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## RAZVOJ DESTINACIJE CIKLOTURIZMA IZ PERSPEKTIVE LOKALNIH DIONIKA

### CYCLING TOURISM DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FROM LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE

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**SAŽETAK:** S ciljem poimanja perspektive dionika o različitim aspektima razvoja destinacije cikloturizma u razdoblju nakon pandemije COVID-a-19, u prikupljanju stavova i mišljenja dionika primijenjene su metoda ispitivanja i studija slučaja. U radu su uvaženi relevantni znanstveni i stručni izvori te trenutno stanje u EU (gdje se u planovima oporavka nakon pandemije COVID-a-19 puno raspravlja o rastućem udjelu biciklizma). U kontekstu sagledavanja rezultata primarnog istraživanja, osim doprinosa novim spoznajama o razvoju regionalnog cikloturizma uopće, rezultati istraživanja identificiraju često zanemarene stavove lokalnih dionika koji su primarno fokusirani na interna (lokalna) destinacijska pitanja i odnose.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** cikloturizam, post-COVID-19 oporavak, percepcija dionika, Krapinsko-zagorska županija

**ABSTRACT:** To determine the stakeholder perspective on different circumstances of cycling tourism destination development in the post- COVID-19 period, the survey method and a case study approach were implemented in obtaining stakeholder expert judgement. This paper acknowledges the recent academic and industry publications, and the current momentum in the EU (where post-COVID-19 recovery plans include raising the share of cycling), and discusses the primary research findings on cycling tourism development in this context. Primarily contributing to the body of knowledge on regional cycling tourism development in general the findings of this paper acknowledge the often-neglected local stakeholder perspective and indicate that stakeholders tend to focus more on internal (local) destination issues and relationships.

**KEY WORDS:** cycling tourism, post- COVID-19 recovery, stakeholders' perspective, Krapina-Zagorje County

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## 1. UVOD

Potencijali kretanja biciklom u ublažavanju klimatskih promjena, suočavanju s ekonomskim izazovima, ostvarivanju društvenih koristi i suočavanju s utjecajima COVID-a-19, nameću potrebu uvrštavanja biciklističkog prometa, mobilnosti i turizma u prioritete svih relevantnih EU politika i linija financiranja<sup>1</sup>. Održavanje trenutnog udjela aktivne mobilnosti i povećane razine biciklizma u slobodno vrijeme ovisi o strateškim investicijama i poticanju odgovornog individualnog ponašanja (Budd i Ison, 2020; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021). Na vlastima je pokušati ponovno uspostaviti biciklizam kao ravnopravni način kretanja i postići održivi oporavak nakon pandemije uključivanjem „biciklističkih“ ciljeva u svoje politike i novi financijski okvir EU-a (*Dugoročni proračun EU-a za razdoblje 2021. – 2027.*; Europski fond za regionalni razvoj), natječući se za dio od šest milijardi eura dostupnih za „smjela i vizionarska ulaganja u biciklistički promet i turizam“ (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020c; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020d).

Iako vrlo izazovna za turizam, pandemija je i prilika za ponovno promišljanje, preispitivanje i ponovno osmišljavanje putovanja, načina života i turističkih kretanja (Orihuel, 2021). No, kako će turizam izgledati nakon pandemije COVID-a-19 (npr. OECD, 2020; Turayev i Sharma, 2020; Butcher, 2021; Korstanje, 2021; UNWTO, 2021), hoće li se resetirati i uvažiti strategije za održiviju budućnost ili se vratiti ranijoj praksi, ostaje otvoreno pitanje. Za cikloturizam se očekuje porast u obimu i vrijednosti, budući da je rast ostvaren i tijekom pandemije (ADFC, 2021;

<sup>1</sup> Biciklizam je dio i *Strategije za održivu i pametnu mobilnost* EU, no nisu definirani ključni momenti/prekretnice za biciklizam kao modalitet prijevoza, niti eksplicitne akcije kojima bi se uloga i udio biciklizma povećali (Delaney, 2020).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The potentials of cycling in mitigating climate change, overcoming economic challenges, and achieving social benefits while facing the COVID-19 effects require making cycling as a means of transportation, mobility and tourism a priority in all relevant EU policies and funding decisions<sup>1</sup>. Sustaining the current levels of active mobility and increased levels of leisure cycling strongly relies on strategic investments and supporting the responsible individual choices (Budd and Ison, 2020; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021). The authorities are expected to try to re-establish cycling as a mainstream travel mode, and achieve sustainable post- COVID recovery by including pro-cycling objectives in their policies and the new financial framework of the EU (*Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027*); European Regional Development Fund), while opting for a share of the €6 billion with “bold and visionary investments in cycling transport and tourism” (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020c; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020d).

Although challenging for the tourism sector, the pandemic provides an opportunity to rethink and reimagine travel, lifestyle and tourism patterns (Orihuel, 2021). Nevertheless, regarding the post- COVID tourism prospects (e.g. OECD, 2020; Turayev and Sharma, 2020; Butcher, 2021; Korstanje, 2021; UNWTO, 2021) and the chances for resetting and re-strategizing towards a more sustainable future (‘build back better’) or turning back to ‘normal’ remains to be seen. Cycling tourism is expected to continue growing in volume and value, just as it has been growing during the pandemic (ADFC,

<sup>1</sup> Cycling is acknowledged in the EU *Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility* but there are no specific milestones for cycling as a transport mode, nor explicit campaigns to increase cycling role and share (Delaney, 2020).

Radlobby, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021; Tornow, 2021).

Evidentan je jaz u akademskim istraživanjima odnosa „sport-turizam-društvena zajednica“, kao i praktičnih problema sredina koje ne prepoznaju puni potencijal korištenja sporta u svom turističkom proizvodu i održivom (društvenom) razvoju (Herbold, Thees i Philipp, 2020). Lokalna zajednica ima važnu ulogu u razvoju regionalnog cikloturizma, kako izravno (nudeći usluge cikloturistima), tako i neizravno (na neki od mnogih načina doprinoseći integralnoj kvaliteti destinacijskog proizvoda i iskustvima turista). Unatoč tome, stavovi lokalnih dionika prema razvoju cikloturizma vrlo su slabo istraženi.

U skladu sa značajem dionika cikloturizma i njihovim mogućim utjecajem na iskustvo cikloturista u destinaciji, cilj ovog rada je ponuditi perspektivu „insajdera“, nastojeći odgovoriti na sljedeće istraživačko pitanje:

- Kakva su mišljenja i stavovi dionika destinacije cikloturizma regionalne razine o prednostima, slabostima, prilikama i prijetnjama budućem potencijalu i preprekama u razvoju cikloturizma?

## **2. PREGLED TEORIJE I KONTEKST ISTRAŽIVANJA**

Razmatranje trendova i trenutnih okolnosti biciklističkog prijevoza i turizma pružaju kontekst važan za razvoj cikloturizma u 2021. godini i u budućnosti.

### **2.1. Cikloturizam, lokalni dionici i regionalni razvoj**

Biciklizam je temeljni, sastavni i neizostavni dio iskustva cikloturizma (Ritchie, 1998; Sustrans, 1999; European Parliament, 2009) koji uključuje različite segmente cikloturizma (Lamont i Buultjens, 2011), odnosno aktivne i pasivne potražnje (Lamont, 2009). Zbog mnogih pojavnih oblika i mnoštva dio-

2021; Radlobby, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021; Tornow, 2021).

There is a clear gap in researching the 'sports-tourism-community' triangle, as well as practical community issues that fail to recognise the full potentials of utilizing sports in their tourism products and sustainable (social) development (Herbold, Thees and Philipp, 2020). The host community plays an important role in regional cycling tourism development, whether directly (by offering services to cycling tourists) or indirectly (many modes of contributing to the integral quality of a destination's offering and the tourists' experience). Local stakeholders' attitudes towards cycling tourism development, however, have hardly been studied.

In line with the importance of cycling tourism stakeholders and their potential to influence the cycling tourists' experience of a destination, the aim of this paper is to capture the 'insider' perspective by seeking to answer the following research question:

- What are the opinions and attitudes of regional cycling tourism destination stakeholders towards cycling tourism development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, future potentials, and obstacles?

## **2. BACKGROUND – THEORY REVIEW AND CONTEXT**

The consideration of the current trends and circumstances in cycling transportation and tourism provided an important context for cycling tourism development in 2021 and in the future.

### **2.1. Cycling tourism, local stakeholders and regional development**

Cycling is a fundamental, integral and indispensable part of the experience of cycling tourism (Ritchie, 1998; Sustrans, 1999; European Parliament, 2009) that includes

nika koji oblikuju okruženje u kojem djeluje (Rowe *et al.*, 2016), nedosljednosti u rasponu varijabli analiziranih u raznim studijama te čimbenika koji sprječavaju sveobuhvatnu definiciju (Kovačić, 2015), istraživanje cikloturizma je složeno, a preciziranje njegova opsega i vrijednosti teško. Često citirana procjena Europskog parlamenta ukazuje na 44 milijarde € vrijednosti i 2,3 milijarde biciklističkih putovanja godišnje (Weston *et al.*, 2012). Nastavno na razlike u fokusu i postavkama postojećih istraživanja, različita je i tipologija cikloturista<sup>2</sup>.

Cikloturizam pridonosi održivom razvoju, uskladiv je s mnogim drugim oblicima turizma (ADFC, 2018) te rezultira brojnim prednostima za turističke destinacije (Mrnjavac, Kovačić i Topolšek, 2014). Kapacitet regionalnog razvoja cikloturizma suočava se s izazovima poput „kratkotrajne prirode političkih ciklusa i prioriteta vlasti u ruralnim područjima, čvrstog oslanjanja na vodstvo i financiranje od regionalne ili državne vlasti, visoke stope promjene čelnika javnog sektora i sukoba između ugrađenog lokalnog parohijalizma i nametnutih regionalnih razvojnih struktura“ (Carson, 2013). Lokalno stanovništvo jedna je od glavnih interesnih skupina u razvoju destinacijskog turizma (González-García *et al.*, 2018) zbog čega su njihova podrška i angažman ključni čimbenici potpore stvaranju autentičnih iskustava sportskog turizma (Herbold, Thees i Philipp, 2020). Stanovnici bi stoga trebali biti više uključeni u planiranje i razvoj cikloturizma (Brščić, Lovrečić i Šugar, 2021), zajed-

different segments (Lamont and Buultjens, 2011) of active and passive demand (Lamont, 2009). Studying cycling tourism is complex, and capturing its volume and value is difficult due to its many forms and the multitude of stakeholders who shape the landscape in which it operates (Rowe *et al.*, 2016), as well as to the inconsistency in the range of variables measured across studies and the factors that hinder a comprehensive definition (Kovačić, 2015). A frequently cited estimate of the European Parliament specifies the value of EUR 44 billion and 2.3 billion cycling trips per year (Weston *et al.*, 2012). Regarding the differences in the research focus and settings, the classification and typology of cycling tourists<sup>2</sup> also varies.

Cycling tourism contributes to sustainable development, is compatible with many other forms of tourism (ADFC, 2018), and results in many benefits for the destinations (Mrnjavac, Kovačić and Topolšek, 2014). The capacity of regional cycling tourism development may be challenged by “the short-lived nature of political cycles and government priorities in rural areas, an entrenched reliance on regional or state government leadership (and funding), high turnover rates of public sector leaders, and conflicts between embedded local parochialism and imposed regional development structures” (Carson, 2013). Residents are a key interest group in destination tourism development (González-García *et al.*, 2018), and their endorsement and engagement are the critical support factors in creating authentic sport tourism

<sup>2</sup> Za ovo je istraživanje važno objasniti razliku između biciklizma u slobodno vrijeme (eng. leisure cycling) i funkcionalne mobilnosti biciklom (eng. commuter cycling) koja implicira funkcionalne vožnje s ciljem odlaska na posao, u školu ili obavljanje druge redovite obveze. Biciklizam u slobodno vrijeme u najširem smislu uključuje rekreativnu aktivnost lokalnog stanovništva u domicilu, ali i različite pojavne oblike cikloturizma, odnosno turistička putovanja u kojima je glavni motiv aktivnost vožnje biciklom.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this research, a distinction between leisure cycling and utility (commuter) cycling should be noted. The latter implies functional rides with the aim of going to work, school or performing other regular duties. Leisure cycling in the broadest sense refers to the recreational activity of the local population within their domicile area, but also to various forms of cycling tourism, i.e., tourist trips in which cycling is a fundamental or a primary motive.

no s ostalim skupinama lokalnih dionika (lokalna poduzeća, nevladine organizacije, biciklistički klubovi, itd.) čija je perspektiva vrijedni resurs pri upravljanju destinacijom cikloturizma.

Lokalno stanovništvo skloni je podržati razvoj cikloturizma čak i u početnoj fazi razvoja (Pavluković, Nikić i Stankov, 2020), no nedostatak javnog financiranja često ometa projektiranje biciklističkih mreža, bez obzira na dostupne alate za vrednovanje odnosa troškova i koristi (Giovannini, Malucelli i Nonato, 2017) čija bi primjena pomogla pri donošenju informiranih odluka. Na potporu stanovnika sportskom turizmu pozitivno utječe imidž mjesta i znanje o turizmu, a njihova je podrška jača ako njihov prihod dolazi od turizma (Chang, Choong i Ng, 2020). Općenito, ulaganja u biciklističku infrastrukturu i sadržaje uglavnom su pozitivna za lokalna poduzeća (Volker i Handy, 2021), no utjecaj cikloturizma na gospodarstvo (npr. Weed *et al.*, 2014; Buning, Cole i McNamee, 2016; Preez i Lee, 2016; Kaya i Erdoğan, 2020) i uslužni sektor (Fahrradportal, 2017), nadilazi lokalnu razinu (Adventure Cycling Association, n.d.; The Outdoor Industry Association, 2018).

Regionalni razvoj cikloturizma utemeljen je u odgovarajućoj resursnoj bazi područja, predanosti vlasti razvoju cikloturizma (posjedovanje i provođenje strateških dokumenata) i koordinaciji dionika kojom neizbježno upravlja tijelo destinacijskog menadžmenta (Slavić i Ivek, 2021), to jest, u postojanju jasnih smjernica i praćenja (Institute for Transport Studies, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, 2019). Mnogo dostupnih studija razmatra perspektivu izvana prema unutra, usredotočujući se na utjecaje cikloturizma te na profil i ponašanje cikloturista (Marcussen, 2009; Lamont i Buultjens, 2011; Mrnjavac i Kovačić, 2012; Chen i Chen, 2013; Lamont i Jenkins, 2013; Piket, Eijgelaar i Peeters, 2013; Weed *et al.*, 2014; Gazzola *et al.*, 2018; Soyalp, 2018; Di Giacomo, Di Ludovico i D'Ovidio, 2020; Kaya

experiences (Herbold, Thees and Philipp, 2020). They should, thus, be more involved in cycling tourism planning and development (Brščić, Lovrečić and Šugar, 2021), alongside the other groups of local stakeholders (local businesses, NGOs, cycling clubs, etc.) whose perspective is a valuable asset in cycling tourism destination management.

