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PROBLEMS OF STRATEGIC TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE REGIONS OF POLAND

In the article the results of the analysis of the state of strategic tourism management in the regions of Poland are presented. In particular, the applicability of foresight research was indicated, in order to facilitate the process of tourism management in the regions and eliminate the occurring problems.

Keywords: tourism management, strategic management, strategy, foresight, region, Poland.

JEL Classification: L83, O18, P48.

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ПРОБЛЕМИ СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ ТУРИЗМОМ У РЕГІОНАХ ПОЛЬЩІ

У статті представлено результати аналізу стану стратегічного управління туризмом в різних регіонах Польщі. Зокрема, вказано на можливість застосування прогностичного дослідження для спрощення процесу стратегічного управління туризмом у регіонах та усунення виникаючих проблем.

Ключові слова: туризм, стратегічний менеджмент, стратегія, прогноз, регіон, Польща.

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОГО УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ТУРИЗМОМ В РЕГИОНАХ ПОЛЬШИ

В статье представлены результаты анализа состояния стратегического управления туризмом в различных регионах Польши. В частности, показана применимость прогностического исследования для упрощения процесса стратегического управления туризмом в регионах и устранения возникающих проблем.

Ключевые слова: туризм, стратегический менеджмент, стратегия, прогноз, регион, Польша.

1. Reference of the issue in question to scientific and practical foundations.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, as confirmed by the statistical studies of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), both of which note steady growth in both the number of tourists and revenues from tourism after the Second World War. The growth and importance of tourism has been one of the undoubted successes of the global economy over the past 50 years (Leitao, 2011). In 1950, 25 mln. tourists crossed the border of their countries, while in 2011 their number increased almost 40 times and reached 980 mln. UNWTO estimates that in 2012, record in international tourism will be beaten, as 1 bln. people will go abroad as tourists for the first time. Also, the income from international tourism grow rapidly year by year. In 1950, they amounted to USD 2 bln., while in 2011 increased to the level of USD 919 bln. (UNWTO, 2012). In 2011, the global tourism sector was generating 9.1% of gross world product and the

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total expenditure is estimated at USD 6346.1 bln. (WTTC, 2012a). In Poland, however, tourism in 2011 generated only 4.8% of GDP, and the total expenditure amounted to 24.8 bln. (WTTC, 2012b).

Due to the fact that tourism is a determinant of the development of many enterprises and regions, the state takes action to create conditions for further development of this sector. Tourism as an area of economic growth, also because of its interdisciplinary nature, contributes to the development of other sectors and industries, becoming the driving force of regional and local development. Moreover, it contributes to the activation of society and development of entrepreneurship and social activity. Tourism is also an instrument of regional policy, which allows the equalization of socioeconomic differences. The development of tourism in a region leads to an increase in demand for local products, increase in the number of tourist facilities, as well as positively affects regional infrastructure, employment and ecology (Sviridova, 2005). Tourism is an effective means of development of market mechanisms, generating revenues to regional and local budgets and affecting job creation (Likhomanova, 2004).

The development of tourism in regions is heavily dependent on the phenomena occurring both within a region and beyond its borders. This forces regional decision-makers use available management tools helping to build competitive advantages and develop regions of tourist reception.

The use of strategic management tools enables the preparation of long-term plans for the development of provinces and the country that set directions for future development and its financing sources. Unfortunately, in Poland, still at all levels of local government and at the central level the planning elements and system solutions, allowing for the implementation of established plans, are missing. The problem is not only the lack of funds for the implementation of a strategy, but also the instability of Polish local governments due to their short duration, high dependence on political factors, and the lack of responsibility implementation of adopted plans (PARP, 2007a).

