoral plans in tourism with sustainable territorial development of areas.

Compared to the standard instruments in SEA, ESIA introduces new parameters for quantitative and qualitative assessment of the effects of planned development activities in order to improve the existing methodological framework. Namely, by taking into account socio-economic parameters as well, ESIA should give a comprehensive idea about the consequences which development activities may have for a certain area.

### EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES: CASE STUDIES IN SERBIA

#### Challenges in Strategic Planning for Sustainable Territorial Development of Tourism Destinations in Serbia

SEA is a relatively new tool in the planning process, both in Serbia and across the European Union (Fischer, 2007; Arts *et al.*, 2004). The challenge is that the legal basis in Serbia (laws on planning and construction, environmental protection, transport, tourism, etc.) does not establish the obligation to coordinate sectoral planning with environmental and spatial planning. The Law on Tourism (National assembly of the RS, 2009) does not mention integral planning or coordination with spatial and environmental planning, nor the obligation of carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessment for sectoral plans. After the adoption of tourism development master plans for certain primary tourism destinations in Serbia, a significant problem occurred in developing spatial plans for special-purpose areas and regional spatial plans.

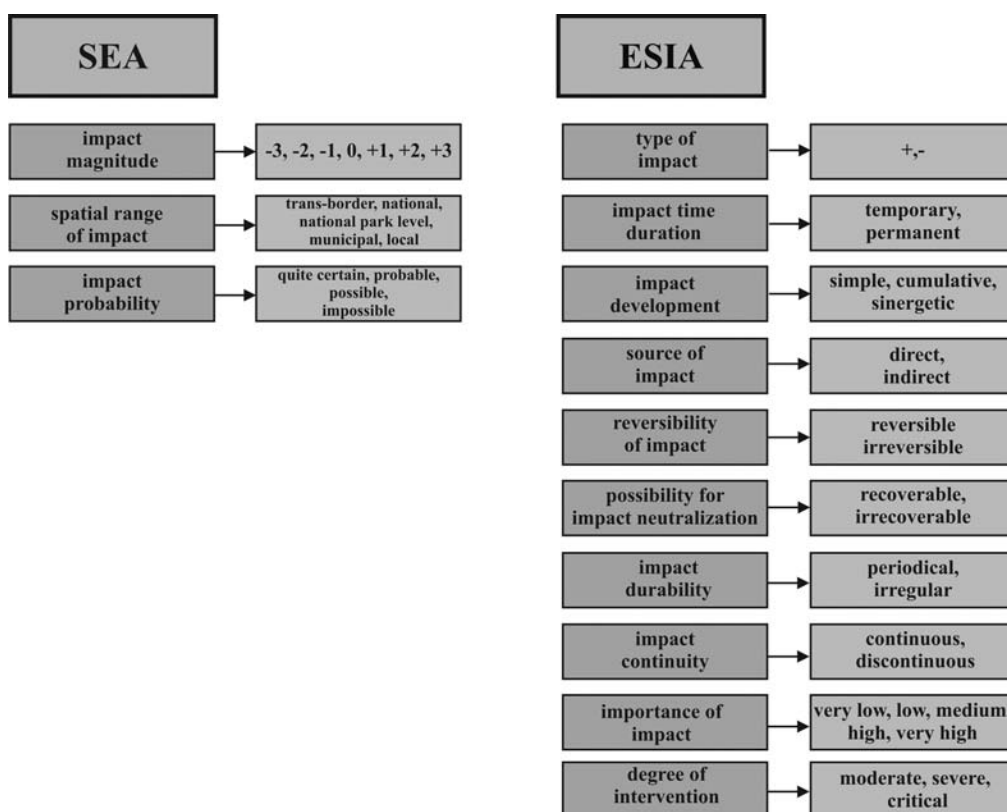


Figure 1. Differences between evaluation parameters in SEA and ESIA (Source: authors)

The integration of SEA into the spatial and urban planning in Serbia has produced good results in evaluating different territorial development options and contributing to the improvement of the quality of life and environment so far. Non-implementation of legal requirements pertaining to the development of SEA for sector plans in tourism represents a limitation in the implementation of coordinating and integrative role of strategic environmental assessments in Serbian planning system. Under such conditions, the implementation of SEA, with the extended methodology of adapted ESIA, in spatial plans for tourism destinations and binding regulation plans for tourist resorts (the plan of general regulation and the plan of detailed regulation) is the only control instrument enabling the coordination between sector-oriented strategic master plans and spatial and environmental planning.