The local population is inclined to support cycling tourism development even in its initial stages (Pavluković, Nikić and Stankov, 2020), but it is the lack of public funding that often hinders designing cycling networks, regardless of the available cost-benefit tools (Giovannini, Malucelli and Nonato, 2017) that could help make more-informed decisions. Residents' support for sport tourism is positively affected by place image and knowledge about tourism, and their support is stronger if their income comes from tourism (Chang, Choong and Ng, 2020). In general, investments in bicycle facilities are mostly positive for local businesses (Volker and Handy, 2021) but cycling tourism impacts on the economy (e.g. Weed *et al.*, 2014; Buning, Cole and McNamee, 2016; Preez and Lee, 2016; Kaya and Erdoğan, 2020) and the services sector (Fahrradportal, 2017) go beyond the local level (Adventure Cycling Association, n.d.; The Outdoor Industry Association, 2018).

Regional cycling tourism development is based on the appropriate resource base of the region, authority commitment to cycling tourism development (having and implementing strategic documents), and stakeholder coordination, and is inevitably managed by the destination tourism authority (Slavić and Ivek, 2021), i.e., through the existence of clear guidelines and monitoring (Institute for Transport Studies, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, 2019). A large number of available studies demonstrate the outside-in perspective, focusing on cycling tourism impacts, and cycling tourists' profile and behaviour (Marcussen, 2009; Lamont and Buultjens, 2011; Mrnjavac and Kovačić,

i Erdoğan, 2020; Lin *et al.*, 2020; Lőrincz, Banász i Csapó, 2020; Volker i Handy, 2021), a izostavlja perspektivu iznutra prema van, perspektivu dionika (za razliku od npr. Pavluković, Nikić i Stankov, 2020; Brščić, Lovrečić i Šugar, 2021), koja je slabo istražena, a ovaj rad teži premošćivanju tog jaza.

Kao aktivnost slobodnog vremena, biciklizam ima velik turistički potencijal. Biciklizam u kontekstu turizma generira ekonomske i društvene koristi, uz minimalni utjecaj na ekološku održivost zbog čega predstavlja prihvatljiviji scenarij razvoja lokalnog i regionalnog turizma u područjima raznolike i očuvane resursne osnove. Pri tome, u razmatranju heterogenih potreba potražnje cikloturizma nužno je uključiti sve skupine dionika u destinaciji u stvaranje integralnog turističkog proizvoda koji će generirati koristi i za turiste, ali i destinaciju i društvenu zajednicu koja ondje živi i radi.

## 2.2. Kretanje biciklom tijekom pandemije COVID-a-19

Uz restrikcije svakodnevnom načinu života (prije svega, „zatvaranje“, rad i obrazovanje na daljinu, održavanje fizičke distance, zatvaranje sportskih dvorana, itd.), globalna pandemija COVID-a-19 također je utjecala na promjene obrazaca ponašanja i veću fokusiranost na osobno mentalno i fizičko zdravlje te uz to vezanu maksimizaciju vremena provedenog na otvorenom. Vožnja biciklom smatra se zdravom (Celis-Morales *et al.*, 2017; European Cyclists' Federation, 2018), a omogućava i održavanje distance uz istovremeno ispunjavanje minimalnih dnevnih potreba za fizičkom aktivnošću (WHO, 2021) prilikom boravka na otvorenom – pod uvjetom da to dostupne površine omogućavaju (Nurse i Dunning, 2020). Za razliku od brojnih negativnih učinaka na urbani način života, pandemija je otkrila i latentnu potražnju za kretanjem biciklom te je utjecala na rast udjela biciklističkog prijevoza u funkcionalnom kretanju, kao i na povećanje

2012; Chen and Chen, 2013; Lamont and Jenkins, 2013; Piket, Eijgelaar and Peeters, 2013; Weed *et al.*, 2014; Gazzola *et al.*, 2018; Soyalp, 2018; Di Giacobe, Di Ludovico and D'Ovidio, 2020; Kaya and Erdoğan, 2020; Lin *et al.*, 2020; Lőrincz, Banász and Csapó, 2020; Volker and Handy, 2021), but omit to include the stakeholders' perspective (unlike, e.g. Pavluković, Nikić and Stankov, 2020; Brščić, Lovrečić and Šugar, 2021), which is a gap this paper seeks to bridge.

As a leisure activity, cycling has great tourism potential. In a tourism setting, cycling generates economic and social benefits, while having the least effect on ecological sustainability, thus making it a more acceptable scenario of local and regional tourism development in regions with diverse and preserved resource bases. In addressing the heterogeneous needs of cycling tourism demand, however, it is essential to involve all stakeholder groups in a destination in designing an integrated tourism product capable of generating benefits both for the tourists and for the destination and the community living and working there.

## 2.2. Cycling during the COVID-19 pandemic

Besides the restrictions to everyday life (primarily the lockdown(s), the stay-at-home / work-from-home guidelines, physical spacing, closing of fitness facilities, etc.) the global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak also resulted in changing the behavioural patterns and greater focus on individual mental and physical health, thus maximizing the time spent outdoors. Cycling is considered healthy (Celis-Morales *et al.*, 2017; European Cyclists' Federation, 2018), and allows maintaining distance while meeting minimum daily physical activity requirements (WHO, 2021) and staying outdoors – provided that the available surfaces allow it (Nurse and Dunning, 2020). Unlike its many negative impacts on the urban lifestyle, the pandemic

nje vožnji biciklom u slobodno vrijeme i u rekreativne svrhe (Bucsky, 2020; Buehler i Pucher, 2021; Möllers, Specht i Wessel, 2021; Troy, 2021).

COVID-19 je na puno načina određujući za dizajn i upotrebu javnih površina (Honey-Rosés *et al.*, 2020). Tijekom pandemije prometni su sustavi reorganizirani kako bi se omogućilo održavanje fizičke distance, bolja kvaliteta zraka, sigurna mobilnost i učinkovitost modaliteta – često brzo implementiranim rješenjima, inovativnim alatima za uključivanje dionika u proces reorganizacije i „meke“ mjere (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020a). Zahvaljujući karakteristikama vožnje biciklom (oblik aktivne i individualne mobilnosti, brži u usporedbi s hodanjem, zdrav i opuštajući, itd.), udio kretanja biciklom uvelike se povećao u mnogim gradovima (Laker, 2021; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021) pod utjecajem porasta ponude biciklističke infrastrukture (Delaney, 2021; Haubold, 2021), kao i nametnutim ograničenjima kretanja i odlukama o kontroli epidemije COVID-a-19 (Venter *et al.*, 2020; Schweizer *et al.*, 2021). Na primjer, u usporedbi s istim razdobljem prethodne nepandemijske godine, udio kretanja biciklom u europskim gradovima povećao se 2020. godine u rasponu od 56% (Berlin) i 82% (Barcelona) pa do 119% (London) i 222% (Liverpool), dok na nacionalnoj razini podaci ukazuju na povećanje od 27% u Francuskoj, 32% u Njemačkoj te za preko 50% u Poljskoj (Holger, 2020).

Mnoge su zemlje EU-a uključile biciklizam u svoje nacionalne planove oporavka i otpornosti kao društveno koristan oblik klimatski prihvatljive aktivne mobilnosti i javno dostupnog prijevoza (Colli, 2021). U razdoblju nakon COVID-a-19 strah i zabrinutost za zdravlje mogli bi utjecati na percepciju lokalnog stanovništva i njihovu uključenost u stvaranje ponude cikloturizma (Vegara-Ferri, Pallarés i Angosto, 2021). Stoga je neophodno razumijevanje socijalne percepcije stanovništva, čija je uloga u razvoju cikloturizma ključna.

has revealed a latent demand for cycling, and 'helped' boost cycling levels for daily utilitarian trips, as well as for leisure and recreation purposes (Bucsky, 2020; Buehler and Pucher, 2021; Möllers, Specht and Wessel, 2021; Troy, 2021).

There are many ways in which COVID-19 affects the design and use of public space (Honey-Rosés *et al.*, 2020). During the pandemic, transportation systems were reorganized to allow for more social distancing, better air quality, safe mobility and efficient options, frequently through easily implemented solutions, innovative tools for stakeholder involvement, and 'soft' measures (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020a). Due to its characteristics (individual and active mode of mobility, faster in comparison to walking, healthy and relaxing, etc.) cycling levels increased in many cities (Laker, 2021; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021), largely influenced by the increased offering of cycling infrastructure (Delaney, 2021; Haubold, 2021), as well as by the mobility limitations and epidemic-control-decisions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Venter *et al.*, 2020; Schweizer *et al.*, 2021). For example, compared with the same period in the previous non-pandemic year, the use of bicycles in European cities in 2020 increased by 56% (Berlin), 82% (Barcelona), going as high as 119% (London) and 222% (Liverpool), while data at the national level indicate increases of 27% in France, 32% in Germany and more than 50% in Poland (Holger, 2020).

As part of their *National Recovery and Resilience Plans*, many EU countries acknowledged cycling as a socially beneficial form of climate-friendly active mobility and publicly available transportation (Colli, 2021). In the post- COVID-19 period, fear and health concerns could affect the local residents' perception and their involvement in creating a cycling tourism offering (Vegara-Ferri, Pallarés and Angosto, 2021). Therefore, understanding the social perception of the population, whose role in cycling tourism development is key, is indispensable.

Pored uočenih promjena u mobilnosti i prijevozu, promjene u slobodnom vremenu i ponašanju pod utjecajem COVID-a-19 rezultirale su i rastom cikloturizma u 2020. godini (u odnosu na 2019. godinu), to jest, značajnim rastom biciklizma u rekreacijske svrhe i slobodno vrijeme (Radlobby, 2021), većom učestalošću i udjelom biciklizma te općenito porastom biciklističkih odmora (ADFC, 2021). S percepcijom biciklističkih tura, kao sigurnom i atraktivnom opcijom tijekom pandemije (The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021), putovanja sa svrhom biciklizma zamijenila su mnoga druga planirana putovanja (Tornow, 2021), a zabilježen je i veliki broj osoba koje su prvi puta sudjelovale u cikloturizmu – na primjer, 54% od ukupnog broja u Njemačkoj, zbog čega projekcije za 2021. godinu uključuju veliki porast biciklističkih odmora (+18%) (ADFC, 2021).

Moguće je zaključiti kako se pandemijske okolnosti pokazuju povoljnima za razvoj cikloturizma zahvaljujući širenju infrastrukturne mreže, povećanoj orijentaciji na individualno zdravlje, potrebi za kretanjem i socijalnim distanciranjem te povećanju funkcionalnog i rekreativnog kretanja ovim održivim modalitetom.

### **2.3. Cikloturizam u Republici Hrvatskoj**

Pandemijske okolnosti pogodovale su cikloturizmu dijelom i zbog toga što ga karakterizira veliki udio domaćih turista (ADFC, 2017; The Outdoor Industry Association, 2018; ADFC, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021). Izuzetno mali udio biciklizma u sustavima gradskog prijevoza (TNS Opinion & Social Network, 2014; Mrnjavac i Slavić, 2018; Slavić i Mrnjavac, 2019) te nedostatak praćenja broja i potrošnje cikloturista ukazuju na nedostatak strateškog pristupa cikloturizmu u Hrvatskoj, unatoč činjenici da je cikloturizam dio Strategije razvoja

Aside from the observed changes in mobility and transportation, COVID-19-influenced changes in leisure time and travel behaviour also resulted in cycling tourism growth in 2020 (in comparison to 2019), i.e., in a notable increase in cycling for recreational and leisure purposes (Radlobby, 2021), a higher frequency and cycling levels, and in general more cycling holidays (ADFC, 2021). With cycle touring perceived as a safe and attractive option during the pandemic (The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021), cycling trips replaced many other planned trips (Tornow, 2021) and there was a large number of first-time cycling tourists – for example, 54% of those who did go on a cycling holiday in 2020 did so for the first time in Germany, that is expected to translate into a significant increase in cycling holidays in 2021 (+ 18%) (ADFC, 2021).

It can be concluded that the pandemic circumstances are seen to favour the development of cycling tourism through the expansion of the infrastructure network, the enhanced focus on individual health, the need for movement and social distancing, and the opportunity for more functional and recreational movement through this sustainable modality.

### **2.3. Cycling tourism in Croatia**

Pandemic circumstances favoured cycling tourism partially due to its characteristic of being largely domestic (ADFC, 2017; The Outdoor Industry Association, 2018; ADFC, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021). The extremely small share of cycling in urban transportation systems (TNS Opinion & Social Network, 2014; Mrnjavac i Slavić, 2018; Slavić i Mrnjavac, 2019) and lack of monitoring cycling tourists' numbers and expenditure indicate the lack of a strategic approach to cycling tourism in Croatia, despite the fact that cycling tourism is a part

turizma Republike Hrvatske (Vlada Republike Hrvatske, 2013), što postoji nacionalni Akcijski plan razvoja cikloturizma (Institut za turizam, 2015) te što sve kontinentalne i nekoliko obalnih županija imaju operativne planove za razvoj cikloturizma zahvaljujući javnom sufinanciranju (Europski fondovi, 2019; Ministarstvo turizma i sporta, 2021).

Postojeća istraživanja (npr. Poljičak, Šego i Periša, 2021) potvrđuju da je cikloturizam u Hrvatskoj još uvijek nedostatan razvijen te stoga ne generira cjelogodišnju potražnju kakva se očekivala do 2020. godine (Institut za turizam, 2015). Razlozi leže u nedostizanju potencijala ključnih akcija usmjerenih na intenziviranje razvoja cikloturizma (izgradnje, umrežavanja, označavanja i održavanja biciklističke infrastrukture; poboljšanja sigurnosti prometa; smještajnih, ugostiteljskih i drugih uslužnih objekata; i intenzivne promocije cijelog nacionalnog teritorija kao destinacije cikloturizma) (Institut za turizam, 2015:38). Uz navedeno, postojeća istraživanja na primjeru Hrvatske obuhvatila su još profiliranje cikloturista (Kovačić, 2015), planiranje razvoja cikloturizma (Brščić i Lovrečić, 2019), logistiku destinacija cikloturizma (Slavić, 2017) i biciklističkih hotela (Slavić, 2018), kao i standardizaciju usluga cikloturizma (Slavić i Ivek, 2021).

