

University of Tourism and Management in Skopje

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR BUSINESS,
ECONOMY, SPORT AND TOURISM, 2020

**ALTERNATIVE PATHS FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF EMERGING ECONOMIES IN GLOBAL
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

Proceeding



Skopje, Macedonia

University of Tourism and Management in Skopje

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR BUSINESS,
ECONOMY, SPORT AND TOURISM, 2020

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Proceeding

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you to the Seventh International Congress, ICON BEST 2020, on the topic: „ALTERNATIVE PATHS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGING ECONOMIES IN GLOBAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT“. The Congress is organized by the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje which constantly monitors the educational, scientific and economic trends in the developed economies around Europe and all over the world, the idea is to create and implement innovations that will bring us closer to the standards of the European Union.

During the congress we want to open discussions with academicians how to foster economic development offering innovative approaches in the field of tourism, economy, entrepreneurship, human resources management, marketing management and information technologies. With working title of this congress we want to encourage scientists to provide solutions based on a strong academic foundation and highly specialized

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business knowledge bases in order to reach high productivity of emerging economies in dynamic global arena.

I am convinced that each of us will give an extremely high contribution to the exchange of information and its current scientific thoughts while sharing ideas about tourism, economy, education in the 21st century, managing intellectual capital as well as creating an entrepreneurial business environment. The best practices for improving the business climate in the region and wider will be presented at the Congress. At the same time you will have the opportunity to establish contacts with prominent leaders in the field of tourism and management.

Thank you for participating in the Congress.

Rector

Prof. Dr. Sci. Ace Milenkovski

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR BUSINESS, ECONOMY, SPORT AND TOURISM, 2020

ALTERNATIVE PATHS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGING ECONOMIES IN GLOBAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

About the congress

International Congress for Business, Economy, Sport and Tourism - ICON BEST 2020 is an International congress regarding research in business, sport, economy and tourism organized by the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje. The ICON BEST is traditionally organized since 2008. It first started as a Scientific Conference and from 2009 was organized as a Scientific Congress and as a biennial event. This year we celebrate and organize the 7th Scientific Congress.

The main aim of the congress is to put emphasis on the importance of business, economy, sport and tourism as important factors for improvement of national economic development. This year the working title of the congress is **“Alternative paths for development of emerging economies in global business environment”**.

During the congress we want to open discussions with academicians how to foster economic development offering innovative approaches in the field of tourism, economy, entrepreneurship, human resources management, marketing management and information technologies. With working title of this congress we want to encourage scientists to provide solutions based on a strong academic foundation and highly specialized business knowledge bases in order to reach high productivity of emerging economies in dynamic global arena.

This international congress aims to support the academics, researchers and PhD students by offering them an opportunity to present their latest research results in the fields of education, social

sciences, sports, tourism, business & economics, finance and management through which they can contribute to the social development, building a higher level of awareness, and an appropriate approach to domestic and global problems. The knowledge and the professional skills are a vibrant and dynamic process that is always changing and improving, so the ability to keep up to date with it and enrich the professional competencies is inevitable in the academic and scientific world.

This year ICON BEST 2020 will be organized as a Virtual Congress, covering different topics in:

- **Tourism** (Socio Cultural Effects of Tourism, Cultural and Economic Effects of Events on Destination, Environmental Impacts of Tourism, Food Culture and Tourism, Tourism in Multimedia, Gastronomy as a tourism resource: profile of the culinary tourist, Safety and security in global tourism, Entrepreneurship in Tourism, Sustainable tourism and well-being),

- **Marketing & Integrated Marketing Communications** (Marketing (Product & Service, International Marketing, Marketing Logistics, Strategic marketing, Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications, Strategies of Marketing Communication, Pricing Strategy, International Marketing Strategy and Sustainability, E-Business and Competitive Strategy, Branding, Marketing planning, Public relations, Strategic Marketing Management for Nonprofit Organizations),

- **Information technologies** (Software Engineering, Software Systems, Software Verification, Databases, Natural Language Processing, Applied Mathematics, Computer Networks, Cloud Computing, Distributed Systems, Management of Information Systems, Information Management, E-Business, E-Governance, ICT in Education, Digital Society),

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- **Open Topics Related to Business Education** (Bridging the gap between education and business on global and local level, Digital media and business education, Innovation, entrepreneurship and education, Social responsibility and business strategy alignment, Learning by doing - reshaping the classroom).