2. Review of the literature. The issue of strategic tourism management in the regions of Poland has received little attention in the national literature. Few publications in this field include the publications of J. Borzyszkowski (2011), T. Chudoba (2008, 2010), B. Meyer and D. Milewski (2009), A.S. Kornak and A. Rapacz (2001), R. Ziolkowski (2002) and K. Michalowski (2002, 2008). These publications mainly refer to theoretical foundations of strategic tourism management in regions, constitute the analysis of single cases or concern only selected issues. There are no papers, however, which would comprehensively discuss the issue undertaken by the authors, mainly in terms of the possibilities for improving strategic management of tourism development in a region. Using foresight research in the field of tourism should be regarded as pioneering.

3. Defining the fundamental problem. The main problem discussed in the article is determining the state of tourism development management in Polish regions and identifying opportunities to improve it through the use of foresight studies. The undertaken problem is new, and its solution can be a significant contribution to the development of tourism management in regions.

4. Strategic management of tourism in the regions of Poland. The state is the primary entity realising the tourism policy of any country. It is generally accepted that

there are 7 functions of government in relation to tourism. These include: coordination, planning, legislation, economic activity, stimulation, socialization of tourism, protection of public interest (Borzyszkowski, 2011).

Management of tourism in Poland at the national level is performed by the Ministry of Sports and Tourism created in 2007. It is responsible for programming the development, shaping legal and economic mechanisms and promotion of tourism at national and international markets.

The responsibilities of the ministries in the area of tourism management include in particular tasks associated with creating development and tourism promotion and elaboration, implementation and monitoring of programs and decisions relating to the tourism sector (Borzyszkowski, 2011).

The planning document shaping the development of tourism at the national level was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 26 September 2008 in the document "Guidelines for developing tourism by 2015" (MSIT, 2008).

Proper management of tourism should not be limited only to the solutions at the central level. The important role in tourism is played by management bodies of regional and local levels, which include local governments. Local governments have both regulatory functions (legislative, strategic and programmatic, control) and they work directly in the tourism domain. In Poland, local governments function at 3 levels of management: provincial – as a regional power, district and municipal – as a segment of local authority (Ziobrowski and Lachewicz, 2000).

The highest form of self-government is a provincial government, which plays an important role in tourism management. The possibility of management of tourist development results mainly from the following competences of a provincial government: adoption of provincial development strategies, programs, and spatial development plan, adoption of provincial budget, designation of the rules for awarding specific and earmarked subsidies from a budget (Kiryluk, 2009). Provincial government, taking care of the development, may create its own regional tourism policy, aimed at raising the level of competitiveness and innovation of tourism economy, stimulating economic activity and preserving the value of natural and cultural environment of areas. The implementation of this policy within the scope of tourism management allows especially programming of the direction of tourism development in the region by developing strategies and programs of the development of regional tourism products.

Due to the granted powers, provincial governments have a wide range of possibilities in management of the development of tourism in a region. They make important decisions on the directions of development, area planning, manner of management, directions for budget resources spending. Therefore, they can consciously initiate the processes aiming at effective and rational usage of valuable natural resources and cultural regions.

Currently, the responsibility of local governments is to create planning documents, in which tourism plays an important role. These primarily include the study of conditions and directions of spatial development and regional development strategy. Whereas, the elaboration of tourism development strategy is optional. In the case of regions possessing this document there is a problem with its implementation. Often, the strategy of tourism development, which is passed by a regional provincial council,

becomes a document which is not realised on practice. The strategy legislation becomes only a short-term political aim, and the tasks indicated in it, along with the conditions of activities, are not undertaken at all or are implemented only partially. Such practices include, among others, provincial strategies (programs) for tourism development prepared in part of the regions for 2003–2006. The unrealised strategy records were again entered into the subsequent planning period, including the period of 2007–2013 and the following, and the reality of implementation of these objectives is still limited (Panasiuk, 2009).

5. Status of strategic management of tourism in the regions of Poland. Tourism management includes elements of planning, organizing, motivating and monitoring of activities and resources in order to achieve the adopted goals. So far, tourism management in the regions was mainly manifested in the elaboration of tourism development strategy. The analysis of existing provincial (regional) tourism development strategies of individual 16 Polish regions conducted by the authors, in terms of methodology of elaboration, participation of stakeholders and the ways and the state of implementation of the objectives as well as strategic directions, enabled the presentation of the current state of tourism management in the region. The acquired results are presented in Table 1 and discussed in detail later in this article.