Biciklistička infrastruktura osnovni je preduvjet privlačenja biciklista, a značajke dizajna infrastrukture utječu na njezinu upotrebu (EU CYCLE Interreg Europe, 2021). Pored ostalih međunarodnih ruta (poput biciklističkih staza Mura i Drava) te mreže od 10 nacionalnih ruta (Koordinacijsko tijelo za razvoj cikloturizma Hrvatske, n.d.) i mnoštva regionalnih i lokalnih ruta, kroz Hrvatsku prolaze četiri EuroVelo rute: Atlantik – Crno more (EV 6), Mediteranska ruta (EV 8), ruta Baltičko – Jadransko more (EV 9) i Ruta željezne zavjese (EV 13) (EuroVelo, n.d.). Uz infrastrukturu, pet glavnih smjernica za razvoj cikloturizma u Hrvatskoj uključuju zakonska pitanja, ljudske resurse i tehnologiju, upravljanje destinacijskim turiz-

of the *Croatian Tourism Development Strategy* (Vlada Republike Hrvatske, 2013), there is a national *Action plan for the development of cyclotourism* (Institut za turizam, 2015), and that all continental and several coastal counties have operational plans for cycling tourism development, owing to public co-financing (Europski fondovi, 2019; Ministarstvo turizma i sporta, 2021).

The available studies (e.g., Poljičak, Šego and Periša, 2021) confirm that cycling tourism in Croatia is still underdeveloped, and that cycling tourism does not yet generate the whole-year tourism it was expected to by 2020 (Institut za turizam, 2015). The reasons lie in the fact that the key campaigns to drive more intensive cycling tourism development (the construction, networking, signage and maintenance of cycling infrastructure); enhance traffic safety; improve accommodation, catering and other service facilities; and undertake intensive promotion of the entire national territory as a cycling destination (Institut za turizam, 2015:38), failed to realise their full potential. The previous research on cycling tourism in Croatia also focused on profiling cycling tourists (Kovačić, 2015), cycling tourism development planning (Brščić and Lovrečić, 2019), logistics of bicycle tourism destinations in Croatia (Slavić, 2017) and cycling tourism hotels (Slavić, 2018), as well as on cycling tourism service standardization (Slavić and Ivek, 2021).

Cycling infrastructure is the basic precondition to attracting cyclists, and its design features influence its usage (EU CYCLE Interreg Europe, 2021). Besides other international routes (like the Mura and Drava cycling routes), a network of 10 national routes (Koordinacijsko tijelo za razvoj cikloturizma Hrvatske, n.d.) and many regional and local routes, four *EuroVelo* long-distance cycle routes pass through Croatia: the Atlantic – Black Sea route (EV 6), the Mediterranean route (EV 8), the Baltic – Adriatic route (EV 9), and the Iron Curtain Trail route (EV 13) (EuroVelo, n.d.). Additionally, five main

mom, te informacijski i marketinški sustav (Institut za turizam, 2015:38-40).

Osim infrastrukturnih problema, čini se da se izazovi cikloturizma u Hrvatskoj nalaze u izostanku specijalizacije turističkih usluga za potrebe cikloturista, tj. standardizacije kvalitete (poput Pravilnika *Ride & Bike standarda* Krapinsko-zagorske županije (Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, 2019)) i uključivanju lokalnih dionika, poduzetništva i dostupnosti raznovrsnih usluga (poput usluga smještaja uz biciklističke rute – Poljičak, Šego i Periša, 2021). Čini se da je cikloturizam uglavnom ovisan o inicijativi lokalnih i regionalnih dionika koji djeluju unutar parametara nacionalnog okvira.

U sljedećem proračunskom razdoblju EU-a Hrvatska planira kapitalizirati svoj potencijal za cikloturizam s više biciklističke infrastrukture, aktivnom promocijom turizma i digitalnim rješenjima u iznajmljivanju i korištenju bicikala uključenih u razvoj „turističkih proizvoda visoke vrijednosti“, vrijednima 120 milijuna eura kroz Nacionalni plan oporavka i otpornosti (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020b; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020c; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020d; Colli, 2021).

### 3. METODOLOGIJA ISTRAŽIVANJA

Fokus ovog rada stavljen je na razumijevanje stavova i mišljenja dionika o okolnostima regionalnog razvoja destinacije cikloturizma. Sukladno tome, metoda ispitivanja primijenjena je na uzorku dionika na primjeru jedne hrvatske biciklističke regije u razvoju kako bi se dobio uvid u stajalište eksperata.

guidelines for the development of cycling tourism in Croatia include legislative issues, human resources and technology, destination tourism management, and information and marketing system (Institut za turizam, 2015:38-40).

Aside from infrastructural issues, cycling tourism in Croatia seems to be challenged by specialisation of tourism services for cycling tourists' needs, i.e., quality standardization (like in the case of Krapina-Zagorje County's *Ride&Bike standardization rulebook* – Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, 2019), and local stakeholder involvement, entrepreneurship and the availability of various services (like accommodation available on the route – Poljičak, Šego and Periša, 2021). Cycling tourism seems to depend mostly on local and regional stakeholder initiatives, working within the parameters of the national framework.

In the next EU budgeting period, Croatia plans to capitalize its potential for cycling tourism with more cycling infrastructure, active tourism promotion and digital solutions in bicycle rental and use, included in the 'high-value tourism products' development, amounting to €120 million as part of the NRRPs (European Cyclists' Federation, 2020b; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020c; European Cyclists' Federation, 2020d; Colli, 2021).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper's focus is on understanding the stakeholder perspective on the different circumstances of regional cycling tourism destination development. Accordingly, the survey method was implemented on the sample of stakeholders in the case-studied region in order to obtain an insight into experts' judgement.

### 3.1. Primjer biciklističke regije u razvoju: Krapinsko-zagorska županija

Krapinsko-zagorska županija prvenstveno je poznata kao lječilišno i wellness odredište, ali zbog svog povoljnog zemljopisnog položaja, bogate povijesti i slikovitog krajovalika privlači turiste različitih preferencija. U namjeri iskorištavanja potencijala za zadovoljavanje potražnje posebnih interesa, zabilježeni su pokušaji stvaranja i standardiziranja konjičke (Zagorje Ride n.d.), biciklističke (Zagorje Bike, 2021; Tourist Board of Krapina-Zagorje county, 2021) te, u posljednje vrijeme, ukupne ponude turističkih aktivnosti na otvorenom. Krapinsko-zagorska županija ima najrazrađenije kriterije za standardizaciju biciklističkih usluga u Hrvatskoj, što svjedoči tome da je cikloturizam jedna od ključnih osi regionalnog razvoja i da mu se strateški pristupa budući da postojeći naponi nadilaze ulaganja u izgradnju osnovne infrastrukture, kao što se često događa. Ovo područje ima veliko iskustvo u razvoju cikloturizma, ali čini se da su trenutno stanje razvoja cikloturizma i prepoznatljivost na tržištu u nesrazmjeru s razinom regionalne predanosti, projektima i ulaganjima u biciklističku infrastrukturu i usluge, iako su primjetni pomaci u promjeni načina života stanovnika te u odnosu prema cikloturizmu. Potencijal županije nije dovoljno iskorišten, a razlozi za trenutno stanje vrlo su složeni, unatoč dostupnoj infrastrukturi i uslugama u županiji koji opslužuju različite segmente tržišta cikloturizma (Zagorje Bike, 2021).

S četiri prepoznatljiva međusobno povezana projektna razdoblja od 2012. do 2021. godine, ulaganja u biciklističku infrastrukturu u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji ukupno su iznosila gotovo 200.000 eura i rezultirala su sljedećim pomacima:

- mreža od otprilike 40 biciklističkih ruta za bicikliste različitih sposobnosti koje povezuju najvažnija mjesta na tom području,

### 3.1. An example of a developing cycling tourism region: Krapina-Zagorje county

The Krapina-Zagorje County is primarily known as a spa and wellness destination, but its favourable geographical position, rich history, and picturesque landscape make it appealing to tourists of various preferences. To tap into this potential to satisfy more special-interest experience seekers, attempts have been made to create and standardize the equestrian (Zagorje Ride, n.d.), cycling (Zagorje Bike, 2021; Tourist Board of Krapina-Zagorje county, 2021) and, recently, the overall outdoor tourism offering. This county has the most elaborate service standardization criteria in Croatia, which proves that cycling is one of the key axes of regional development and is strategically approached since these efforts exceed the investments in building the basic infrastructure, as is often the case. This area is very experienced in developing cycling tourism, but the current state of cycling tourism development and market recognition seem to be in disproportion with the level of regional commitment, projects and investments in cycling infrastructure and services in spite of a noticeable change in the residents' lifestyles and attitudes towards cycling tourism. The county's potential is underutilized and the reasons for the current state are very complex – despite the available infrastructure and the county services that cater to a variety of different segments of the cycling tourism market (Zagorje Bike, 2021).

With four distinctive interrelated project periods from 2012 to 2021 investments in cycling infrastructure in the Krapina-Zagorje County amounted to almost €200,000 and has resulted in the following:

- a network of approximately 40 cycling routes for different-ability cyclists, connecting the most important sites in the area,
- around 20 cycling rest stops built across the county, some interpretative,

- otprilike 20 odmorišta za bicikliste raspoređena u županiji, nekoliko interpretativnih,
- označena nacionalna ruta br. 6 – Zagorska ruta u dijelu kroz županiju, nacionalne povezujuće rute (rute Trakošćan, Sutla i Toplička), kao i Kružna županijska ruta,
- nekoliko biciklističkih ruta integriranih u prekograničnu biciklističku rutu,
- webstranica posvećena ponudi cikloturizma u području – *ZagorjeBike*,
- razvoj aplikacije za bicikliste,
- vođene i samo-vođene ture u digitalnom i tiskanom obliku informativnog i promotivnog materijala o mreži ruta,
- certificirani (lokalni) biciklistički vodiči,
- dizajnirani pilot za sustav javnih bicikala,
- regionalni „bike“ standardi – *Pravilnik Ride&Bike standarda* za različite nositelje usluga u turizmu,
- pet standardiziranih ponuđača smještajnih usluga, te usluga hrane i pića na razini „bike professional“ i „bike friendly“ (izrada autora na osnovu osobnog sudjelovanja u EU projektima u KZZ-u; interne regionalne projektne dokumentacije TZ Krapinsko zagorske županije i Zagorske razvojne agencije 2012-2021 (Ride&Bike: Ride&Bike info, 2021; Zagorje Bike, n.d.)).
- signposted national State route No. 6 – the Zagorje Route through the county, national connecting routes (Trakošćan, Sutla and Spa routes), and the Circular County Route,
- several cycling routes integrated into the cross-border cycling route,
- designated cycling tourism website *ZagorjeBike*,
- development of a smartphone cycling application,
- guided and self-guided tours, electronic and printed material on the cycling route network, designed promotional material,
- certified (local) cycling guides,
- designed pilot for public bike share system,
- regional bike standards – *Ride&Bike standardization rulebook* for different types of tourist service facilities,
- five standardized accommodation and catering facilities labelled ‘bike professional’ or ‘bike friendly’ (authors’ elaboration based on participation in regional EU projects; internal regional project documentation for The Krapina-Zagorje Tourism Board and Zagorje Development Agency from 2012-2021 (Ride&Bike: Ride&Bike info, 2021; Zagorje Bike, n.d.)).

Diverzifikacija portfelja Krapinsko-zagorske županije inicijativom *Zagorje Bike* rezultat je sustavnih napora i vizije na regionalnoj razini, no čini se da turistička tijela lokalne razine nerado međusobno surađuju te da dionici iskazuju nisku razinu zadovoljstva elementima ponude cikloturizma (Slavić i Ivek, 2021). Unatoč tome, ova destinacija cikloturizma nastavlja svoj razvoj ponudom novih sadržaja i infrastrukture planiranim u sljedećem razdoblju (npr. „pump track“ u Donjoj Stubici) te planiranjem implementacije alata za promociju i osiguranje kvalitete usluga (npr. brendiranje ponude aktivnosti na otvorenom).

The diversification of the Zagorje-Krapina tourism portfolio with the *Zagorje Bike* initiative is the outcome of systematic efforts and a vision at the regional level, but local level tourism bodies seem reluctant to cooperate with each other, and the stakeholders demonstrate low levels of satisfaction with the elements of the cycling tourism offering (Slavić and Ivek, 2021). Yet, this cycling tourism destination continues its development by supplying new amenities and infrastructure (e.g., the ‘pump track’ in Donja Stubica) and planning to implement promotional and quality assurance tools (e.g., branding the open-air activity offering).

### 3.2. Opis istraživanja

Primarna metoda prikupljanja podataka bila je metoda ispitivanja putem interneta (online ispitivanje), dostavljanjem poveznice na online obrazac pripremljen za samostalno ispunjavanje. U skladu s fokusom istraživanja, dostupnošću interne dokumentacije o razvoju cikloturizma županije koja je uzeta za primjer autorima, kao i podataka o ključnim dionicima, uzorak je namjeran (utvrđeni kao poznavatelji ili eksperti) te se smatra reprezentativnim u smislu mišljenja i stavova dionika cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji.

U odnosu na uobičajenu listu dionika sportskog turizma u lokalnoj zajednici (Herbold, Thees i Philipp, 2020:15), ovo istraživanje izostavlja jedino skupinu "sportaši", dok su ostale skupine dionika predstavljene sintetiziranim pristupom. Primjena jasnog skupa kriterija uzorkovanja rezultirala je prikupljanjem podataka od najinformiranijih, odnosno najpupćenijih ispitanika, do ispitanika s najviše znanja i najviše iskustva (Patton, 2018; Marušić, Prebežac i Mikulić, 2019) u regionalnom cikloturizmu. Stopa povrata bila je 41,18%. Veličina uzorka u apsolutnom broju je 56 eksperata, a uzorak čine predstavnici ponude smještaja (35,71%), zatim destinacijskog menadžmenta (17,86%), pružatelji sportskih i rekreacijskih usluga na otvorenom (14,29%) te druge skupine regionalnih pružatelja turističkih usluga (izravno ili neizravno povezanih s biciklizmom, ukupno 32,14%).

Prije nego što je u ožujku 2021. godine distribuirana poveznica na ispunjavanje upitnika putem službene e-pošte od regionalne razvojne agencije na popis izabranih eksperata u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji, upitnik je testiran na manjem uzorku te je u skladu s time modificiran. Sadržaj upitnika čini osam strukturiranih pitanja te šest otvorenih pitanja o ključnim odrednicama razvoja cikloturizma iz perspektive dionika. Osim pet strukturiranih pitanja, koja su omogućila

### 3.2. Research design

The primary method of data collection was an online self-completion survey with a link to an online form. In line with the research focus, the availability to the authors of internal cycling tourism development documentation of the case-studied region, and the information about the key stakeholders, the sampling was deliberate (determined as the expert sample), and therefore it is considered representative in terms of the opinions and attitudes of the cycling tourism stakeholders in the Krapina-Zagorje County.

From the Herbold, Thees and Philipp's (2020:15) list of sport tourism stakeholders in the local community, this research excluded only 'sports people and athletes', while all other stakeholders are represented in a more synthesized manner. The implementation of a clear set of sampling criteria resulted in approaching the most knowledgeable insider and well-informed, and experienced potential respondents (Patton, 2018; Marušić, Prebežac and Mikulić, 2019) in regional cycling tourism. The response rate was 41.18%. The sample size consisted in total 56 experts and is made up of accommodation sector representatives (35.71%), followed by destination managers (17.86%), outdoor sports and recreation service providers (14.29%), and members of other (directly or indirectly cycling-related) regional tourism service provider groups (in total 32.14%).