- **The Challenges of global COVID-19 pandemic.**

The best ranked papers from the Congress should be published in the December 2020 issue of the International *UTMS Journal of economics*, indexed and abstracted in following databases: ABI/INFORM (ProQuest); ABI/INFORM Global (ProQuest), AP PLATFORMS; C.I.R.E.T.; DOAJ; EBSCO; EconBiz; Econis; EconPapers; EconStor; EDRIC; EZB; GOOGLE SCHOLAR; IDEAS; Open J-Gate; RePEc; Socionet; ZBW, Business Collection (ProQuest), Business Premium Collection (ProQuest).

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**CYCLIST SATISFACTION FROM THE MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS ON
POPOVA SHAPKA****Ilija Zakoski¹****Abstract**

The benefits from cycling are endless. In addition to the ones in terms of health, there are mental and social benefits making cycling a more useful activity. The mountain could become even more attractive for the cyclists with the trails crossing through the untouched nature, clean air and a number of tourist attractions. Popova Shapka already offers eight mountain biking trails with proper signage (informative boards and panels, road maps, marks and marked pillars) manufactured in line with the regulations set forth by the Cycling Federation of Macedonia.

The purpose of this research is the level of satisfaction from the biking trails, the nature, and cultural, historical and anthropological motives. The research was done through an anonymous survey including 10 questions answered by cyclists using these trails. A total of 68 (sixty eight) cyclists were interviewed, presenting a high percentage of satisfaction related to the biking trail signage – 79,4% (54); information made available on the panels – 86,7% (59); nature 89,7% (61). These results indicate that Popova Shapka as a tourist destination with its mountain biking trails considerably adds to the tourist offer.

Key words: mountain biking, biking trails, signage, attraction, satisfaction

JEL classification: J16, J31, N30

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary tendencies in the global tourist development show that this is a phenomenon which continuously adds to its value. This can be noted through the increased number of tourists included in the activity and the generated profits as a result; from the number of new services providers; development of economic and non-economic active participants of the tourist offer, and so forth. The attention of the masses for new tourist offering becomes even more expressed. This means that tourism lately witnesses tourist services requests from various profiles. The heterogeneity of the requirements leads towards a more dynamic selection of the tourism development. This intention for selectivity derives the phenomenon for new and specific forms of tourism, which find their basis for development in the interactive relationship between the advanced and sophisticated requirements of the services users on one hand, and the available possibilities to respond to the same. Sports and recreational tourism represent one of the forms of selectivity which can respond to the contemporary conditions of the tourist market.

¹ **Ilija Zakoski MSc.**, University of “Goce Delcev” in Shtip, Republic of North Macedonia

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The alternative tourism in Macedonia represents its wealth in natural resources, as well as the excellent geographic position of the country. This type of tourism is of an exceptional interest, putting on spot the new possibilities for satisfying the tourist needs, becoming more and more popular as it positively influences the people and the environment. The mountain biking as an adventurous activity is part of the alternative tourism. The paths for mountain recreational tourism must satisfy all of the tourist needs, including but not limited to the: recreational, cultural, informative, and the need to satisfy certain safety standards.(Ciriviri K 2012)

The mountain biking is an alternative to the classic cycling. Its basis consists of the need to overcome challenging, uneven areas and difficult-to-manage mountain slopes. The mountain paths of this type feature terrain and soil structure with different slopes and presence of rocks, water, vegetative and other type of obstacles, as well as communications leading to these types of terrains. This means that the cyclists belong to a group of people with recreational needs closely related to biking, nature-loving and the desire for overcoming challenges. (Planinarski klub Sara ski 2019)

The implementation of the paths for mountain biking on Popova Shapka and further in the Shar Mountain region will not only enrich the tourist offering, but will also satisfy the needs for sports and recreational activities of the visitors.

1. SUBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Popova Shapka hosts the start of eight mountain biking paths, already marked in line with the previously set standards of the Cycling Federation of Macedonia. These are functional and intensively used by the cyclists. The paths feature roadmaps with information about the coordinates and characteristics of the paths; marked resting areas; maps for each of the paths with information; GPS routes; mobile phone application. When tracing the paths, the cyclists' safety is taken into consideration.

A subject to research of this thesis is the sports and recreational activities, that is, the mountain biking in the context of creating cyclist satisfaction from the mountain biking trails on Popova Shapka.

The purpose of this research is to empirically ascertain the quality of the mountain biking trails of the tourist destination Popova Shapka through a satisfaction validation of the cyclists regarding the markings, safety, environment, etc.

2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The data of this research is gathered through secondary data sources regarding the mountain biking in the Republic of North Macedonia. The primary data of the quality of the mountain biking gathered from the direct opinions of the cyclists, is gathered through anonymous survey including a number of 68 (sixty-eight) cyclists. Only the cyclists who have cycled at least three different trails were being surveyed. The survey consisted of 10 (ten) questions, which define the group by gender, age and level of education; furthermore, it included questions on valuation of the standards for building trails, and the safety levels of their usage based on the Regulations Book of the Cycling

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Federation of Macedonia; valuation of the trails marking, their features (length, difference in altitude, time needed for passing); and the GPS data as important criteria for the cyclists' orientation. In addition, the advertising material on the cross-country biking trails and their influence of the increased tourist offer is being assessed.

In order to reach higher level of accuracy in researching this thesis, a statistical method was being used. The statistical processing of the data is done through the computer application Microsoft Excel, providing ranking, percentage calculations and graphic shaping of the processed data.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS

Based on the secondary data received from the literature review, the tourist destination Popova Shapka possesses an enormous potential to become a regional center for mountain tourism in the North-West part of the Republic of North Macedonia. Its potentials have not been exploited enough, resulting in the poor current position when it comes to valorization of the tourist resources.(Zakoski I,2018)

The primary data which need to derive from the research is expected to define the current state of the mountain biking trails on Popova Shapka and their influence towards the enrichment of the tourist offer.

This research is expected to provide for:

- Marking of certain systemic weaknesses, difficulties and limitations when defining the mountain biking trails as a new tourist product;
- Marking the elements assessed by the cyclists as insufficient and inadequately implemented when marking the mountain biking trails;
- Indicating the conditions which might significantly improve the Popova Shapka tourism.

4. RESULTS

Out of the 68 cyclists surveyed for the mountain biking trails on Popova Shapka, 62 (sixty-two) or 91,2% were men and only 6 (8,8%) were women. This is a predominantly male sport, as indicated by the main part of the registered cyclists in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Regarding the age groups, the younger generation is predominant. From the surveyed cyclists, 9 (13,3%) were younger than 18; 45 (64,7%) were aged 19-40; 15 (22%) were aged 41-60; and none was older than 60 years of age. Having in mind that this is a sport which requires physical readiness and adventurous spirit above all, it is expected that the cyclists are represented by younger persons. The structure of the surveyed group by age is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Division of the surveyed by gender and age (number and percentage)

| <18 | 19-40 | 41-60 | >60 |
|-----|-------|-------|-----|
|-----|-------|-------|-----|

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| | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| male % | 13,3% | 60,3% | 17,6% | 0,0% |
| male number | 9 | 41 | 12 | 0 |
| female % | 0,0% | 4,4% | 4,4% | 0,0% |
| female number | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

Division of the surveyed by gender and age graphically presented (Figure 1). From the overall surveyed population, 6 (8,8%) were women, 62 (91,2%) were men.