**Methodology for ESIA Application in Serbia**

Environmental impact analyses, i.e. SEA and EIA, have been conducted in the Republic of Serbia over the past 10 years, based on the theoretical research by Fischer (Fischer, 2007; Fischer *et al.*, 2010), and Therivel (Therivel, 2010). Although the legal basis for the implementation of SEA and EIA in Serbia has been innovated several times since 2004, SEA and EIA methodology still remains vaguely defined. This has encouraged a more comprehensive research work on developing the specific and widely applicable methodology for carrying out SEA and EIA (Stojanović and Maričić, 2008; Stojanović and Spasić, 2006; Maksin Mičić *et al.*, 2009; Nenковиć Riznić *et al.*, 2010). A common feature of these methodologies is that they have been mainly based on the determination of a set of goals of SEA, i.e. they have primarily had an environmental character. ESIA has not been recognized in the legal basis and strategic documents in Serbia.

The major problem which appeared in the elaboration of spatial plans for tourism destinations and special-purpose areas in Serbia (nature parks, national parks, water basins, cultural heritage in the UNESCO World Heritage List etc.) was caused by the failure of SEA to provide precise quantitative and qualitative determination of cumulative and synergistic effects of planned activities, determination of reversibility, durability and continuity of impacts, and thereby their neutralization. Due to the mentioned problems, in 2006 IAUS (Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia) started to implement the adapted ESIA methodology (initially based on the work of Alonso *et al.*, 2002), an innovative, adjusted and improved research instrument which enabled the application of ESIA for the purposes of evaluating the effects of planned activities on territorial development of tourism destinations and special-purpose areas. The mentioned methodology (hereinafter referred to as “adapted ESIA methodology”) has the basic systematization of impacts (type, duration, development, sources, reversibility, possibility of neutralization, durability, continuity, importance, and degree of necessary intervention). In addition, it has significantly improved the impact evaluation of tourism-related and other activities by introducing socio-economic dimension as equally important in the evaluation process.

However, ESIA methodology cannot be used as the one and only methodology in impact assessment either, considering that more detailed evaluation of the effects (particularly with regard to their territorial distribution and impact strength) is carried out by the initial SEA methodology. Table 1 presents a comparison of the two methodologies with their positive and negative characteristics. Comparative analysis is based on the results of more than 40 SEA and ESIA studies conducted in IAUS, and their positive and negative effects, advantages and disadvantages on planning, which were also used in this research.

*Table 1. Comparison of ESIA and SEA methodologies in relation to the degree to which criteria are observed*

Type of impact assessment Pos./Neg. Assessment of methodology according to criteria	ESIA	SEA
Diversified quantitative assessment	-	+
Assessment of simple, cumulative and synergistic effects	+	-
Evaluation of variant solutions	-	+
Assessment comprehensiveness (ecological, economic, social indicators)	+	-
Legal grounds	-	+
Degree of necessary intervention	+	-
Territorial distribution of impact	+	+
Possibility for neutralizing the impact	+	-

(Source: authors)

This table leads to the general conclusion that there is a strong necessity for combining these two methodologies, especially if we consider the importance of the evaluation of the effects of planned tourism-related activities on the protection of environmental quality, nature and cultural heritage, and sustainable territorial development.

**RESULTS**

**Case Studies of Combined Complementary Methodologies for SEA and ESIA Application in Spatial Plans for Tourism Destinations**

The role and the results obtained by the combined complementary methods for carrying out environmental impact assessment for tourism destinations will be discussed on the examples of spatial plans of special-purpose areas (SPSPA) for Đerdap National Park and Stara Planina Nature Park (IAUSa, 2011; IAUSb, 2011). These cases are taken into consideration because they are two of the most important primary tourism destinations in the territory of Serbia. Also, there are significant conflicts between protection and development in these areas, which makes them an interesting field of research.