Prior to its distribution to the list of expert stakeholders in Krapina-Zagorje County in March 2021 through an official e-mail by the regional development agency, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on a small-scale, and modified accordingly. It contained eight structured questions, and six open-ended questions on the key marks of cycling tourism development from the stakeholder perspective. Besides five structured questions that captured the stakeholders' role in the destination's tourism industry (on their primary business / occupation, involvement in

poimanje uloge dionika u turizmu destinacije (pitanja o njihovom primarnom poslu/zanimanju, uključenosti u cikloturizam, prethodnom iskustvu s cikloturistima i standardizaciji ponude prema *Pravilniku Ride & Bike standarda*), od primarne važnosti za ovaj rad su podaci dobiveni s još tri strukturirana pitanja (o stavovima regionalnih dionika o izjavama vezanim uz cikloturizam u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji, o uključenosti dionika u pružanje usluga cikloturizma te o mogućnostima ostvarivanja koristi od biciklističkih za razliku od turista ostalih preferencija) i šest otvorenih pitanja. Četiri su otvorena pitanja u funkciji SWOT analize: *Koje su snage razvoja cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji? Koje su najveće slabosti područja u odnosu na razvoj cikloturizma? Koje su prednosti područja/prilike koji Krapinsko-zagorska županija treba valorizirati razvojem cikloturizma? Koje su prijete razvoju cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji?* Preostala dva otvorena pitanja imala su svrhu identificirati prepreke razvoju cikloturizma (*Koje su objektivne prepreke razvoju cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji?*) i prikupiti sugestije za daljnji razvoj cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji.

Samostalno ispunjavanje online upitnika te relativno mali i namjerni uzorak mogli bi se smatrati ograničenjima ovog istraživanja. Međutim, namjerno odabran manji uzorak opravdan je kada se radi o ispitanicima koji se smatraju ekspertima za predmet istraživanja (Marušić, Prebežac i Mikulić, 2019), što je slučaj u ovom istraživanju (stručnjaci su odabrani na temelju kriterija involviranosti u biciklizam, njihovog posla/zanimanja i prebivališta u županiji) te kada je svrha istraživanja donijeti zaključke o prirodi proučavanog fenomena. Sekaran i Bougie (2016) potvrđuju stavove nekih ranijih istraživanja kako je uzorak veći od 30 (i manji od 500) prikladan u većini istraživanja.

cycling tourism, previous experience with cycling tourists, and standardization the offering according to the *Ride&Bike Standardization Rulebook*), also crucial are the data obtained from three structured questions (attitudes of regional stakeholders regarding statements related to cycling tourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County, stakeholders' provision of cycling tourism services, and possibilities of benefiting from cycling tourists as opposed to tourists of other preferences) and six open-ended questions. Four questions were intended to provide inputs for a SWOT matrix: *What are the strengths of developing cyclotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County? What are the greatest weaknesses of the area regarding the development of cycling tourism? What opportunities should the Krapina-Zagorje County assess by cyclotourism development? What are the threats to the development of cycling tourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County?* Two remaining open-ended questions aimed to identify the threats (*What are the actual obstacles to the development of cycling tourism in Krapina-Zagorje County?*) and gather suggestions for the further development of cycling tourism in this county.

The online self-completion of the survey and the relatively small and purposive sample could be considered this study's limitations. However, a deliberately chosen smaller sample is justified in cases when respondents are considered experts in the research subject (Marušić, Prebežac and Mikulić, 2019), which is the case in this research (experts were chosen based on criteria of involvement in cycling, their business / occupation, and local residency), and when the purpose is to draw conclusions about the nature of the studied phenomenon. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) corroborate the views of some previous studies that a sample size greater than 30 (and less than 500) is appropriate in most studies.

#### **4. REZULTATI ISTRAŽIVANJA I RASPRAVA: Stajalište dionika o (budućem) razvoju cikloturizma**

Namjerno odabrane skupine dionika cikloturizma sudjelovale su u online ispitivanju u ožujku 2021. Ukupno je 14 pitanja u fokusu ovog rada, a rezultati istraživanja prikazani su u ovom poglavlju. Na razini cijelog uzorka većina ispitanika (78,57%) vjeruje da pružanje usluga cikloturistima rezultira većom zaradom u odnosu na prihvat prosječnih turista, što nije iznenađujuće u odnosu na strukturu uzorka.

##### **4.1. Utjecaj cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji**

Pri procjeni utjecaja i učinaka cikloturizma u Županiji (Tablica 1), ispitanicima je strukturiranim pitanjem ponuđeno 10 tvrdnji u odnosu na koje je bilo potrebno odrediti razinu slaganja u rasponu od 1 do 5, pri čemu je 1 značilo „Uopće se ne slažem“, a 5 „U potpunosti se slažem“. Za mjerenje stavova ispitanika primijenjena je Likertova skala od 5 stupnjeva budući da omogućuje da se dobiveni odgovori tretiraju kao intervalna skala na temelju numeričkih vrijednosti koje kodiraju dobivene odgovore (Marušić, Prebežac i Mikulić, 2019:201). Prilikom formuliranja upitnika tvrdnje su generirane u odnosu na točke fokusa destinacijskog menadžmenta identificirane u dostupnim strateškim dokumentima cikloturizma.

Percepcija dionika o uspjehu razvoja cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji (tvrdnja 10) prilično je neutralna (AS = 3,18). U skladu je s donekle niskom razinom zadovoljstva trenutnom ponudom (Slavić i Ivek, 2021) i evidentno većim očekivanjima. Međutim, sve se skupine dionika slažu da je cikloturizam prikladan izbor za razvoj ovog turističkog područja (tvrdnja 8), a čini se da uočeni pozitivni utjecaji snažno nadmašuju negativne (tvrdnje 2 – 7) (Tablica 1). Općenito, ispitanici izražavaju snažno slaganje s

#### **4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: Stakeholders' standpoint on (future) cycling tourism development**

Deliberately chosen groups of cycling tourism stakeholders participated in the online self-completion survey in March 2021. This paper examines 14 questions and the findings are presented in this section. At the entire sample level, most respondents (78.57%) believe that the provision of services for bicycle tourists yields higher earnings than average tourists, which is not surprising in view of the sample composition.

##### **4.1. The impact of cycling tourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County**

When asked to estimate the impacts and effects of cycling tourism in the studied county (Table 1), the respondents were offered ten statements to which they were asked to express their level of agreement from 1 to 5, where 1 implies “Strongly disagree”, and 5, “Strongly agree”. A 5-point Likert scale was applied to measure the respondents' attitudes, while allowing the obtained answers to be treated as interval scales on the basis of numerical values which encode the obtained answers (Marušić, Prebežac and Mikulić, 2019, p. 201). In formulating the questionnaire statements were generated in relation to the focus points of destination management as identified in the available strategic documents of cycling tourism.

The stakeholders' perception on the cycling tourism development in Krapina-Zagorje County (statement 10) is rather neutral (AM = 3,18) and is in line with a relatively low level of satisfaction with the current offering in the county (Slavić and Ivek, 2021) and obviously higher expectations. However, all stakeholder groups agree that cycling tourism is an appropriate choice for this tourist area's development (statement 8), and the perceived positive impacts seem to outweigh the

**Tablica 1: Stav dionika o 10 tvrdnji o cikloturizmu u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji**

Br.	Tvrdnja	ACC	AEE	CSP	DM	OSR	O	TOTAL AS	STDEV
1	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na promicanje zdravog načina života u županiji	4,8	4,5	4,33	5	5	4,25	<b>4,71</b>	<b>0,66</b>
2	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na lokalno gospodarstvo	4,8	4	4,67	4,2	5	4,25	<b>4,57</b>	<b>0,69</b>
3	Razvoj cikloturizma pozitivno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju	4,7	4	4,67	4,4	4,75	3,75	<b>4,46</b>	<b>0,69</b>
4	Razvoj cikloturizma negativno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju	1,8	1	2,33	1	1	1,25	<b>1,46</b>	<b>1,07</b>
5	Cikloturizam generira koristi za lokalnu zajednicu	4,7	4,5	4,33	4,4	5	4,25	<b>4,57</b>	<b>0,63</b>
6	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva	4,7	4	4	4,2	5	4,25	<b>4,46</b>	<b>0,84</b>
7	Razvoj cikloturizma dovest će do problema u destinaciji	1,6	2	2,33	1	1	1,75	<b>1,54</b>	<b>1,04</b>
8	Cikloturizam je prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije-Krapinsko-zagorske županije	4,6	4,5	4,33	4,6	4,5	4,25	<b>4,5</b>	<b>0,58</b>
9	Cikloturizam pruža turistima mogućnost jedinstvenog iskustva u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji	4,7	4,5	4,67	4,6	5	4,75	<b>4,71</b>	<b>0,53</b>
10	Krapinsko-zagorska županija uspješno razvija cikloturizam	3,5	2,5	3	3,6	2,75	2,75	<b>3,18</b>	<b>1,09</b>

\*ACC = pružatelji usluga smještaja; AEE = usluge animacije, zabave, organizacije događaja;

CSP = pružatelji usluga hrane i pića; DM = destinacijski menadžment;

OSR = pružatelji sportskih i rekreativnih usluga na otvorenom; O = ostali dionici

Izvor: primarno istraživanje autora

navodima da cikloturizam pruža turistima mogućnost jedinstvenog iskustva u županiji (tvrdnja 9), kao i da pozitivno utječe na promicanje zdravog načina života u županiji (tvrdnja 1), te da stvara koristi za lokalnu zajednicu (tvrdnja 5) i generira pozitivan utjecaj na lokalno gospodarstvo (tvrdnja 2).

Na temelju rezultata prikazanih u Tablici 1, moguće je utvrditi kako najvišu razinu slaganja ispitanici izražavaju za tvrdnje 1 i 9, odnosno da cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na promicanje zdravog načina života u županiji (AS = 4,71) i da omogućava turistima jedinstveno iskustvo Krapinsko-zagorske županije (AS = 4,71). Najsnažnije slaganje s tvrdnjom 1 iskazuju ispitanici iz skupine destinacijskog menadžmenta (DM) i skupine

negative ones (statements 2-7) (Table 1). The respondents strongly agree that cycling tourism offers tourists the opportunity of a unique experience (statement 9), positively impacts promoting healthy lifestyle locally (statement 1), creates benefits for the local community (statement 1), and generates positive impact on local economy (statement 2).

The results listed in Table 1 reveal that the respondents agree mostly with statement 1, that cycling tourism has a positive effect on promoting healthy lifestyle in the county (AM = 4.71), and statement 9, that it provides tourists with a unique experience in the Krapina-Zagorje County (AM = 4.71). These respondents belong to the destination management (DM) group, and to the outdoor

**Table 1: The overall attitude of stakeholders on 10 statements regarding cycling tourism in Krapina-Zagorje County**

No.	Statement	ACC	AEE	CSP	DM	OSR	O	TOTAL AM	STDEV
1	Cycling tourism has a positive impact on promoting a healthy lifestyle in the county	4.8	4.5	4.33	5	5	4.25	<b>4.71</b>	<b>0.66</b>
2	Cycling tourism development has a positive impact on the local economy	4.8	4	4.67	4.2	5	4.25	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.69</b>
3	Cycling tourism development positively impacts local identity, culture and tradition	4.7	4	4.67	4.4	4.75	3.75	<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.69</b>
4	Cycling tourism development negatively impacts local identity, culture and tradition	1.8	1	2.33	1	1	1.25	<b>1.46</b>	<b>1.07</b>
5	The local community benefits from the development of cycling tourism	4.7	4.5	4.33	4.4	5	4.25	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.63</b>
6	Cycling tourism positively affects the quality of life of local residents	4.7	4	4	4.2	5	4.25	<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.84</b>
7	The development of cycling tourism will lead to problems in the destination	1.6	2	2.33	1	1	1.75	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1.04</b>
8	Cycling tourism is appropriate for development of Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination	4.6	4.5	4.33	4.6	4.5	4.25	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.58</b>
9	Cycling tourism offers tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience in Krapina-Zagorje County	4.7	4.5	4.67	4.6	5	4.75	<b>4.71</b>	<b>0.53</b>
10	Krapina-Zagorje County is successfully developing cycling tourism	3.5	2.5	3	3.6	2.75	2.75	<b>3.18</b>	<b>1.09</b>

\*ACC = accommodation service providers; AEE = animation, entertainment, events;

CSP = catering service providers; DM = destination management;

OSR = outdoor sports and recreation service providers; O = other stakeholders

Source: Authors' contribution

pružatelja sportskih i rekreativnih usluga na otvorenom (OSR) kod kojih rezultat ukazuje kako se svi ispitanici u potpunosti slažu s tvrdnjom (AS = 5,00). Najniža razina slaganja s tvrdnjom 1 evidentirana je u skupini ostalih dionika (O), najčešće osoba koje ne sudjeluju izravno u ponudi cikloturizma u destinaciji (AS = 4,25).

S tvrdnjom 2, da cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na lokalno gospodarstvo, u potpunosti se slažu svi ispitanici iz skupine pružatelja sportskih i rekreativnih usluga na otvorenom (OSR), čija je ista pozicija zabilježena i kod tvrdnje 5 (cikloturizam generira koristi za lokalnu zajednicu), tvrdnje 6 (cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva) te tvrdnje 9. Nešto niža razina

sports and the recreational service providers (OSR) group – all expressing full agreement with the statement (AM = 5.00). The lowest level of agreement with the statement 1 is evident in the group of other stakeholders (O) which is made up mostly of people who are not directly engaged in the destination's cycling tourism offering (AM = 4.25).

All respondents in the OSR group strongly agree with statement 2 (cycling tourism has a positive impact on the local economy), as well as with statement 5 (the local community benefits from cycling tourism), statement 6 (cycling tourism has a positive effect on the quality of life of residents) and statement 9. While their level of agreement is slightly lower with regard to statement 3 (cycling tourism

slaganja dionika iste skupine, no uz najvišu razinu slaganja s tvrdnjom u odnosu na ostale skupine dionika, zabilježena je kod tvrdnje 3 kako razvoj cikloturizma pozitivno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju (AS = 4,75). Ova skupina dionika (OSR) pokazala je i najvišu razinu neslaganja s tvrdnjama koje nisu afirmativne – s tvrdnjom 4, kako je utjecaj cikloturizma na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju negativan (AS = 1,00) te tvrdnjom 7 kojom se navodi da će razvoj cikloturizma rezultirati problemima u destinaciji (AS = 1,00). Jednaka razina neslaganja, tj. potpuno neslaganje s tvrdnjom (AS = 1,00) svih ispitanih dionika za posljednje navedene dvije (neafirmativne) tvrdnje zabilježena je kod skupine destinacijskog menadžmenta (DM). Oni iskazuju najvišu razinu slaganja s tvrdnjom 10, kako Krapinsko-zagorska županija uspješno razvija cikloturizam, s kojom se sve skupine ispitanika zamjetno manje slažu nego s ostalim tvrdnjama (AS = 3,18), no najmanju razinu slaganja iskazala je skupina dionika pružatelja usluga animacije, zabave i organizacije događaja (AEE; AS=2,50).

