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## Determinants and Forms of Cooperation in Tourism

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dozwolonego użytku.

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## **DETERMINANTS AND FORMS OF COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

### **Abstract**

The article covers the following issues: factors determining cooperation of tourism entities, forms of such cooperation and influence on its scope exerted by the state and local authorities. The conducted considerations that the basis for the cooperation of tourist operators, regardless of size, is preparing tourist products and actions aimed at their enhancement by innovations, product quality improvement and portfolio extension. Additionally, the subject of cooperation in the case of entities operating in a limited scale is bridging gaps in resources and skills as well as educational and advisory activities, while in entities operating in a larger scale – extending the market and gaining access to tourist assets and specialist skills. A significant role in shaping such cooperation is played by a tourism policy pursued by the state, region and in a local scale through development programmes and strategies applying to tourism activities and their implementation tools.

**Keywords:** tourism, tourism entities, cooperation

### **Introduction**

Needs regarding cooperation between tourism entities are varied as, on the one hand, they result from their internal operational factors, and on the other – from external factors associated with their environment. Generally, greater attention is paid to external factors, thus focusing on opportunities and limitations of cooperation between tourism entities in competitive conditions. Internal

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factors are treated as a result of these determinants having influence on forms and scope of cooperation between tourism entities, not always acting in favour of producing a finished product or a comprehensive portfolio. It results from insufficient capacities of action of these entities, limited operational scale, lack of resources for development and changes as well as maintaining the position in the market or strengthening it, and independent entering the market. Such situation occurs in developing areas – like in the case of tourism in Poland in the period of transformation and crisis of the economy. This is where a need of support provided by governmental and local authorities arise with respect to using various tools supporting tourism entities' development and operations.

Taking into account the complexity of the presented issues, the article attempts at determining factors and forms of cooperation between tourism entities, and in particular between entities pursuing similar activities in a limited scale in a local and regional market. The aim of the paper is both cognitive and application. The article covers the following issues: factors determining cooperation of tourism entities, forms of such cooperation and influence on its scope exerted by the state and local authorities. The issues have been analysed based on subject literature, observation of cooperation between tourism entities and activity in this regard displayed by governmental and local authorities as well as the author's own considerations.

## 1. Determinants of cooperation in tourism

Cooperation between economic entities has been in place since the moment the exchange economy emerged, but its scope, intensity and forms changed in particular stages of economic development, from exchange and trade in goods, through cooperation and integration of actions, providing specialist services and deliveries and franchising, to joint ventures and projects.<sup>1</sup> Needs for joint actions are mostly similar in individual domains of economic life, but they also have a specific nature resulting from the manner of conducting a given activity and determinants associated with it, like for example in tourism.

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<sup>1</sup> See: J. Lichtarski, *Formy kooperacyjne [Cooperative forms]*, in: *Podstawy nauki o przedsiębiorstwie [Foundations of business research]*, J. Lichtarski (ed.), Wyd. Akademii Ekonomicznej [University of Economics Publishing House], Wrocław 2005, p. 443.

Needs for cooperation in tourism result from various groups of factors. The primary ones, comprising its specific character, may be listed as follows:

1. Complexity of tourist demand, comprising varied assets and tourist infrastructure as well as tourist product preparation services performed by different entities.
2. Fulfilment of tourist demand through linking of various services and preparation of a tourist package.
3. Geographic diversification of demand for tourist services and travels, encompassing different places and countries, along with cooperation between entities operating there.
4. Policy of tourist assets protection and conservation for future generations.
5. Policy of economic activity development, including tourist activities pursued by individual places, local authorities or countries and unions of countries (i.e., European Union).

The mentioned determinants of cooperation in tourism are varied but linked with regards to tourist product preparation and care for the product quality. The activities are performed directly by the concerned tourism entities in line with concluded agreements stipulating the scope and forms of cooperation. They may be supported by national, regional and local authorities by way of programmes and strategies related to development of economic activity, also in tourism, along with such programmes and strategies implementation tools. Similar support occurs in the cases of joint activities of different countries (e.g., in cross-border regions). Actions supporting cooperation between tourism entities aim at stimulating their activation and joint activities for the benefit of a particular region or product development.