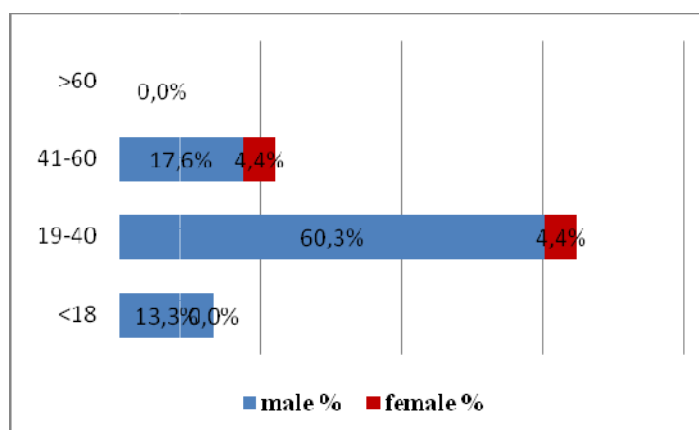


Figure 1. Division of the surveyed group by gender and age in percentage

Most of the cyclists using the trails on Popova Shapka are highly educated (university degree holders), 34 (50%); followed by a group with completed secondary education, 31 (45,6%); while 3 (4,4%) of the group had completed primary school education only (Figure 2).

The mountain biking results in terms of health can be easily noted in the balance provided from the benefits of exercising against the risks of air-pollution, accidents and injuries. In that sense, the awareness of the people with completed higher levels of education should be greater. (Johan de Hartog,J., Boogaard,H., Nijland,H., and Hoek,G. “2010).

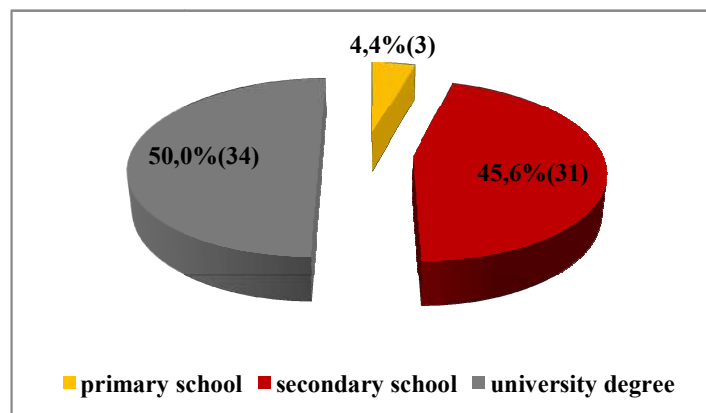


Figure 2. Division of the surveyed group by level of education

The mountain biking trails are built in accordance with the Regulations Book of the Cycling Federation of Macedonia, thereby, fulfilling the criteria for mountain biking trails. More than a half (60,3% or 41) of the cyclists-users of the Popova Shapka biking trails responded affirmative. A high percentage of 27,9% (19) users responded that the trails partially fulfill the conditions; while 11,8% (8) responded negative. However, more than 50% of the surveyed expressed satisfaction of the implemented standards for mountain biking trails (Figure 3).

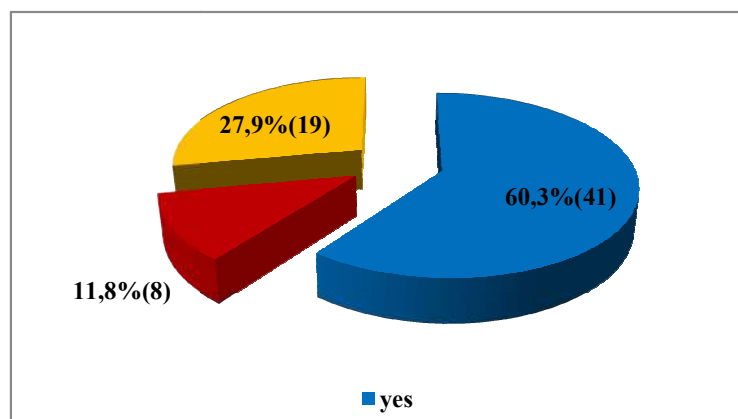


Figure 3. Cyclist satisfaction of the implemented standards for mountain biking trails

Regarding the safety when using the Popova Shampka biking trails, 48 (70,6%) of the surveyed responded affirmative; 8 (11,8%) believe were not completely safe; while 12 (17,6%) believe the trails were not safe. Certain areas were considered risky because of the terrain configuration.