Kako bi se sagledalo koja skupina ispitanih dionika ima najviše utjecaja na cjelokupni rezultat, provedena je analiza (Tablica 2). Tablica prikazuje doprinos pojedine skupine ispitanika ukupnom zajedničkom rezultatu za svaku tvrdnju. Negativno usmjerene tvrdnje rekodirane su u Tablici 2 kako bi se olakšala interpretacija. Analiza ukazuje kako najniži rezultat postižu skupine dionika CSP – pružatelji usluga hrane i pića, O – ostali dionici, i AEE – usluge animacije, zabave, organizacije događaja, ali razlike među skupinama dionika su relativno male. Te skupine dionika postižu prosječni rezultat u rasponu 4,13 – 4,15 dok preostale tri skupine dionika (ACC – pružatelji usluga smještaja, DM – destinacijski menadžment te OSR – pružatelji sportskih i rekreativnih usluga na otvorenom) postižu rezultat 4,5 – 4,7 koji ukazuje na izuzetno visoku razinu slaganja s tvrdnjama, odnosno doprinos tih skupina ukupnom zajedničkom rezultatu.

positively impacts local identity), culture and tradition (AS = 4.75), it is nevertheless the highest level of agreement with this statement among all the stakeholder groups. The OSR group also reported the highest level of disagreement with non-affirmative statements; namely, with statement 4, that cycling tourism has a negative effect on local identity, culture and tradition (AS = 1.00), and with statement 7, that cycling tourism development will lead to problems in the destination (AS = 1.00). In addition to the OSR group, all respondents in the DM group also reported that they strongly disagree (AS = 1.00) with these two (non-affirmative) statements. Among the groups, the DM group respondents reported the highest level of agreement with statement 10, that Krapina-Zagorje County is successfully developing cycling tourism. In general, the respondents in all groups reported levels of agreement with statement 10 which are considerably lower than the levels of agreement with other statements (AS = 3.18). The animation, entertainment and event providers (AEE) group shows the lowest level of agreement with statement 10 (AS = 2.50).

To understand which of the stakeholder groups has the most influence on the entire combined score, the analysis was performed (Table 2). Table 2 demonstrates the contribution of each group of respondents to the overall combined score for each statement. The negatively-worded statements have been recorded in Table 2 to facilitate interpretation. Analysis shows that the catering service provider (CSP) group, the O group, and the AEE group have the lowest scores with relatively small differences between these stakeholder groups. The average score of these three stakeholder groups ranges from 4.13 to 4.15, while the average score of the other three stakeholder groups (the accommodation service providers (ACC) group, the DM group and the OSR group) ranges from 4.5 to 4.7, suggesting an exceptionally high level of agreement with the statements and pointing to the high contribution of these groups to the overall combined score.

**Tablica 2: Doprinos pojedine skupine dionika rezultatu za svaku tvrdnju te ukupnom zajedničkom rezultatu, uz rekodirane negativne tvrdnje**

Br.	Tvrdnja	ACC	AEE	CSP	DM	OSR	O	TOTAL AS	STDEV
1	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na promicanje zdravog načina života u županiji	4,80	4,50	4,33	5,00	5,00	4,25	<b>4,71</b>	<b>0,66</b>
2	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na lokalno gospodarstvo	4,80	4,00	4,67	4,20	5,00	4,25	<b>4,57</b>	<b>0,69</b>
3	Razvoj cikloturizma pozitivno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju	4,70	4,00	4,67	4,40	4,75	3,75	<b>4,46</b>	<b>0,69</b>
4	*Razvoj cikloturizma negativno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju – rekodirano	4,20	5,00	<b>3,67</b>	5,00	5,00	4,70	<b>4,54</b>	<b>1,07</b>
5	Cikloturizam generira koristi za lokalnu zajednicu	4,70	4,50	4,33	4,40	5,00	4,25	<b>4,57</b>	<b>0,63</b>
6	Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva	4,70	4,00	4,00	4,20	5,00	4,25	<b>4,46</b>	<b>0,84</b>
7	*Razvoj cikloturizma dovest će do problema u destinaciji – rekodirano	4,40	4,00	<b>3,67</b>	5,00	5,00	4,20	<b>4,46</b>	<b>1,04</b>
8	Cikloturizam je prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije Krapinsko-zagorske županije	4,60	4,50	4,33	4,60	4,50	4,25	<b>4,5</b>	<b>0,58</b>
9	Cikloturizam pruža turistima mogućnost jedinstvenog iskustva u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji	4,70	4,50	4,67	4,60	5,00	4,75	<b>4,71</b>	<b>0,53</b>
10	Krapinsko-zagorska županija uspješno razvija cikloturizam	3,50	2,50	3,00	3,60	2,75	2,75	<b>3,18</b>	<b>1,09</b>
TOTAL	*uz rekodiranje tvrdnji 4 i 7 iz negativnih u pozitivne	<b>4,51</b>	<b>4,15</b>	<b>4,13</b>	<b>4,50</b>	<b>4,70</b>	<b>4,14</b>	<b>4,42</b>	

Izvor: primarno istraživanje autora

Najniži prosječni ukupni rezultat ima skupina dionika CSP – pružatelji usluga hrane i pića – (4,13) koja ujedno ima i najniži rezultat na rekodiranim negativno usmjerenim tvrdnjama 4 i 7. Te se tvrdnje mogu opisati kao izražavanje stava o negativnim posljedicama cikloturizma na lokalne uvjete. Budući da je ta skupina dionika (CSP) izrazila slaganje s drugim tvrdnjama o koristima cikloturizma, može se protumačiti kako cikloturizam nije prepoznat kao donositelj isključivo pozitivnih učinaka, nego da nosi i potencijalne negativne učinke. Postojeća istraživanja ukazuju na to da dionici podržavaju cikloturizam čak i u početnim fazama razvoja bez obzira na (nisku) razinu informiranosti i znanja o njegovom potencijalu (Pavluković, Nikić i Stankov, 2020). To potvrđuju i nalazi

The CSP group has the lowest average overall score (4.13) as well as the lowest score in the recoded negatively-worded statements 4 and 7. These statements can be described as the expression of opinions on the negative effects of cycling tourism on local conditions. Since the CSP group expressed their agreement with other statements on the benefits of cycling tourism, this can be interpreted as their understanding that cycling tourism brings both positive effects and can be the bearer of potential negative effects. Former studies indicate that stakeholders support cycling tourism, even in its initial stages of development, regardless of the (low) level of information and knowledge they have about its potential (Pavluković, Nikić i Stankov, 2020). The primary research results on the

**Table 2: The contribution of each stakeholder group to the score for each statement and the overall combined score, with the recoded negative statements**

No.	Statement	ACC	AEE	CSP	DM	OSR	O	TOTAL AM	STDEV
1	Cycling tourism positively impact on promoting a healthy lifestyle in the county	4.80	4.50	4.33	5.00	5.00	4.25	<b>4.71</b>	<b>0.66</b>
2	Cycling tourism development positively impacts the local economy	4.80	4.00	4.67	4.20	5.00	4.25	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.69</b>
3	Cycling tourism development positively impacts local identity, culture and tradition	4.70	4.00	4.67	4.40	4.75	3.75	<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.69</b>
4	*Cycling tourism development negatively impacts local identity, culture and tradition – recoded	4.20	5.00	<b>3.67</b>	5.00	5.00	4.70	<b>4.54</b>	<b>1.07</b>
5	The local community benefits from the development of cycling tourism	4.70	4.50	4.33	4.40	5.00	4.25	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.63</b>
6	Cycling tourism positively affects the quality of life of local residents	4.70	4.00	4.00	4.20	5.00	4.25	<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.84</b>
7	*The development of cycling tourism will lead to problems in the destination – recoded	4.40	4.00	<b>3.67</b>	5.00	5.00	4.20	<b>4.46</b>	<b>1.04</b>
8	Cycling tourism is an appropriate choice for the development of Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourism destination	4.60	4.50	4.33	4.60	4.50	4.25	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.58</b>
9	Cycling tourism offers tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience in Krapina-Zagorje County	4.70	4.50	4.67	4.60	5.00	4.75	<b>4.71</b>	<b>0.53</b>
10	Krapina-Zagorje County is successfully developing cycling tourism	3.50	2.50	3.00	3.60	2.75	2.75	<b>3.18</b>	<b>1.09</b>
TOTAL	*with the statements 4 and 7 recoded from negative to positive	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4.42</b>	

Source: Authors' primary research

primarnog istraživanja budući da dionici u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji podržavaju cikloturizam kao odgovarajući pravac razvoja županije.

Utvrđivanjem korelacije među tvrdnjama vezanim uz stavove regionalnih dionika u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji o cikloturizmu (Tablica 3) primjenom Pearsonove korelacije, odnosno prema dobivenim koeficijentima korelacije ( $r$ ), moguće je ustanoviti da tvrdnje koje nisu afirmativne (br. 4: „Razvoj cikloturizma negativno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju“ i br. 7: „Razvoj cikloturizma dovest će do problema u destinaciji“) slabo koreliraju s drugim tvrdnjama dok je njihova međusobna korelacija umjerenog pozitivne naravi ( $r=0,68$ ), što je u skladu s očekivanjima.

stakeholders in the Krapina-Zagorje County confirm support for cycling tourism as the appropriate choice for its development.

By determining the correlations between the statements relating to the attitudes of regional stakeholders towards cycling tourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County (Table 3) using Pearson's correlation, i.e., according to the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), it is possible to establish that those claims that are not affirmative (4: “Cycling tourism development has a negative impact on local identity, culture and tradition” and 7: “The development of cycling tourism will lead to problems in the destination”) and have weak relationships with other statements, while their mutual correlation is moderately positive ( $r = 0.68$ ), and in line with the expectations.

**Tablica 3: Usporedba stavova dionika – korelacija među tvrdnjama o cikloturizmu u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji**

	Tvrđnja 1	Tvrđnja 2	Tvrđnja 3	Tvrđnja 4	Tvrđnja 5	Tvrđnja 6	Tvrđnja 7	Tvrđnja 8	Tvrđnja 9	Tvrđnja 10
Tvrđnja 1	<b>1,00</b>									
Tvrđnja 2	0,97	<b>1,00</b>								
Tvrđnja 3	0,98	0,99	<b>1,00</b>							
Tvrđnja 4	0,16	0,33	0,35	<b>1,00</b>						
Tvrđnja 5	0,99	0,98	0,98	0,20	<b>1,00</b>					
Tvrđnja 6	0,98	0,99	0,97	0,19	0,99	<b>1,00</b>				
Tvrđnja 7	0,24	0,34	0,33	0,68	0,31	0,23	<b>1,00</b>			
Tvrđnja 8	0,99	0,97	0,97	0,22	0,99	0,97	0,35	<b>1,00</b>		
Tvrđnja 9	0,98	0,98	0,97	0,24	0,99	0,98	0,36	0,99	<b>1,00</b>	
Tvrđnja 10	0,91	0,87	0,90	0,33	0,86	0,86	0,18	0,90	0,87	<b>1,00</b>

Izvor: primarno istraživanje autora

**Table 3: Comparing stakeholders' opinions – correlations between answers to different statements on cycling tourism**

	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6	Statement 7	Statement 8	Statement 9	Statement 10
Statement 1	<b>1.00</b>									
Statement 2	0.97	<b>1.00</b>								
Statement 3	0.98	0.99	<b>1.00</b>							
Statement 4	0.16	0.33	0.35	<b>1.00</b>						
Statement 5	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.20	<b>1.00</b>					
Statement 6	0.98	0.99	0.97	0.19	0.99	<b>1.00</b>				
Statement 7	0.24	0.34	0.33	0.68	0.31	0.23	<b>1.00</b>			
Statement 8	0.99	0.97	0.97	0.22	0.99	0.97	0.35	<b>1.00</b>		
Statement 9	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.24	0.99	0.98	0.36	0.99	<b>1.00</b>	
Statement 10	0.91	0.87	0.90	0.33	0.86	0.86	0.18	0.90	0.87	<b>1.00</b>

Source: Authors' contribution

Vidljivo je kako su ostale (afirmativne) tvrdnje međusobno snažno pozitivno korelirane s koeficijentom korelacije u rasponu vrijednosti od  $r=0,86$  do gotovo savršene korelacije  $r=0,99$  među varijablama. Pri tome, gotovo savršenu pozitivnu korelaciju moguće je uočiti između:

- tvrdnje 1: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na promicanje zdravog načina života u županiji“ i tvrdnje 5: „Cikloturizam generira koristi za lokalnu zajednicu“, odnosno tvrdnje 1 i tvrdnje 8: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na razvoj lokalne zajednice“ i tvrdnje 10: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na razvoj lokalne zajednice“ i tvrdnje 10: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na razvoj lokalne zajednice“
- statement 1: “Cycling tourism has a positive impact on promoting a healthy lifestyle in the region,” statement 5: “The local community benefits from the development of cycling tourism”, and statement 1

It is evident that the other (affirmative) claims correlate strongly positively with the coefficients ( $r$ ) ranging from  $r=0.86$  to an almost perfectly positive linear correlation of  $0.99$  between the variables. Thereby, the almost perfect positive correlations are found between:

zam je prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije Krapinsko-zagorske županije“;

- tvrdnje 2: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na lokalno gospodarstvo“ i tvrdnji 3: „Razvoj cikloturizma pozitivno utječe na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju“ te 6: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva“;
- tvrdnje 5: „Cikloturizam generira koristi za lokalnu zajednicu“ i tvrdnje 6: „Cikloturizam pozitivno utječe na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva“, odnosno tvrdnje 5 i tvrdnje 8: „Cikloturizam je prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije Krapinsko-zagorske županije“, kao i tvrdnje 5 i tvrdnje 9: „Cikloturizam pruža turistima mogućnost jedinstvenog iskustva u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji“;
- tvrdnjama 8: „Cikloturizam je prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije – Krapinsko-zagorske županije“ i 9: „Cikloturizam pruža turistima mogućnost jedinstvenog iskustva u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji“.