An ESIA study was developed for the needs of elaborating the Spatial Plan for the Special-Purpose Area of Đerdap National Park – SPSPA Đerdap (IAUSa, 2011). Occupying the area of 637 km<sup>2</sup>, Đerdap National park is included in the lists of Important Plant Areas, Important Bird Areas, Prime Butterfly Areas, Carpathian protected areas, as well as in the programme of the European Green Belt Project and in the

Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage. It is also part of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest in Serbia. Valuable immovable cultural heritage of the National Park from prehistoric, Roman and medieval period is an important element of its cultural identity. Besides this, it is a primary tourism destination with all-year-round offer, and it is a section of the Danube international waterway E-80. At the same time, this is a peripheral rural area comprising 27 settlements. The key problems in achieving sustainable development of the National Park are as follows: underdeveloped presentation of natural and cultural heritage (now under development for two archaeological sites - Lepenski Vir archaeological site and Golubac medieval fortress), undeveloped tourism products and unattractive tourist offer; poor accessibility from Pan-European Corridors VII and X, pronounced depopulation and rural unemployment, low level of awareness of local population and entrepreneurs about the value of heritage for local economic development and non-engagement in its protection (e.g. uncontrolled deforestation by private owners), etc. Also, these are some of the reasons for tourism development not to be at its peak, achieved in the 1980s. Therefore, the positive effects of tourism on the socio-economic development of local communities are not sufficient, taking into account its potentials.

The protection regimes for the nature and immovable cultural heritage prescribed for the National Park territory can have great comparative advantages in tourism (taking into account the potential attractiveness of the protected assets, on the one hand), while they directly influence the quality of life of people and socio-economic development of local communities with regard to limitations in carrying out and developing the activities, as well as limitations for the construction of facilities in the protected area, on the other hand. Therefore, it is necessary to precisely determine

the cumulative and synergistic effects of certain planning solutions on the environment and local community, as well as the strength and territorial distribution of these effects, and to prescribe, after the detailed evaluation, the measures for reducing and eliminating the conflicts and their negative effects on the sustainable territorial development. Through the use of combined ESIA and SEA instruments, the effects of certain planning solutions have been specified according to the type of impact, impact time duration and development, impact source, impact reversibility and possibility of neutralizing the impact, as well as impact durability, continuity and importance, and the degree of necessary intervention. The prescribed goals of SEA/ESIA concern the effects of tourism-related and other activities on the air, water and land, waste evacuation, etc., and the effects on cultural heritage, biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscapes, population and human health, socio-economic development of local communities, development of local infrastructure and public services, as well as on strengthening the institutional competences in environmental protection and tourism development at the level of the National Park. The goals of the strategic environmental assessment have been expressed through indicators and elaborated in more detail through specific goals for each of the mentioned fields.

ESIA and SEA methodologies have enabled a more detailed classification of the environment in the territory of Đerdap National Park, according to the assessed effects of planning solutions on the protection and improvement of environmental quality (Figure 2) and socio-economic development. The planning solutions for tourism development proposed by the Master Plan for Lower Danube Tourism Destination (Ministry of economy, 2007) and implemented in SPSPA Đerdap have displayed several potentially negative effects on the environment, the quality of life and socio-economic development of local communities,