Table 1. Criteria for analysis of tourism development strategy in Polish regions

Time horizon of provincial tourism development strategy					
2013		2014		2015	
9		1		3	
				2020	
				2	
The body commissioning the elaboration of the tourism development strategy					
Marshal's Office			Other		
15			1		
The entity preparing the tourism development strategy					
Polish Tourism Development Agency		Expert university teams		Commercial firms	
8		4		3	
Participation of stakeholders in the preparation of a tourism development strategy in a region					
Significant participation in preparing the document		Providing opinions on strategic records		Lack of participation	
3		11		1	
Methods used in the formulation of strategies					
Touristic audit	SWOT analysis	Vision and mission	Strategic directions and targets	Strategic programs	Scenarios of development
15	15	15	15	15	4
Parties responsible for implementing the tourism development strategy in a region					
Marshal's offices			The tourism development program implementation committee		
14			1		
Monitoring of the implementation of the tourism development strategy in a region					
Monitoring conducted			No monitoring		
1			14		

Source: Own study based on the test results.

According to the research conducted by the authors, most provinces (15) have developed a tourism strategy. Whereas, Lubelskie Voivodship possesses only touristic audit, which was elaborated in 2008 in order to determine the position of this voivodship within the context of designing the directions of tourism development for 2008–2015.

Developing a strategy is often the only step in the tourism management process in a region. The very existence of this document does not guarantee success. Only the realization of its objectives and monitoring the progress of implementation will bring the planned outcomes by contributing to the vision of tourism development design in regions.

Time horizon of the strategy in 9 cases dates to 2013, in 1 – 2014, in 3 – 2015, and in 2 cases – up to 2020. In most of the documents, it is identical to the horizon of programming and financing the policies from the European Union budget for 2007–2013. Strategies in all the provinces were developed on request of local authorities, that is marshal offices of individual provinces. The entity most often preparing the strategy, in as many as 8 of 15 cases was the Polish Tourism Development Agency (PART). Others were university teams of experts or commercial firms.

In all the strategies the research methodology was usually based on performing a tourist audit, a SWOT analysis, the designation of vision and mission, development of strategic goals, directions and operational programs. Only in 4 of them the scenarios for development were further developed – mostly optimistic and pessimistic. In the studied strategies, the scope of participation of stakeholders varied. In 3 of 15 strategies social actors played a significant role in the preparation of strategic records, in 11 they only issued opinions on strategic records during consultations, and in one case there was no record of their participation in the preparation of the document.

The analysed strategic documents presented the guidelines for their implementation in very general terms. Marshal offices were responsible for the implementation of most of the strategies, and ceded the responsibility to regional tourism organisations. A good practice, unparalleled in other provinces, was the establishment in Lodz region of the Implementation Committee of the Tourism Development Programme in the region by 2020. As a part of its activities, working groups in 4 areas of tourism were set up: economic, image, spatial development and education. The Implementation Committee's task was to, inter alia, monitor and evaluate tourism projects, help raising funds for their implementation, establish new contacts and integrate activities in the region.

Manifestations of provincial governments' activities in monitoring the implementation of the strategy appear only in Lower Silesia, where the analysis of the implementation of the strategies was performed in preparation for its update. Unfortunately, this analysis was very superficial. This was probably due to the fact that the conducted assessment process has highlighted a low level of implementation of the strategy's objectives. Despite the problems indicated in the analysis, 5 projects, in the range of regional promotion campaigns and the tourism movement research, were realised within the framework of the programme implementation.

Currently, the prepared strategies of tourism development in the region and the process of their creation and implementation present many weaknesses. As shown by the conducted analyses, even at the planning stage, significant weaknesses of the strategy can be seen.