Ovi snažni odnosi korelacije među različitim tvrdnjama proizašli iz stavova ispitanih dionika ukazuju na sljedeće: ako lokalna zajednica percipira da razvoj cikloturizma generira koristi za njih (tvrdnja 5), kao i u slučaju percepcije cikloturizma adekvatnim izborom za razvoj destinacije (tvrdnja 8), to će se pozitivno odraziti i na promociju zdravog načina života u županiji (tvrdnja 1). Jednako tako, cikloturizam će se percipirati kao pozitivan utjecaj na lokalnu ekonomiju (izjava 2) kada postoji pozitivna percepcija razvoja cikloturizma na lokalni identitet, kulturu i tradiciju (tvrdnja 3), kao i u slučaju pozitivne percepcije cikloturizma na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva (tvrdnja 6). Poimanje cikloturizma kao generatora koristi za lokalnu zajednicu bit će pozitivno (tvrdnja 5) ako se pozitivnima percipiraju utjecaji cikloturizma na kvalitetu života lokalnog stanovništva (tvrdnja 6), kao i ako se cikloturizam percipira kao prikladan izbor za razvoj destinacije (tvrdnja 8), odnosno ako

and statement 8: “Cycling tourism is an appropriate choice for the development of Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination”;

- statements 2: “Cycling tourism development positively impacts the local economy,” 3: “Cycling tourism development positively impacts the local identity, culture and tradition,” and 6: “Cycling tourism positively affects the quality of life of the local residents”;
- statements 5: “The local community benefits from the development of cycling tourism“, 6: “Cycling tourism positively affects the quality of life of local residents“, 5 and 8: “Cycling tourism is an appropriate choice for the development of the Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination“, and statements 5 and 9: “Cycling tourism offers tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience in the Krapina-Zagorje County”;
- statements 8: “Cycling tourism is an appropriate choice for the development of the Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination” and 9: “Cycling tourism offers tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience in the Krapina-Zagorje County”.

These strong correlations between responses to the different statements indicate that if the local community perceives the development of cycling tourism as beneficial (statement 5), and if cycling tourism is perceived as an appropriate choice for the development of the county as a tourist destination (statement 8), this will positively affect the promotion of a healthy lifestyle in the region (statement 1). Cycling tourism development will also be perceived as having a positive impact on the local economy (statement 2) if there is a positive perception of the impact of cycling tourism development on the local identity, culture and tradition (statement 3), as well as if there is a positive perception of its impact on the quality of life of the local residents (statement 6). The development of

se smatra da je cikloturizam područja sposoban pružiti turistima jedinstveno iskustvo u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji (tvrdnja 9). Cikloturizam će se percipirati adekvatnim izborom za razvoj destinacije (tvrdnja 8) paralelno s percepcijom kako je cikloturizam Krapinsko-zagorske županije u mogućnost ponuditi jedinstveno iskustvo svojim cikloturistima (tvrdnja 9).

#### 4.2. Prepreke razvoja cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji

Na pitanje o preprekama razvoju cikloturizma, dionici (njih 26%) ističu „nedostatak biciklističke infrastrukture“ kao primarnu prepreku. Međutim, upravo je u infrastrukturu najviše uloženo u prethodno spomenutom razdoblju (2012.–2021.) razvoja cikloturizma. Rezultati proizlaze iz strukturiranog pitanja s maksimalno moguća tri odgovora. Ponuđeni odgovori preuzeti su iz nekoliko drugih studija (Wang, 2018; Aldred *et al.*, 2019; Institut za poljoprivredu i turizam Poreč, 2021) te modificirani sukladno fokusu ovog istraživanja. Odgovori ispitanika upućuju na ključne prepreke razvoja cikloturizma iz percepcije dionika.

Dionici su izrazito usredotočeni na slabosti destinacije te je uočen i zamjetni udio negativnih kritika u prikupljenim mišljenjima dionika. Na nedostatnu infrastrukturu u županiji (26%) posebno su fokusirani dionici koji pružaju usluge smještaja i ugostiteljstva. Slijede problematični odnosi s tvrtkama za upravljanje cestama (15%) koji koč razvoju novih ruta (ovo je pitanje posebno važno iz perspektive ispitanika koji pripadaju skupini destinacijskog menadžmenta i pružatelja usluga smještaja). Suradnja između različitih dionika (15%) i nedostatak predanosti lokalnih turističkih zajednica (11%) također su visoko na popisu prepreka razvoju cikloturizma u županiji. Pružatelji usluga sporta i rekreacije na otvorenom ističu neoptimalnu suradnju između različitih dionika. Nedovoljna infrastruktura u zaštićenim prirodnim

cycling tourism will be perceived as beneficial (statement 5) if its impacts on the local residents' quality of life are perceived positively (statement 6), if cycling tourism is perceived as an appropriate choice for the development of the Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination (statement 8), and if cycling tourism is perceived as able to offer tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience in the county (statement 9). The perception of cycling tourism as an appropriate choice for the development of the Krapina-Zagorje County as a tourist destination (statement 8) correlates positively with its ability to offer tourists the opportunity to experience a unique experience (statement 9).

#### 4.2. The obstacles of cycling tourism development in the County

When asked about the obstacles to cycling tourism development, the stakeholders (26%) stress the “lack of bicycle infrastructure” as the primary obstacle, in spite of heavy infrastructural investments in the mentioned cycling tourism development period (2012–2021). The results reflect the structured question with a maximum of three responses. The list of barriers to cycling from other studies (Wang, 2018; Aldred *et al.*, 2019; Institute for Agriculture and Tourism Poreč, 2021) was modified to better fit this study's focus. The answers emphasize the key obstacles to cycling tourism development from the stakeholders' perception.

A considerable focus on the destination's weaknesses and a share of negative criticism is noted in the gathered opinions. In particular, the accommodation and catering service providers called attention to the region's lacking infrastructure (26%). Another obstacle is the relationship with road management companies (15%) that impedes the development of new routes (this is particularly an issue from the perspective of the destination managers and accommodation service providers). The cooperation between different

područjima (7%), nedostatak svijesti lokalnog stanovništva (7%) i nedovoljni razvojni projekti (4%) ne smatraju se preprekama razvoju cikloturizma iz perspektive većine dionika. Dio obrazloženja za izražene stavove moguće je pronaći u Carsoninu istraživanju (2013) o izazovima, primarno političke naravi, s kojima se kapacitet regionalnog razvoja cikloturizma suočava. Uz to, suradnja s poduzećima za upravljanje cestama i paralelno planiranje infrastrukture za biciklizam i druge oblike cestovnog prijevoza dokazano rezultira velikim uštedama u izgradnji i održavanju infrastrukture za obje strane (European Cyclists' Federation, 2018).

#### **4.3. Čimbenici razvoja cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji**

Stavovi ispitanih dionika o unutarnjim i vanjskim čimbenicima koji utječu na razvoj cikloturizma, predstavljeni u Tablici 4, detaljno su istraženi ranije navedenim četirima otvorenim pitanjima (potpoglavlje 3.2.).

Ideja za primjenu SWOT analize bila je sagledati stavove dionika o internim i eksternim faktorima razvoja cikloturizma, budući da isti nisu uzimani u obzir prilikom formuliranja strateških dokumenata u prethodnim fazama razvoja destinacije. Upotrijebljena je kvalitativna SWOT analiza koja je dobro konsolidiran pristup u području procjena održivosti i uobičajeno se primjenjuje za podršku procedurama strateškog planiranja razvoja zahvaljujući sposobnosti da na racionalan i organiziran način predstavi utjecaj više endogenih i egzogenih čimbenika na različiti kontekst odlučivanja (Comino i Ferretti, 2016). Ipak, zbog relativno malog uzorka (koji je i namjerni), primjena SWOT analize zadržana je na razini identificiranja mogućih parametara kako bi eventualno poslužili kao referentna točka destinacijskom menadžmentu za sljedeću fazu strateškog promišljanja razvoja, za koju se preporuča uvažiti inpute dionika, budući da o njima ovisi razvoj cikloturizma u županiji. Shvaća-

stakeholders (15%) and the lacking commitment of the local tourism authorities (11%) are also high on the list of obstacles in the county. The providers of outdoor sports and recreation services stress the suboptimal cooperation between different stakeholders. Insufficient infrastructure in the protected natural areas (7%), the local population's lack of awareness (7%), and insufficient development projects (4%) are not deemed as obstacles to cycling tourism development from the perspective of most stakeholders. This may be explained by Carson's study on the challenges, mostly political, that the capacity for regional cycling tourism development faces (Carson, 2013). Likewise, cooperation with road management companies on simultaneous infrastructure planning of cycling and other road transportation modes manifestly results in large savings on construction and maintenance for both sides (European Cyclists' Federation, 2018).

#### **4.3. Factors influencing cycling tourism development in Krapina-Zagorje County**

The surveyed stakeholders' views on the internal and external factors influencing cycling tourism development were explored in-depth through four open-ended questions (previously indicated in subheading 3.2.).

The idea behind the application of the SWOT analysis was to account for the views of the stakeholders on the internal and external factors regarding cycling tourism development, since they were not taken considered in formulating the strategic documents in the previous stages of destination development. A qualitative SWOT analysis was used as it is a well-consolidated approach in the field of sustainability assessments and commonly applied to support strategic development planning procedures owing to its ability to represent in a rational and organized way the influence played by multiple endogenous and exogenous factors on different decision con-

nje mogućnosti i izazova na osnovu kvalitativne SWOT analize, kao primarnog koraka u razvoju turističke strategije, ima svoje utemeljenje u postojećim akademskim izvorima (npr. Zhang, 2012).

Sistematizacija stavova dionika uzima u obzir sljedeće kategorije ponude destinacije za cikloturizam u županiji: resursna osnova i strateški pristup/dokumenti; (umrežena) infrastruktura cikloturizma; bike-friendly usluge, kao i specifične (standardizirane) usluge za bicikliste; specifični (biciklistički) multimedijski sadržaji; promocija i popularizacija biciklizma i cikloturizma; te funkcije, akcije i aktivnosti destinacijskog menadžmenta regije (Slavić i Ivek, 2021).

Navodi u Tablici 4 realno odražavaju stavove ispitanika izražene prilikom ispitivanja. Uvaženi su svi izraženi stavovi, pri čemu je do modifikacije došlo jedino u smislu unificiranja stila i sintakse te eliminiranja ponavljanja.

Snage regionalnog cikloturizma nalaze se u postojećoj resursnoj osnovi i u komparativnim prednostima. Postojeći standardi biciklističkih usluga (kriteriji i postupci za standardizaciju različitih usluga) smatraju se ključnima u strateškom pristupu poboljšanju ponude cikloturizma temeljenom na postojećoj infrastrukturi. Evidentno je kako, osim resursne i infrastrukturne osnove, ispitanici prepoznaju važnost specijalizacije turističkih usluga za potrebe cikloturista, tj. standardizacije kvalitete koje ova županija ima – Pravidnik Ride & Bike standarda (Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, 2019).

S druge strane, slabosti regionalnog cikloturizma, kojih su dionici svjesni, spadaju u kategorije aktivnosti destinacijskog menadžmenta, odnosno promocije i popularizacije te usluga specifičnih za biciklizam (nedostatak promocije, nedostatak koordinacije dionika, nerazvijena svijest o cikloturizmu, mali broj ljudi sa specifičnim „biciklističkim“ vještinama i znanjem), infrastrukturnih nedostataka (sigurnosni problemi, nepostojanje EuroVelo ruta u regiji, nedostatak umre-

texts (Comino and Ferretti, 2016). However, due to the relatively small sample (which is also deliberate), the application of the SWOT analysis was kept at the level of identifying parameters that could possibly serve as reference points for destination management in the next stage of strategic development, in which cycling tourism development in an area is based on stakeholders' inputs. The comprehension of opportunities and challenges to be faced through a qualitative SWOT analysis as a primary step of developing tourism strategies has its academic foundation (Zhang, 2012).

The systematization of stakeholder attitudes takes into account the following categories of a cycling tourism destination offering in the county: resource base and strategic approach/documents; cycling tourism infrastructure (network); bicycle-friendly services, as well as cycling-specific (standardized) services; cycling-specific multimedia information; cycling (tourism) promotion and popularization activities; and the destination area management's (i.e., the regional tourism authority's) functions, campaigns and activities (Slavić and Ivek, 2021).

The statements in Table 4 realistically reflect the attitudes of the respondents expressed during the survey. All expressed attitudes were taken into account, with the modification occurring only in terms of unifying the style and the syntax, while also eliminating the repetitions.

The strengths of the region's cycling tourism are found in the resource base and in comparative advantages. The service-standardization regulation (criteria and procedures for standardization of a variety of services) is considered key in the strategic approach to cycling tourism supply upgrades, which is set in the existing infrastructure. In addition to resource and infrastructure bases, the respondents also recognised the importance of tourism service specialisation to meet the needs of the cycling tourists, i.e., the importance of the county's standardising qualities

ženosti i signalizacije na rutama) i nedostatih usluga (nedostatak podupirućih usluga biciklizmu, mali broj standardiziranih objekata, izostajanje nadogradnje biciklističke aplikacije), zajedno s dodatnim (unutar-destinacijskim) faktorima (nedovoljna suradnja između različitih jedinica lokalne uprave, niski udio kretanja biciklom među lokalnim stanovništvom). Također, među dionicima je uočen djelomični nedostatak svijesti o njihovoj ulozi u razvoju cikloturizma u županiji. Čini se da je najveći problem u promišljanju vlastitog poslovanja i županije izolirano od konkurencije, tržišnih trendova, dostupnog *know-how*-a i neočekivanih događaja. Stavovi ispitanika sukladni su ranije uočenom nedostizanju potencijala ključnih akcija usmjerenih na intenziviranje razvoja cikloturizma (Institut za turizam, 2015:38) na razini cijele Hrvatske, kao i uočenom nedostatku involviranosti lokalnih dionika i poduzetničkog duha (poput usluga smještaja uz biciklističke rute (Poljićak, Šego i Periša, 2021)).

(Pravilnik Ride & Bike standarda; Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu, 2019).

Conversely, the weaknesses of the region's cycling tourism known to the stakeholders are categorised as destination management functions or campaigns, promotion and popularization activities, cycling-specific services (lack of promotion, stakeholder coordination, cycling tourism awareness, and people with specific 'bike' skills and knowledge), infrastructural shortcomings (safety issues, no *EuroVelo* routes in the region, nor networking and signage), and service insufficiency (lack of cycling support services, small number of standardized facilities, no cycling app upgrades), together with additional (in-destination) factors (insufficient cooperation between different municipalities, low level of cycling among the local population). There is also partial unawareness among the stakeholders about their role in the development of cycling tourism in the county. The biggest issue seems to be their idea of viewing the businesses and county operations in isolation from the competition, market trends, the available know-how, and unexpected events. The respondents' opinions agree with the previously noted inability to realise the full potential of key activities focused on intensifying cycling tourism development (Institute for Tourism, 2015:38) at the national level, and with the observed lack of the local stakeholders' involvement and entrepreneurial spirit (e.g., providing accommodation services along cycling routes – Poljićak, Šego and Periša, 2021).