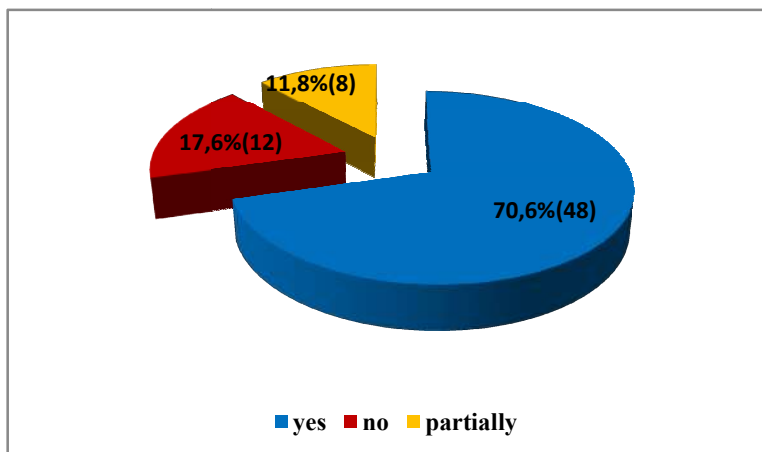


Figure 4. Cyclist satisfaction from trail safety

All of the cyclists-users of the biking trails of Popova Shapka were satisfied from the trail markings. Namely, everyone agreed that there are pathways, informative boards, marked resting areas, and similar in a trails' length. The satisfaction from the trail markings was confirmed by 86,7% (59) from the surveyed. Only 13,3% (9) responded negatively, meaning they were not satisfied from the way the trails are marked (Figure 5).

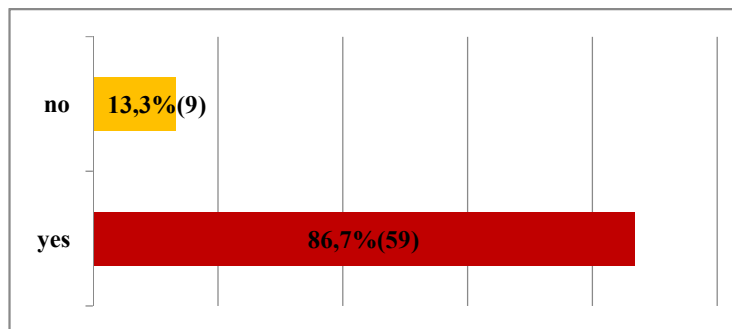


Figure 5. Cyclist satisfaction from the trail marking

The pathways are accompanied by GPS routes and mobile phone application. The satisfaction from the GPS routes was confirmed by 62 (91,2%) from the surveyed, while 6 (8,8%) were not satisfied because they haven't managed to use it, and believe there is none.

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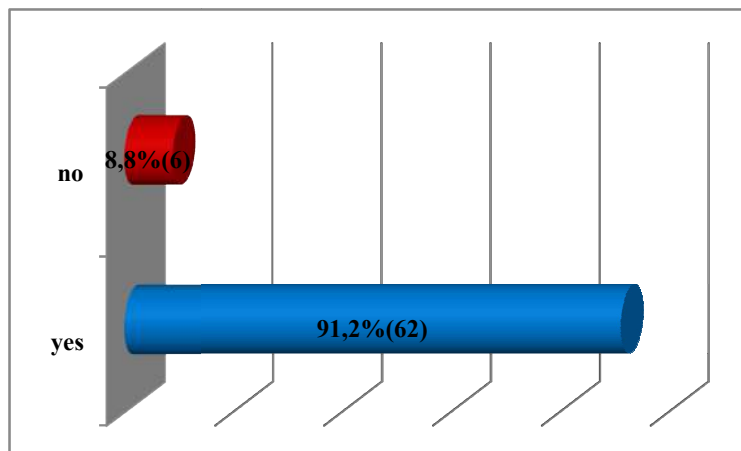


Figure 6. Cyclist satisfaction from the existence of GPS routes

The biking trails go through lively areas, untouched nature, many attractive resources (waterfalls, lakes, rivers, steep rocks, woods, etc.). The satisfaction of the cyclists from the environment where the biking trails are located is presented on Figure 7.