They are manifested primarily in a very low level of participation of regional representatives of entrepreneurs, scientists, public administrations, NGOs, the public and media, although their participation at each stage of strategy preparation from the perspective of implementation of developed goals and directions of development is

extremely important. The low level of participation in the process of creating strategic documents keeps stakeholders from identifying themselves with the drawn objectives and guidelines of development, through which they do not feel coresponsible for the implementation. The methodology of preparing the document also shows many weaknesses. For each region, it is virtually identical, and narrows down to performing a tourism audit, SWOT analysis, determining goals and strategic directions and operational programs. By doing so, each region is treated identically, despite many differences in economic, social, technological, environmental, and political spheres. Also, the variety and wide range of developed objectives and strategic directions makes it difficult to identify among them the priority ones, owing to which tourism would have a chance for dynamic development in the region. The realized actions are, above all, those that achieve the possibility of being funded from external sources, and not those that are crucial for a region.

As it can be seen from the conducted research, the process of preparing of the strategy, implementing its provisions and monitoring the carried out activities has many weaknesses. It is, however, worth to appreciate the efforts to date in the area of tourism management in the region, due to the fact that had they not been taken, it could grow to a much lesser extent than so far. However, note that the gap between the current and the target state is still large. Real changes do not depend only on the content stored in the documents, but above all on the determination and willingness of regional actors to work together to implement the strategy. Skilful implementation of new processes, anticipating future changes in tourism and the use of knowledge of the prospective market segments can be a chance for modern tourist regions. The proposal for such a process is the foresight, which is understood as all activities designed to make the best possible choice of vision of the future, as well as identify ways of its implementation.

6. Possibility of applying foresight in tourism management in a region. In order to improve the tourism management process in a region, according to the authors, a tool which that has gained acceptance and is increasingly used in regional management should be taken into consideration. Foresight is this tool which has been successfully used around the world since 1970s and recently in Poland.

Among the foresight definitions the most well-known has been developed by B. Martin, according to whom it is the process involved in systematic attempts to look at the long-term future of science, technology, economy and society, which aims to identify strategic areas of science and technology to ensure maximum economic and social benefits (Martin, 1995).

H. Grupp i H.A. Linstone, on the other hand, define foresight as an equivalent to the beam of systematic efforts to look ahead and make the most efficient choice. At the same time, foresight implies that there is no single future. Depending on the action or inaction in the present, many variants of the future are possible, but only one of them will come to pass (PARP, 2007b).

A. Rogut and B. Piasecki see foresight as a kind of systematic thinking, the essence of which is more creating the future than just its anticipation and management (Rogut and Piasecki, 2011). The interpretation of J.F. Coates, who treats foresight as a process in which there exists full understanding of the forces shaping distant future, and which should be taken into account in policy formulation, planning and decision-making should also be indicated (Coates, 1985).

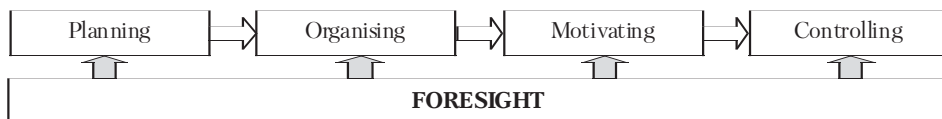
In the literature, it is assumed that the aim of foresight is to identify and assess future needs, opportunities and threats associated with social, economic and technological development, as well as the preparation of appropriate pre-emptive action, concerning science and technology, taking into account broader social, economic, and technological conditioning (Kucinski, 2010). The objectives of foresight are realized using a variety of tools and methods for both the strictly scientific, as well as heuristic, based on expert intuition. The iterative nature of the process makes foresight able to be regarded as a permanent approach to thinking about future and act as a useful tool when attempting to manage it (Magruk and Janczuk, 2009).

The task of the foresight process is the simultaneous implementation of 3 goals: thinking about future, carrying out specialist debates on the subject and formulating recommendations for appropriate actions of shaping future (thinking, debating, shaping) (Kucinski, 2010).