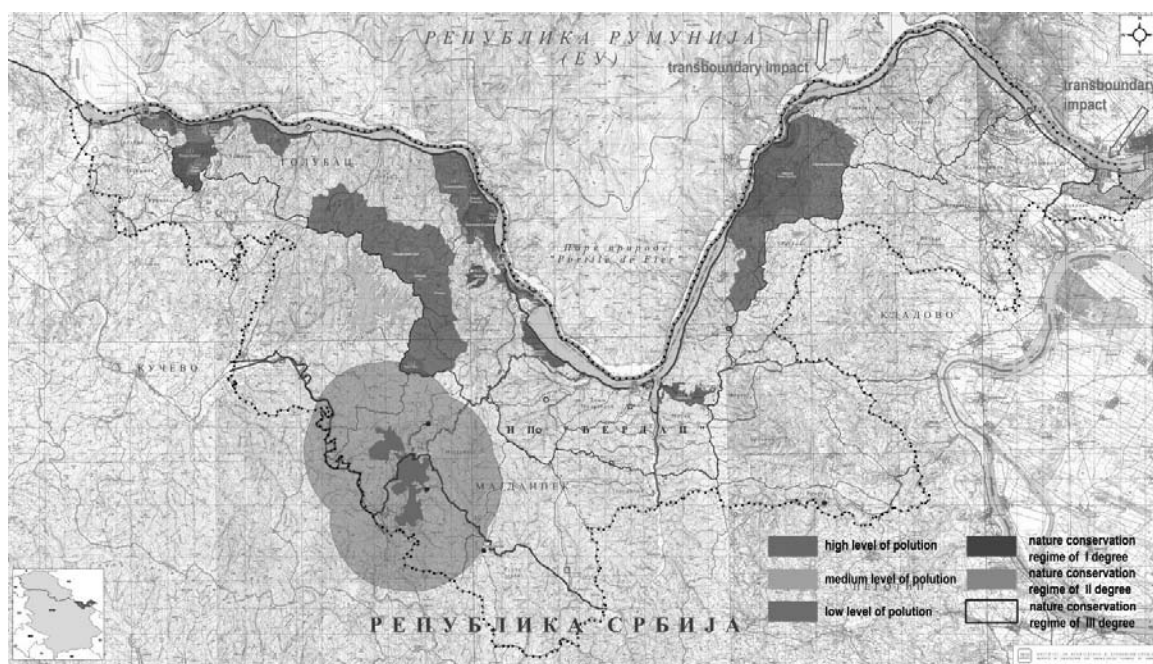


Figure 2. Classification of the environmental quality in the SPSPA Đerdap (Source: IAUSb, 2011)

which can be controlled by adopting the measures proposed by ESIA. The necessary public insight implied and enabled the participation of local community, while also facilitating easier acceptance of proposed measures.

ESIA was carried out (IAUS, 2009; ECOSIGN, 2007) for the purposes of the Spatial Plan for the Special-Purpose Area of the Stara Planina Nature Park (hereinafter: SPSPA Stara Planina). Occupying the area of 1,143 km<sup>2</sup> Stara Planina Nature Park has been designated as one of Important Plant Areas and Important Bird Areas site. It is also an area containing a great number of cultural monuments, as well as authentic old mountain villages, water sources of national and regional importance, etc. At the same time, this is a peripheral rural area comprising 78 small settlements. The key problems in achieving sustainable development of the Nature Park are as follows: undeveloped presentation of natural heritage, undeveloped tourism products, poor accessibility from Pan-European Corridors X and VII and at tourism destination, undeveloped communal infrastructure and services, depopulation process well underway with serious problems of poverty and ageing rural population, low level of awareness of local population and entrepreneurs about the heritage value and its protection, etc. Although it is regarded as the primary tourism destination with all-year-round offer in Serbia, tourism is still in the initial phase of development.

Based on ESIA, the tourism development has been evaluated for the zones with different protection regimes (Figure 3). Based on the results of the assessment, it is concluded that significant positive effects of implementation of the SPSPA Stara Planina will be particularly manifested in: the protection and improvement of the natural environment; conservation, presentation and adequate use of natural and cultural heritage; overall economic effects and