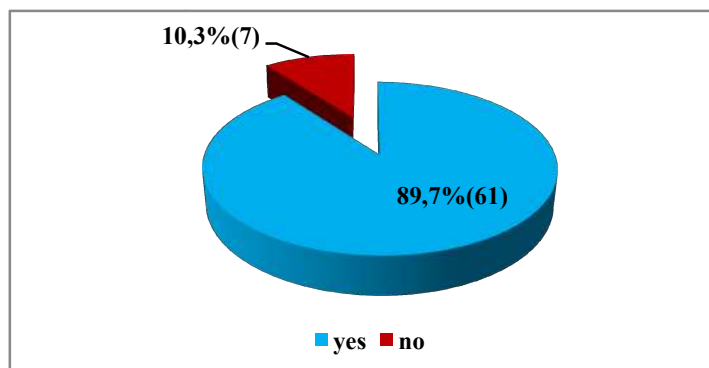


Figure 7. Cyclist satisfaction from the environment where the biking trails are located

Popova Shapka has prepared a brochure to promote these trails on the tourist market. These brochures include all the features of each of the trails. The existing of these trails should enrich the tourist offering of Popova Shapka, leading towards a higher interest for this tourist destination, having in mind the mountain biking is on the rise.

5. DISCUSSION

The sports and recreational tourism represent a social, economic and cultural phenomena derived from the interaction between the tourists, the activities and the destination. Sports and recreation include personal choice activities of the tourist, aiming to satisfy their need for motion, play, recreation and vacationing. The importance of the sports and recreation in tourism is reflected in satisfying the basic human need for physical activity. The Cycling Federation of Macedonia has set forth a Regulations Book of criteria which the biking trails need to fulfill, including the mount biking trails. According to the responses provided by the users of the cross-country trails for mountain biking on Popova Shapka, the criteria is completely fulfilled as 48 (70,6%) of the surveyed consider the trails safe.

Having in mind the mountain terrain, the large altitude differences and the terrain configuration, the safety conditions cannot be considered equal at all places. The question regarding the existence of pathways, informative boards, marked places and resting areas is positively responded by 86,7% (59) of the surveyed. The existence of used GPS routes is positively confirmed by 91,2% (62) from the cyclists. The environment where the biking trails are located was a cause of satisfaction for 89,71% (61) of the surveyed. When analyzing the mountain biking in the Republic of North Macedonia, it was noted that no similar researches were ever conducted on Popova Shapka. This research shall improve the image on the quality of the biking trails on Popova Shapka, resulting in increased number of visiting cyclists.

CONCLUSION

Having in mind the contemporary lifestyle and working conditions in today's industrialized and urbanized civilization, the working person feels the need to change the address of living and stay in clean and unpolluted spaces now more than ever before, satisfying the need to rebuild the physical and psychological condition. Each of the participants in the tourist movements, in addition to wanting to satisfy the basic needs of accommodation and food, shows an interest towards some other circumstances, such as: getting to know the area, the building, the people, the traditions, customs, sports, recreation, etc. Having that said, the bearers of the tourist offerings need to pay exceptional attention to the leisure time of the visitors, that is, to the time which needs to be fulfilled with various activities.

One of these activities is the mountain biking which has been intensively realized on the Shar Mountain slopes. The starting point for the eight marked trails for mountain biking is Popova Shapka. The cyclists using these trails more and more over time were surveyed for the quality of the same.

The cyclist satisfaction from the trail marking, the criteria of having pathways, informative boards and marked resting areas, existence of GPS routes and similar,

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points out the newly realized tourist offer. These biking trails as a new tourist product will surely enrich the overall tourist offering of Popova Shapka.

The advertising material with all the information on the trails printed out in three languages (Macedonian, Albanian and English) should inform the interested cycling clubs, tourist agencies and other entities organizing group mountain tours to visit Popova Shapka, thus increasing the number of tourists.

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