The concept of foresight shows the relationship with strategic management. Foresight is an action supporting strategic activities by providing alternative scenarios for policy-makers, the appearance of which depends on the value of certain key factors (e.g., factors of globalization, the introduction of certain reforms, the level of social acceptance). The foresight project results illustrate the result of work of high-level experts and opinions of a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, they are documents of different class than the government reports and strategy documents (Matusiak, Kucinski and Gryzik, 2009). Strategic foresight integrates ideas, procedures and instruments of trend research, research into the future, in order to support strategic decision-making processes and initiating planning and innovative activities (Muller, 2008).

In search of the relationship between foresight and strategic decisions, the literature gives attention mainly to the easement and not competitiveness of both processes. A wide range of these relationships occur in different phases of decision-making process. If you accept, which you are authorized to by a number of studies in strategic management, that in the strategic decision-making process can be distinguished: the development phase, and "determination of assumptions", "analytical preparation of decisions" phase, "strategic choices" and "implementation", then in each of the these phases strategic foresight plays a different role. In the first phase foresight is used as criticism of the made assumptions relating to the future; in the phase of preparing decisions (analyses) foresight provides indepth analysis of the environment and is "profiling" forward-looking projections; during the communications phase it supports the process of formulating strategic decisions; and finally in the implementation phase facilitates the process of transformation of assumptions into certain conceptions and initiatives (Safin and Ignacy, 2010).

The presented foresight definitions and its characteristics point to the fact that influences all stages of management process (Figure 1).



Source: own study.

Figure 1. The impact of foresight on the stages of management process

Foresight projects implemented in a region typically relate to one or more branches that a team of experts deemed promising or relevant for future development. Reasons for which foresight projects are very popular in the recent years, are in large part due to the factors that led to their development. These factors include, among others (Martin and Johnston, 1999):

- increase of economic and industrial competition (highly developed countries compete at the global market for knowledge-based industries or having strict service nature, such as tourism);
- increase of the competitiveness between regions (in modern times regions are subject to similar requirements as market operators; the development of tourism in a region is heavily dependent on phenomena, both, within a region and beyond its borders);
- growing pressure on government expenditures (the development of many sectors of the economy is built on government expenditure, on the size of which they are dependent; through competition, including the dimension of innovation, the main plane of the references are expenditures on research and development);
- the changing formula of generating modern knowledge (currently, it is generated in various places in the world and most often, it is the permanent part of ongoing innovation processes);
- emerging new styles of executing regional policy (in the early 1990s it was thought that there was a breakthrough of execution of a more open policy, allowing greater participation of regional partners).

Referring to the above-mentioned phenomena associated with dynamic development of regional foresight, the reasons for the wide acceptance of this process in many regions of the world in various industries can be identified, including those tourism-related. The basic premise of regional foresight projects in the tourism industry is a realized need to take an action in planning and construction of the policy of the development of this sector in the region. This refers, in particular, to the regions in which one element of seeking competitive advantages is the sphere of tourism. Other premises for implementation of foresight projects include (Borodako, 2010):

- support of the strategic planning process with substantive involvement of participants in the process: entrepreneurs, scientists, local governments, NGOs, politicians and media;
- common development of social vision of future development of tourism by the parties concerned;
- searching for priority areas of tourism development, for example, relevant from the point of view of the region's smart specialization (smart specialization) and the need for directional spending of limited financial resources;
- gathering knowledge about tourism in a region in the form of reports, books or other publications;
- spreading awareness of tourism among regional partners by organizing a number of workshops, seminars or conferences;
- creating new institutional entities (associations, unions, chambers, clusters) or creating a leader responsible in the industry for its interests and development.

In many cases, however, authors of foresight tourism projects seek to meet more diverse needs and expectations. Articulated needs are then formulated in terms of

objectives of the project, which should be clearly identified and arise from consultations held with key stakeholders of tourism in a region. At the same time, the motives and goals to work on this project must be in a certain way in accordance with the already available results of research on priority areas for tourism development in a region (Borodako, 2010).