**Tablica 4: SWOT analiza cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji (stavovi dionika)**

SNAGE	SLABOSTI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• krajolik, reljef, očuvana priroda i bogata kulturna baština</li> <li>• neeksploatirana područja koja su dostupna biciklima</li> <li>• gastronomija područja</li> <li>• ruralna obilježja prostora</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• zone bez prometa motornih vozila</li> <li>• blizina velikih urbanih sredina</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• postojanje pravila (kriterija i procedure) za standardizaciju smještajnih objekata, objekata hrane i pića, objekata kulturne baštine i zaštićene prirode te specifičnih dionika turističke ponude/ postojanje “biciklističkih standarda”</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• postojeće rute, staze i ostala biciklistička infrastruktura</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nedostatak promocije, komunikacije među dionicima i koordinacije dionika u destinaciji</li> <li>• neprepoznatost vizualnog identiteta standardiziranih usluga za bicikliste</li> <li>• nedostatak ljudi sa specifičnim kompetencijama</li> <li>• nerazvijena svijest o mogućnostima cikloturizma</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nepostojanje <i>EuroVelo</i> (međunarodnih biciklističkih) ruta u županiji</li> <li>• nedostatna/neadekvatna infrastruktura i/ili signalizacija na rutama</li> <li>• biciklističke rute na prometnicama ili uz prometnice – upitna sigurnost biciklista</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nedostatan broj pružatelja specifičnih i dodatnih usluga za bicikliste (iznajmljivanje, servis bicikala i sl.)</li> <li>• mali broj <i>Bike&amp;Bed</i> objekata</li> <li>• ograničena implementacija standardizacije usluga zbog malog interesa poslovnih subjekata</li> <li>• nedostatak investicija u regionalnu aplikaciju cikloturizma</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nedostatna suradnja lokalnih vlasti</li> <li>• nepostojanje kulture biciklizma</li> </ul>
PRILIKE	PRIJETNJE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dostupnost EU fondova, postojeće znanje vezano uz prijavljivanje na javne natječaje za financiranje</li> <li>• primjena e-bicikala u turizmu</li> <li>• postojeći <i>know-how</i> uspješnih međunarodnih destinacija cikloturizma</li> <li>• trendovi vezani uz aktivnosti na otvorenom, povratak/boravak u prirodi, ekološka osvještenost</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dostupnost prostora za stvaranje biciklističkih ruta izvan prometnica, sigurnijih za bicikliste</li> <li>• potencijal istovremenog planiranja biciklističke infrastrukture i infrastrukture cestovnog prometa</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integracija proizvoda cikloturizma s različitim segmentima regionalne ponude (enologija, gastronomija, smještaj, kulturna baština, specifična arhitektura) i suradnja različitih dionika, uključujući male poduzetnike duž ruta</li> <li>• brendiranje destinacijskog područja (prepoznatljivost na međunarodnom tržištu); zajednički pristup tržištu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dinamika promjena biciklističkog turističkog tržišta (neprepoznavanje trendova, nefleksibilnost)</li> <li>• neprepoznatost na biciklističkom turističkom tržištu (kao destinacije cikloturizma)</li> <li>• sporiji razvoj cikloturizma od geografski bliskih konkurenata</li> <li>• nedostatak (ili potpuni izostanak) razumijevanja važnosti biciklističke infrastrukture od poduzeća za upravljanje prometnicama</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nedostatak jasnog razvojnog fokusa (strateške orijentacije na cikloturizam)</li> <li>• nepostojanje jasnih smjernica (akcijskog plana) i strateškog pristupa</li> <li>• stanje krajolika (potreba za boljim upravljanjem otpadom, postavljanjem klupa za sjedenje, održavanje okoliša)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neodržavanje postojeće infrastrukture; stagnacija ponude biciklističke infrastrukture ili izostanak umrežavanja</li> </ul>

PRILIKE	PRIJETNJE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotivne kampanje cikloturizma (u destinaciji) usmjerene na različite pružatelje usluga, koje uključuju mogućnosti sufinanciranja potrebne opreme za uključivanje u sustav standardizacije (vanjski stalci, nosači za bicikle i sl.) ili druge oblike stimulacije dionika na uključivanje u ponudu (savjetovanje, edukacija)</li> <li>• segmentacija potražnje – planiranje infrastrukture i cjelokupne ponude u skladu s profilom ciljnog tržišta – rekreativaca, obitelji, predanih rekreativaca<sup>3</sup> ili dr.</li> <li>• dostupnost vođenih i samo-vođenih tura, stvaranje tematskih ruta, daljnji razvoj mobilne aplikacije</li> <li>• različite vrste biciklističkih događaja</li> </ul>	

*Izvor: primarno istraživanje autora*

**Table 4: SWOT analysis of cycling tourism in Krapina-Zagorje County (experts' evaluation)**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• landscape, relief, preserved nature and rich cultural heritage</li> <li>• unexplored areas accessible by bicycle</li> <li>• gastronomy of the area</li> <li>• rural features of the area</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• traffic-free zones</li> <li>• proximity to large urban centres</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set regulations (criteria and procedures) for standardization of accommodation services, catering services, representatives of cultural and natural heritage and specific stakeholders in the area / 'bike standards'</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the existing routes, trails and other cycling infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of promotion, communication and stakeholder coordination in the destination</li> <li>• insufficient recognition of the visual identity of standardized 'bicycle' facilities</li> <li>• lack of people with specific competencies / education</li> <li>• lack of awareness about the possibilities of cycling tourism</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no <i>EuroVelo</i> (international long-distance cycling) route in the county</li> <li>• insufficient / inferior infrastructure or signalization on routes</li> <li>• bicycle routes on roads or adjacent to roads – (no) cyclist safety</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insufficient number of providers of additional services for cyclists (bicycle rental and repair shops)</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Skupina predanih rekreativaca pojednostavljeno se može pojmiti kao biciklisti natjecatelji, odnosno sudionici biciklističkih događaja i utrka koji nisu profesionalni sportaši. Ipak, aktivnost vožnje biciklom njima je primarni životni interes uz koji razvijaju vještine te prikupljaju znanja i iskustva, nerijetko se poistovjećujući sa skupinom ljudi sličnih preferencija (Stebbins, 2007; Stebbins, 2015; Israeli i Gasul, 2019).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small number of <i>Bike&amp;Bed</i> facilities</li> <li>• limited implementation of standardization due to lack of interest of business entities</li> <li>• no investment in regional cycling mobile app</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insufficient cooperation of local authorities</li> <li>• lack of cycling culture</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• available EU funds, existing knowledge in applying to tenders in the region</li> <li>• e-bikes implementation in tourism</li> <li>• know-how of successful international cycling tourism destinations</li> <li>• trends in outdoor offering, demand turning to nature, ecological awareness</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient space to create routes that do not include road sections (cyclist safety);</li> <li>• the potential of simultaneous planning cycling infrastructure when planning transport infrastructure</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrated cycling tourism products incorporating different segments of the regional offering (enogastro, accommodation, cultural sights, specific architecture), and cooperation of various actors, including small businesses along routes</li> <li>• branding the destination area (making it distinctive in the international market); collective approach</li> <li>• promotional campaign (within the destination) for the development of cycling tourism aimed at various service providers, with the possibility of co-financing the necessary equipment for inclusion in standardization (outdoor racks, bicycle hangers, etc.) or stimulating stakeholders who create the cycling tourism offering (with advice, or funding)</li> <li>• demand segmentation – infrastructure planning and complete supply in accordance with the profile of the target market – leisure cycling, families, serious leisure<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• availability of guided or self-guided tours, design of thematic routes, further development of the mobile application</li> <li>• different kinds of cycling events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fast dynamics of the cycling tourism market (lack of trend recognition and flexibility)</li> <li>• not achieving recognition on the cycling tourism market (as a cycling tourism destination)</li> <li>• cycling tourism developing at a slower pace than geographically close competitors</li> <li>• failure to recognize the importance / lack of understanding the importance of cycling infrastructure by the road management company</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of clear development focus (strategic orientation towards cycling tourism)</li> <li>• lack of clear guidelines (action plan) and strategic approach</li> <li>• the state of the landscape (need for better waste management, sitting benches, landscaping)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• failure to maintain the existing infrastructure; not adding to the existing infrastructure or lack of networking</li> </ul>

*Source: Authors' contribution*

<sup>3</sup> The group of serious leisure cyclists are dedicated recreationists, cycling competitors, or participants in cycling events and races, who are not professional athletes. However, the activity of cycling is their primary life interest, in which they develop skills and gather knowledge and experience, often identifying themselves with a group of people with similar preferences (Stebbins, 2007; Stebbins, 2015; Israeli and Gasul, 2019).

Većina dionika ima pozitivan stav prema regionalnom potencijalu, što ukazuje na široko dostupne mogućnosti za budući razvoj. Većina misli da se prilike nalaze u trendovima na turističkom tržištu (e-bicikli, sportovi na otvorenom, održivost, financiranje iz EU fondova, itd.) i promotivnim aktivnostima, uglavnom u domeni destinacijskog menadžmenta (brendiranje destinacije, segmentacija tržišta, interni marketing, dostupnost informacija o biciklizmu u području, integriranje regionalne ponude, organizacija biciklističkih događanja). Jedna od glavnih prilika je postojeća *resursna osnova*, tj. veličina prostora koji bi se mogao koristiti za biciklističke rute (prirodna i ruralna područja), izbjegavajući površine za promet motornih vozila. Uz zdravstvene i socijalne aspekte vožnje biciklom tijekom potrebe za socijalnim distanciranjem, dostupnost vanjskog prostora ključna je za osjećaj sigurnosti (Nurse i Dunning, 2020), a vožnja biciklom valjana je alternativa zahvaljujući individualnosti, učinkovitom korištenju prostora, učincima na zdravlje i drugim pozitivnim aspektima. Krapinsko-zagorska županija obiluje prirodnim površinama za stvaranje novih biciklističkih ruta i bolje mreže (što bi rezultiralo većim izborom za bicikliste te mogućnošću bolje disperzije korisnika).

Trenutni zamah u EU-u (koji se uvelike odnosi na učinke COVID-a-19 i oporavak nakon pandemije) odražava se na prijevoz, putovanja i turizam. Veći udio biciklističke mobilnosti (Delaney, 2020; Haubold, 2021; Laker, 2021; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021) i povećana potražnja za cikloturizmom (ADFC, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021; Radlobby, 2021) neke su od pozitivnih promjena pod utjecajem pandemije na individualnoj i društvenoj razini. Sigurnost, dobrobit pojedinca i javno zdravlje neka su od ključnih pitanja odgovornog prijevoza (Nikitas *et al.*, 2021) u novonastalom okruženju putovanja i turizma.

Popis prijatni razvoju cikloturizma ukazuje na usmjerenost dionika prema vidljivosti

Most stakeholders have a positive attitude towards the regional potential, indicating the widely available opportunities for future development. Most of them think that the potential lies in the current trends in the tourism market (e-bikes, outdoor sports, sustainability, EU funding, etc.) and the promotion campaigns, most of which are in the scope of destination management (destination branding, market segmentation, internal marketing, information on cycling in the area, integrating regional offer, and organizing cycling events). One of the major opportunities is the existing resource base – the amount of space (available natural and rural areas) that could be used for bicycle routes, avoiding motorized traffic surfaces. In addition to the health and social aspects of cycling during the need for social distancing, outdoor space availability is key to feeling safe (Nurse and Dunning, 2020) and cycling is a valid travel and tourism alternative due to its individuality, space efficiency, health effects, and other positive aspects. The Krapina-Zagorje County abounds in natural areas for creating new routes and a better network (which would result in more choice for cyclists and opportunities for user dispersion).

The current momentum in the EU (which largely refers to the COVID-19 effects and the post-COVID-19 recovery), affects transportation, travel and tourism. The increased share of cycling mobility (Delaney, 2020; Haubold, 2021; Laker, 2021; Nikitas *et al.*, 2021) and demand for cycling tourism (ADFC, 2021; The Dutch Cycling Association 'Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform', 2021; Radlobby, 2021) are some of the positive pandemic-influenced changes at the individual and society level. Safety, individual wellbeing and public health are some of the key issues of responsible transport (Nikitas *et al.*, 2021) in newly created travel and tourism landscapes.

The list of threats to cycling tourism development refers to stakeholder orientation towards market visibility, associated with the shortcomings of promotion and destina-

destinacije na tržištu te uključuje nedostatke promocije i destinacijskog menadžmenta (nedostatak prepoznavanja trendova, razvoj sporijim tempom od konkurencije, neprepoznatost od strane potražnje, nedostatna suradnja s društvima za upravljanje prometnicama), nedostatke u strateškom pristupu i prijetnje povezane s resursnom osnovom (nedostatak fokusa na cikloturizam, nedostatak izvedivog akcijskog plana, nedostaci u upravljanju prirodnim površinama), kao i infrastrukturom (nedostatno održavanje i unaprjeđenja).

Krapinsko-zagorska županija ima priliku planirati buduće događaje za razne skupine sudionika te integrirati razne regionalne specifičnosti u proizvod cikloturizma u narednom razdoblju, što dionici i očekuju (Tablica 3). Događaji su prepoznati kao dobar način za poticanje biciklizma u nekoj regiji, a promotivne vožnje/biciklijade, u koje bi Krapinsko-zagorska županija mogla dalje ulagati, trebale bi biti veći i bolje oglašivani događaji kako bi se unaprijedili destinacijska prepoznatljivost i imidž (Oshimi i Harada, 2019) na tržištu cikloturizma te pridonijelo lokalnoj zajednici i ekonomiji (Gibson, Kaplanidou i Kang, 2012; Buning, Cole i McNamee, 2016). Planiranje budućih biciklističkih događaja mora integrirati različite scenarije za suzbijanje potencijalne krize (poput trenutne pandemije) (Bazzanella *et al.*, 2021).

Odgovori nekih dionika ukazuju na nedostatak znanja, informacija i edukacije o cikloturizmu u županiji o trenutnoj ponudi, planiranim i provedenim akcijama i razvojnoj viziji, što je u suprotnosti s preduvjetima podrške razvoju sportskog turizma (Chang, Choong i Ng, 2020). Ispitana skupina eksperata za cikloturizam u županiji izražava realistične stavove o prijetnjama koje proizlaze iz neravnoteže s dinamikom potražnje te prepoznaje nepovoljni ishod nedostatka praćenja trendova, nedostatka fleksibilnosti ili razvojne stagnacije. Osim uz opću potporu lokalne zajednice/dionika, neuspjeh na tržištu moguće je izbjeći jasnim razvojnim fokusom prema cikloturizmu, jasnim smjer-

tion management (lack of trend recognition, developing at a slower pace than the competition, not being recognized by the demand, no cooperation with road management companies), flaws in the strategic approach, and threats related to the resource base (lack of focus on cycling tourism, lack of clear action plan, shortcomings in landscape management), as well as to the infrastructure (failing to maintain and upgrade it).

The Krapina-Zagorje County has the opportunity to plan future events for a variety of participants, and to integrate a variety of the region's specific features into the cycling tourism product in the forthcoming period, which is what the stakeholders would expect (Table 3). Events are a way to boost regional cycling, and promotional rides that the county could further invest in should be more numerous and better publicized to advance the destination's visibility and image (Oshimi and Harada, 2019) in the cycling tourism market, and contribute to the local community and economy (Gibson, Kaplanidou and Kang, 2012; Buning, Cole and McNamee, 2016). Planning future cycling events needs to integrate different scenarios to counteract potential crisis (like the current pandemic) (Bazzanella *et al.*, 2021).