uniform growth in local employment (in the field of tourism, agriculture and other complementary activities); protection and improvement of health of local population; uniform development of infrastructure and improvement in the quality and accessibility of public and tourism infrastructure and public services; creation of conditions in which tourism and recreation will be accessible to all tourists, etc. It is concluded that, with the concept of a dispersive development and construction which has been implemented in most parts of the area covered by the SPSPA Stara Planina (in about 88% of the area), none of the planning solutions will generate significant long-lasting unfavourable effects on the environment that cannot be kept under control. However, in addition to the SPSPA Stara planina, the Master Plan of the Jabučko Ravnište-Leskovac Tourist Resort (Master Plan) (ECOSIGN, 2007) has also been elaborated, without harmonizing the development of this resort with the development vision and concept of Stara Planina primary tourism destination. This Master Plan has doubled the accommodation capacity in the mountain zone compared to the capacity envisaged by the SPSPA Stara Planina. ESIA indicated that the concept of high construction concentration, which was implemented in the Jabučko Ravnište-Leskovac Tourist Resort with long-lasting adverse effects on the nature and environment, particularly with regard to water supply, wastewater disposal, access and internal traffic, solid municipal waste elimination, electric power supply and accommodation of the employed, the quality of life of local residents (due to the uneven distribution of workplaces, planned dominant participation of the employed from further surroundings, etc.), was implemented only in the smaller part of the area covered by the SPSPA Stara planina (in about 12% of the area). The mentioned concept is much more difficult to control than the concept of dispersive development, which is more

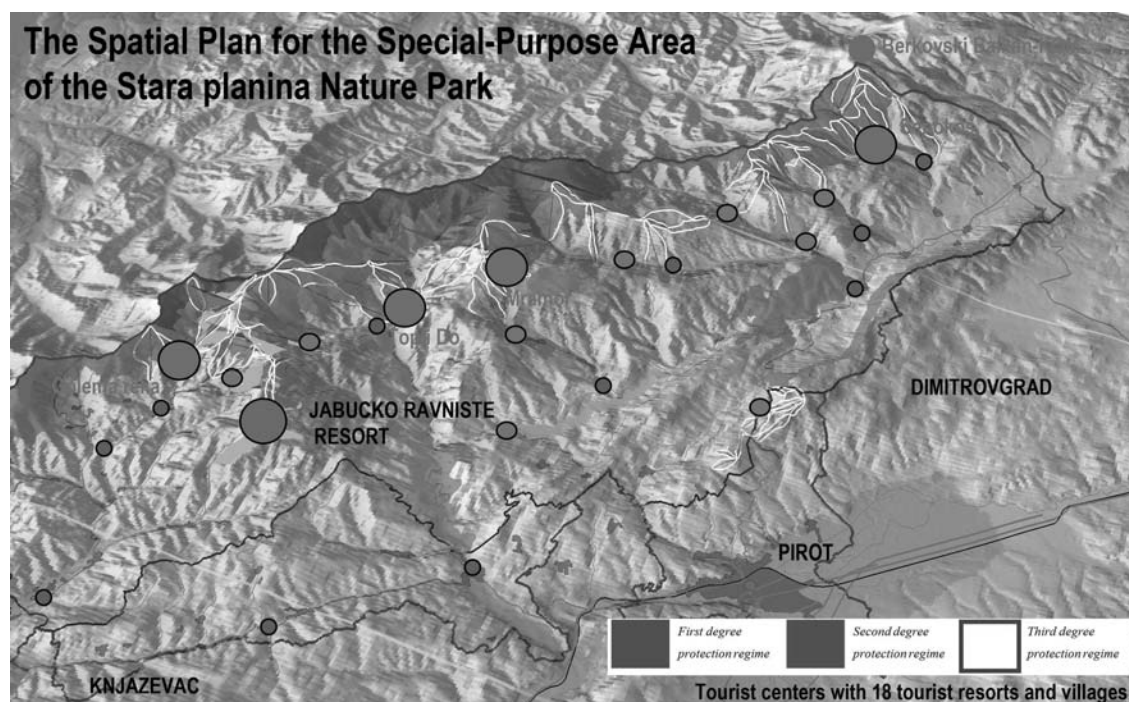


Figure 3. Classification of environmental quality in the SPSPA Stara planina  
(Source: IAUS, 2009)

suitable for the protected area of Stara Planina Nature Park) (Maksin, 2012). ESIA has provided recommendations for the reduction of accommodation capacities of Jabučko Ravnište Tourist Resort to the level which would not endanger the environment. It has also defined measures for diminishing or neutralizing the negative effects of planning solutions on the socio-economic development of local communities and on the quality of life of local residents.