At the end of the first decade of the XXI century, a few completed projects in tourism foresight could be identified around the world (Borodako, 2011). The best-known projects are those in Canada and Spain.

The "Foresight: Shaping a Sustainable Vision for Tourism in BC" was initiated in 2004 in the region of British Columbia by the Council of Tourism Associations (COTA). The aim of the project was to provide a long-term development of the sector, through future growth and development of tourism economy. Within the framework of the project, numerous workshops and conferences with representatives of tourism from various sectors were organized in order to generate knowledge and feedback. The project developed 4 scenarios for tourism development, which arose as a matrix of 2 factors: the quality of tourists' experiences of stay in the region and the predictability (stability) of conditions for tourism in the region. The key objectives and key areas for action and guidelines for operation were developed under the name "The Foresight Action Plan" in accordance to which the tourism industry should be guided by 4 principles: unity of the tourism industry, cooperation of partners in tourism, leadership in tourism and concentration on the concept of sustainable development (COTA, 2007).

Spanish project entitled "Scenarios of tourism" (Spanish Escenarios para el turismo) was initiated in 2004 by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, and the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (OPTI) executed it. The objectives of this project were: to identify new requirements for tourism demand around the world by 2015, to analyse the impact of future demand for tourism in Spain, to identify the need for innovation and new technologies associated with tourist demand and to identify new areas of opportunity for Spanish tourism sector. As a result of the work, 3 scenarios for tourism development were developed, which included a set of guidelines for implementation of the scenario in the tourism industry, in businesses and within the scope of technology (OPTI, 2011).

In addition to the known projects, the identified foresight initiatives in tourism are the projects implemented in: Austria (Austrian Tourism 2015), Finland (Services 2020), the Netherlands (Dutch Hospitality 2020), Trinidad and Tobago (The T&T Foresight Projects) and South Africa (National Research and Technology Foresight).

The conducted analyses of the realized regional foresight projects indicate that in Poland a comprehensive foresight project relating solely to the development of tourism has not been initiated yet. This indicates that tourism is still insufficiently appreciated sector of economy, although it is a very important element in the development of many regions.

In the previously completed regional foresight projects in Poland, tourism is not usually regarded as a key industry. In most cases, when it becomes the object of study it is treated rather marginally. It should be noted that on 15 regional foresight projects carried out only 8 there are indications of significant references to the development

of tourism. Other, make only minor references to tourism or not at all (Szpilko, 2012).

The analysis shows that in a few projects of regional foresight, in which tourism plays a key role the priority areas relate mainly to tourism infrastructure and agri-tourism. The projects, in addition to identifying the key technologies of tourism that are more or less likely to grow over the next several years, build scenarios, indicate opportunities and threats and present recommendations for actions to be taken to develop the tourism sector (Szpilko, 2012).

7. Conclusions and prospects for further research. The lack of decision-makers' interest in regional foresight research in tourism forms an unfavourable economic situation in relation to its development, and thereby causes its marginalization, despite the existing potential. In order to change this situation, the implementation of foresight studies in the context of tourism development in the region must be begun as soon as possible and with the participation of entrepreneurs, scientists, government representatives, NGOs and social partners as well as policy makers the most favorable vision of the future, as well as the way of its implementation must be chosen.

Implementation of foresight projects to promote tourism would help to achieve multiple benefits. First and foremost, it would enable the widely understood creation of tourism, to look into the future and make the most efficient choice, rather than only to anticipate and manage it. The process of foresight would enable assessment of the consequences of current actions and decisions and would help to detect problems before they occur and to avoid them. Such studies would help to develop visions for the future, the most promising of which, implemented with the involvement of authorities, entrepreneurs and society, would have a chance to bring the highest economic and social benefits for regions.

Foresight is a still developing method of studies of the future, with the not entirely fulfilled potential, which substantiates the success of its use in the management of tourism development. Within the context of Poland, the use of foresight research in strategic management may be of importance for tourism development, which is the impetus for economic and social development of regions.

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