Further, some stakeholder responses indicate the lack of knowledge, information, and education about the county's cycling tourism, its current offering, planned and conducted campaigns, and vision, which is incompatible with the preconditions of providing support to sports tourism development (Chang, Choong and Ng, 2020). The surveyed group of cycling tourism experts demonstrates rather realistic attitudes to the threats of ignoring the demand dynamics, and recognizes the results of the lack of trend recognition, flexibility, or developmental stagnation. Besides the general support of the local community/stakeholders, market failure could be avoided by a clear development focus on cycling tourism, clear guidelines (action plan), and a strategic approach to cycling tourism –

nicama (akcijski plan) i strateškim pristupom cikloturizmu, su-kreiranim uz sudjelovanje dionika, komuniciranim javnosti te implementiranim i praćenim u skladu s razvojnim ciljevima destinacije.

#### **4.4. Očekivanja od razvoja cikloturizma u Krapinsko-zagorskoj županiji**

Uz stavove prikazane u Tablici 4, odgovarajući na posljednje (otvoreno) pitanje upitnika, dionici su također izrazili velika očekivanja od budućeg razvoja cikloturizma, kao što su: međunarodna prepoznatost destinacije, segmentacija tržišta, integrirana ponuda temeljena na suradnji dionika, poticanje lokalnog gospodarstva, prije svega malih poduzeća, poticaji za uključivanje dionika, primjena postojećeg znanja i učenje na primjeru drugih destinacija, održivo koristeći dostupnu resursnu osnovu i dodajući vrijednost nematerijalnoj ponudi fokusiranjem na iskustvo i ko-kreaciju istog.

Dionici ispitani u okviru ovog istraživanja prepoznaju potrebu za učinkovitijom komunikacijom ponude destinacije biciklistima te ukazuju na dostupnost ažuriranih informacija u stvarnom vremenu, promotivnih akcija i mrežnih alata te mogućnosti preuzimanja sadržaja (poput biciklističke aplikacije, planiranja vožnje biciklom, logovi ruta za samo-vođenje, dizajna tematskih ruta itd.). Također, imajući na umu heterogenost tržišta cikloturizma (npr. Sustrans, 1999; European Parliament, 2009; Kelly, 2009; Lamont, 2009; Lamont i Buultjens, 2011; Marcussen, 2009; Ritchie, Tkaczynski i Faulks, 2010; Chen i Chen, 2013; Lamont i Jenkins, 2013; Weed *et al.*, 2014), Krapinsko-zagorska županija imala bi koristi od segmentacije potražnje te planiranja u skladu s profilom ciljnog tržišta, bilo da se radi o biciklizmu u slobodno vrijeme, obitelji biciklista, predanim sportašima, itd.

Očekivanja dionika smatraju se ostvarivima ako se postojeće slabosti i prijetnje ade-

co-created with the stakeholder involvement, communicated to the public, and implemented and monitored according to destination development objectives.

#### **4.4. Expectations from cycling tourism development in Krapina-Zagorje County**

Alongside the attitudes in Table 4, the stakeholders' replies to the final open-ended question in the self-completion survey expressed great expectations regarding the future cycling tourism development, e.g.: international recognition of the destination, market segmentation, integrated offering based on stakeholder collaboration, boosting the local economy – primarily small businesses, incentives for stakeholder involvement, implementing the existing knowledge and learning from other destinations, sustainable use of the available resource base, and adding value to the intangible offering by focusing on experience and its co-creation.

The stakeholders surveyed in this research recognize the need for more efficient communication of the destination's offering to cyclists, based on the availability of updated and real-time information, promotion campaigns and online tools, and 'downloadables' (like cycling apps, ride planning option, self-guided route logs, design of thematic routes, etc.). Similarly, considering that the cycling tourism market is very heterogenic, as confirmed by many studies offering different typologies of cycling tourists (e.g., Sustrans, 1999; European Parliament, 2009; Kelly, 2009; Lamont, 2009; Lamont and Buultjens, 2011; Marcussen, 2009; Ritchie, Tkaczynski and Faulks, 2010; Chen and Chen, 2013; Lamont and Jenkins, 2013; Weed *et al.*, 2014), the Krapina-Zagorje County would benefit from demand segmentation and planning in accordance with the profile of the target market, irrespective of whether it involves leisure, family, or serious cyclists, etc.

The stakeholders' expectations are perceived as attainable if the existing weakness-

kvatno prepoznaju, a prednosti i prilike iskoriste u pozicioniranju među regijama cikloturizma, to jest, za nadogradnju i održavanje kvalitete i konkurentnosti na tržištu cikloturizma. Orijentacija dionika na integraciju regionalnih vrijednosti i konkurentskih prednosti (poput kulture, tradicije, arhitekture, enologije, gastronomije, krajolika, prirode) u turistički proizvod cikloturizma pokazuje određenu razinu promišljanja razvoja cikloturizma. Međutim, informiranje dionika o planovima i stanju razvoja, njihovo educiranje prema specijalističkim (biciklističkim) znanjima i podržavanje njihovih poslovnih ideja prilikom provedbe regionalnih ciljeva (poput subvencioniranja kupnje stalaka za bicikale, koji poslovnim subjektima omogućavaju da standardiziraju svoje usluge i postanu dio regionalne mreže standardiziranih pružatelja usluga, doprinoseći regionalnoj vidljivosti i ciljevima upravljanja kvalitetom usluga) ključni su u osiguravanju involviranosti i podrške dionika budući da rezultati ovog istraživanja ukazuju na određenu razinu neupoznatosti s razvojem cikloturizma.

Čini se da su dionici uglavnom usredotočeni na unutarnja pitanja u županiji, poput biciklističke infrastrukture, odnose s ostalim dionicima i suradnju (ili nedostatak istih) te da su potpuno ravnodušni ili nesvjesni eksternih (uključujući i pandemijskih) prilika ili prijetnji. Važno je uvidjeti da lokalni dionici prepoznaju cikloturizam kao pozitivan i koristan za ekonomiju županije, kvalitetu života, kulturu, identitet i tradiciju (Tablica 1), što ukazuje na širinu dostupnih mogućnosti budućeg razvoja cikloturizma (Tablica 4).

## 5. ZAKLJUČAK

Razumijevanje mišljenja, perspektive i (nedostatka) involviranosti lokalnih dionika u cikloturizam smatra se ključnim za razvoj destinacije cikloturizma budući da učinkovito upravljanje destinacijama implicira podršku i suradnju dionika. Usredotočenost dionika na brojne prepreke, slabosti i prijetnje

es and threats are properly recognized, and the advantages and opportunities are used to position it as a cycling tourism region, i.e., for upgrading, maintaining quality, and staying competitive. The stakeholder orientation towards integration of the cycling tourism offering with the regional assets and competitive advantages (like culture, tradition, architecture, enology, gastronomy, landscape, nature) demonstrates a certain level of planning of the development of cycling tourism. Since the results of this study suggest a certain lack of unawareness regarding the development of cycling tourism, the key to ensuring the stakeholder involvement and support is informing them on the plans and developments, training them for more specialized (cycling) competencies, and supporting their business ideas in implementing the regional objectives (like subsidizing bicycle racks that enable business subjects to standardize their services and become part of growing regional network of standardized service providers, while also contributing to regional recognition and service quality control objectives).

The stakeholders seem to be mostly focused on internal issues in the county, like the cycling infrastructure, the stakeholder relationships and cooperation, or lack thereof, and completely indifferent or unaware of external opportunities or threats. Importantly, local stakeholders recognize cycling tourism as positive and beneficial to the county's economy, quality of life, culture, identity and tradition (Table 1), indicating the vast available opportunities for its future development (Table 4).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Understanding the local stakeholders' opinions, perspectives and (lack of) involvement in cycling tourism is considered key to developing the cycling tourism destination since effective destination management implies stakeholder support and cooperation. The stakeholders' focus on numerous barriers, weaknesses and threats to cycling

razvoju cikloturizma ukazuje na činjenicu da interna pitanja destinacije često opterećuju perspektivu dionika cikloturizma i utječu na svojevrsnu izolaciju od trendova na turističkom tržištu, velikih (neočekivanih) promjena i potrebe za planiranjem u skladu sa sadašnjim i potencijalnim vanjskim utjecajima.

Nerazmjer između prepoznatljivosti na tržištu i regionalne predanosti, projekata i ulaganja u cikloturizam u županiji uzetoj za primjer, ali i u bilo kojoj regiji, djelomično bi mogli biti rezultat nedostatka internog marketinga i informiranja lokalnih dionika o viziji, ciljevima i planovima razvoja cikloturizma, kao i o ulozi dionika u procesu. Kompetencije dionika također bi trebalo kontinuirano unapređivati (obrazovanjem, osposobljavanjem, dostupnošću *know-how*-a), prema više specijalističkih znanja i fokusu na usluge, u situaciji kada je broj regionalnih specijalista za cikloturizam i pružatelja pratećih usluga daleko od optimalnog. Potencijalno bi interne promotivne kampanje (unutar destinacije), usmjerene na različite pružatelje usluga, edukaciju, treninge i/ili javna sredstva kojima se sufinanciraju ili subvencioniraju troškovi opreme potrebne za uključivanje u standardizaciju biciklističkih usluga (vanjski nosači za bicikle, itd.) potaknule aktivniju podršku i uključivanje dionika.

Suradnja različitih dionika, uključujući mala poduzeća, ključna je za dugoročni uspjeh i postizanje ciljeva cikloturizma. Dostupne (ranije istaknute) informacije ukazuju kako bi se prilagođavanje trendovima na turističkom tržištu (rastući interes za boravkom na otvorenom, okretanje prirodi i ekološka svijest) moglo i dalje financirati iz fondova EU, ali udio financiranja iz privatnih, odnosno malih poduzeća, trebao bi porasti kako bi se održala dugoročna predanost cikloturizmu.

Iako istraživanja pokazuju kako su cikloturisti *multi-opcijski aktivni turisti*, skloni kombinirati vožnju bicikla s drugim aktivnostima na otvorenom tijekom svojih godišnjih odmora (ADFC, 2018), destinacije ciklotu-

risms development indicates that internal destination issues often cloud the perspective of the cycling tourism stakeholders, and influence a certain kind of isolation from the tourism market trends, big (unexpected) changes, and the need to plan in line with the current and potential external influences.

The disproportion of market recognition and regional commitment, projects and investments in cycling tourism in the studied county, as well as in any region, could partially be a result of the lack of internal marketing and failure to fully inform the local stakeholders about the vision, objectives and plans for the development of cycling tourism as well as the stakeholders' role in the process. The stakeholder capacity should be constantly upgraded (education, training, know-how availability) towards more specialist knowledge and service orientation in cases when the number of regional cycling tourism specialists and supporting service providers is far from optimal. Perhaps internal promotional campaign(s) (within the destination) aimed at various service providers, together with education, training, and / or public funds for co-financing or subsidizing the cost of the necessary equipment for standardizing the cycling services (outdoor racks, bicycle hangers, etc.), would encourage more active support and involvement on part of the stakeholders.

The cooperation of various actors, including small businesses, is key to long-term success and achieving the cycling tourism objectives. The available (afore-highlighted) information indicates that accommodating to the tourism market trends (rising interest in the outdoors, turning to nature, and ecological awareness) could continue to be EU funded, but the share of private small businesses' financing also should increase in order to support the long-term commitment to cycling tourism.

While the research shows that cycle tourists are 'multioptional active tourists', inclined to combine cycling with other (outdoor) activ-

rizma u razvoju imaju priliku preispitati svoju viziju te istodobno raditi na uspostavljanju portfelja drugih različitih oblika ponude na otvorenom (jahanje, trčanje po označenim stazama, pješačenje, hodanje itd.) temeljeći ga na dostupnim prirodnim resursima i atraktivnim mjestima, segmentaciji tržišta i izgradnji kapaciteta različitih dionika.

Opći doprinos ovog istraživanja je u njegovoj relevantnosti i za druge destinacije (i izvan Hrvatske). Na temelju odnosa rezultata ovog istraživanja i referentnih izvora utvrđenih u naslovu 4, postoji veliki potencijal za uvažavanje ovih rezultata u drugim regijama koje se razvijaju kao biciklističke destinacije.

U razmatranju primjenjivosti danih sugestija na druge razvijajuće regije cikloturizma valja uzeti u obzir i ograničenja ovog istraživanja. Prije svega to je namjerni uzorak te samostalno ispunjavanje online upitnika od strane ispitanika. Ipak, destinacijski menadžment mora se usredotočiti na aspekte navedene u rezultatima istraživanja i ojačati kapacitete različitih dionika te ih osvijestiti o potrebnim zajedničkim naporima, ali i izravnim koristima cikloturizma koje generiraju kolektivni pristup i zalaganje. Različiti poticaji dostupni lokalnim dionicima mogu se preslikati iz uspješnijih regija kako bi se potaknule inicijative i sudjelovanje zajednice.

Ovo istraživanje doprinosi širini akademskih istraživanja odnosa *sport-turizam-društvena zajednica* te poimanju praktičnih problema korištenja biciklizma u turističkom proizvodu i održivom društvenom razvoju. Postojeći jaz u istraživanju uloge lokalne zajednice i perspektive lokalnih dionika o cikloturizmu može se istražiti s puno različitih aspekata. Pored skupina dionika uključenih u ovo istraživanje, uključivanje sportaša iz destinacije u buduća istraživanja dodalo bi još jednu dimenziju percepciji dionika u cikloturizmu.

ities during their holidays (ADFC, 2018), the developing cycling tourism destinations have the opportunity to rethink their vision while working on establishing a portfolio of other different types of outdoor offerings (horse riding, trail running, hiking, walking, etc.) on the basis of the available natural resources and attractive sites, market segmentation, and building different stakeholder capacities.

The general contribution of this study can be perceived in its relevance for other destinations in Croatia (as well as outside of Croatia). With respect to the reference sources mentioned in section 4, the findings of this study have great potential for other regions that plan to develop as cycling destinations.

When considering the application of the above suggestions to other developing cycling tourism regions, the limitations of this study should be taken into account – namely, the purposive sampling was used and the online questionnaires were self-administered by the respondents. Nevertheless, the destination management needs to focus on the aspects emphasized in the research results and boost different stakeholders' capacity, and make them aware not only of the joint effort needed, but also of the direct benefits that are generated by collective approach and commitment. Many incentives available to the local stakeholders could be replicated from more successful regions to stimulate community initiatives and participation.

This research contributes to investigating the 'sports-tourism-community' triangle and comprehending the practical issues of utilizing cycling in tourism products and sustainable social development. The research gap regarding the role of the host community and the local stakeholder perspective on cycling tourism can be explored from many different aspects. Thus, involving the destination's athletes, besides the stakeholder groups included in this research, would add another dimension to future cycling tourism stakeholder studies.

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