By introducing ESIA instruments into solving the planning conflicts between the integral spatial plan and economy-oriented tourism sector plan, certain tradeoffs were made, owing to which the sustainable territorial development of tourism in the most vulnerable area of the Nature Park has been retained. By doing so, the main purpose of ESIA application has been accomplished.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The results of the previous studies elaborated for the needs of two primary tourism destinations in different phases of development – Đerdap National Park and Stara Planina Nature Park, indicate that the use of combined ESIA and SEA methodology has directly influenced a more comprehensive consideration of problems in developing tourism-related activities in ecologically vulnerable areas. While standard SEA and EIA solely focus on determining the effects of planning solutions on the environmental quality, these case studies also indicate the necessity of determining the effects of tourism-related and complementary activities on the socio-economic development of local communities, the quality of life of people and protection of natural and cultural heritage. They provide a relatively comprehensive evaluation of the effects on all dimensions of sustainable tourism development, and suggest a corrective modification of the planned tourism, all for the purposes of achieving sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations and its surroundings. Indicators defined for the needs of ESIA application have been significantly extended compared to the standard goals and indicators prescribed for the application of SEA and EIA. Namely, they primarily refer to the incorporation of the effects of planning solutions on population and human health, the quality of life of local residents and socio-economic development of local communities, natural and cultural heritage, but also on the possibility of strengthening the institutional competence of local administration in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development of local communities.

Through combining these two methodologies, the planning solutions with significant negative effects on the environment and the quality of life have been eliminated. Furthermore, this also allowed the simultaneous evaluation of the different type of effects which have not been independently considered in the structure of the planning solutions, but evaluated synergically.

Through the analysis of the area and activities using these two methods, the planning solutions whose realization would not cause significant conflicts in space have been clearly defined. In cases when conflicts were inevitable, ESIA has defined measures aimed at diminishing these conflicts. Therefore, it is possible to comprehensively consider heterogeneous space of tourism destinations

through establishing the system of measures for improving the quality of life and sustainability of tourism development as an integral part of sustainable territorial development of the area and local communities.

Through a combined use of complementary ESIA and SEA methodologies, an indirect control of sustainability of the planning solutions offered by the master plans for tourism destination/resort has been achieved, as well as an indirect coordination with spatial planning.

Although SEA is not applied to master plans in tourism sector for the time being, its application in spatial plans can contribute to achieving a certain balance between the sectoral and holistic approach to development and protection, with a view to achieving sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The coordination and integration of strategic planning is one of the priorities for achieving sustainable territorial development (Dalal-Clayton and Sadler, 2005), primarily with regard to spatial planning, environmental planning and tourism planning. SEA/ESIA is an important control instrument for the support to coordination and integration of strategic planning with a view to achieving sustainable territorial development. Although ESIA is not legally grounded in any EU directive, its application can contribute to better consideration of the specific problems of sustainable territorial development and provide a support to planning options and solutions that will solve them in an ecologically and socially justifiable way.

The integration of ESIA in spatial and urban planning provides an adequate basis for the evaluation of different variants of planning solutions for developing and spatially organizing the tourism-related and other activities which have direct effects not only on the environmental quality, but also on the quality of life and overall economic development.

A precondition for SEA and ESIA to have a controlling and coordinating role is to initiate their application in tourism planning, using as the starting basis experiences related to SEA and ESIA implementation and integration into the spatial planning process, as well as to enable their adequate integration into the strategic planning process – from preparation to implementation, monitoring and auditing of planning documentation.

However, in spite of all abovementioned issues and obvious advantages of ESIA methodology application (or evaluation of environmental and social consequences of tourist activities), the question remains whether there is sufficient institutional capacity to implement their recommendations for minimizing and monitoring effects on sustainable territorial development of tourism destinations and protected areas, given the problems of depopulation, unemployment and underdevelopment which are evident in the protected areas. The same question refers to the whole territory of Serbia.

The introduction of the ESIA methods will, in perspective, certainly have to be followed by the adoption of this multicriteria analysis in the Serbian legislature, and

consequently, by the proper implementation of the ESIA objectives in the planning of the tourism destinations (regardless the social trends in Serbia).

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