Joint preparation of a tourist product is also associated with noticing common benefits by the cooperating entities on account of increasing the scale of operations and gaining a synergy effect.<sup>2</sup> In addition, a range of various factors of cooperation between tourism entities should be taken into consideration, resulting from their current situation and position in the market, as well as from management actions in the scope of cooperation.

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<sup>2</sup> M. Zdon-Korzeniewska, *Jak kształtować regionalnie produkty turystyczne? Teoria i praktyka [How to develop regional tourist products? Theory and practice]*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [Jagiellonian University Publishing House], Kraków 2009, pp. 142–144.

## 2. Tourism policy impact on cooperation between tourism entities

Tourism policy is deliberate supporting and shaping tourism by a country (or a union of countries) and local authorities, involving establishment of economic, political, social, cultural and ecological objectives with respect to its development as well as implementation tools. Thus, EU tourism policy objectives are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- adopting the concept of sustained and sustainable tourism development;
- increasing tourism economy competitiveness and profitability;
- supporting improvement in the quality of tourist product.

The established EU tourism development objectives are a reference for tourism policy objectives in particular countries. In Poland, in *Directions for tourism development until 2015*, four priority areas have been adopted:<sup>4</sup>

1. Highly competitive tourist product.
2. Development of human resources contributing to tourism development.
3. Marketing support.
4. Shaping the tourist space.

Within the four areas, operational objectives have been established, mostly including or potentially including support for cooperation between tourism entities. In particular, this applies to Priority Area I, “Creating and developing competitive tourist products”, where cooperation between tourism entities may include concentration of resources, implementation of innovations and preparation of tourist services packages. Actions with respect to creating a competitive product of a given area may be supported by the development of leading types of tourism related with the area’s assets (e.g., health resort or pilgrimage tourism) and with tourist infrastructure development. In addition, a significant role in these activities may be played by supporting entrepreneurship in tourism and aiding it by way of educational activities (e.g., through advisory programmes for tourist businesses). The other three priority areas include actions supporting operations of tourism entities and preparation of competitive tourist products, including products preserving and enhancing the quality of tourist space in line

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<sup>3</sup> R. Pawlusiński, *Gospodarcze aspekty turystyki [Economic aspects of tourism]*, in: *Turystyka [Tourism]*, W. Kurek (ed.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN [Polish Scientific Publishers PWN], Warszawa 2008, p. 393.

<sup>4</sup> *Directions for tourism development until 2015*, Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland, Warszawa 2008, pp. 23–54.

with sustainable development.<sup>5</sup> Operational objectives of tourism and activities aimed at their accomplishment vary, but share comprehensive focus on tourism development. From the point of view of supporting tourism entities cooperation, the objectives may be listed as follows:

- tourism economy development and tourism management in a given area;
- alignment of tourist infrastructure and services to tourist assets held;
- reasonable use of production factors resources engaged in tourism economy;
- coordination of development of tourism and its associations with other spheres of life;
- use of means necessary for the accomplishment of the listed objectives.

Such support may be carried out at the state level as well as in particular regions and local structures preparing tourism development programmes and strategies. Bałtów municipality may serve as the example, with a Jurassic park, containing life-size reconstructions of dinosaurs (over 100 models at the moment), opened in 2004. The park's trails are divided into sections demonstrating subsequent Earth geologic ages, from the Cambrian until the moment of appearance of humans in the Neolithic period. The park is linked with other attractions prepared for tourists, such as: Lost World of Dinosaurs – an educational trail Żydowski Jar, where, surrounded by steep walls of gorges, tourists can encounter authentic footprints left by dinosaurs, Bałtów menagerie with exotic animals from various continents or historical oceanarium where one can see how underwater life looked like millions years ago, etc. The park has become a leading attraction of the municipality and the Świętokrzyskie province, visited by more than 300 thousand guests from all over Poland each year<sup>6</sup>. The starting point for tourism activities in the municipality were local excavations which gave rise to the creation of tourist assets and basing various tourist products on them. Currently, these products are loosely related to the local excavations but make thematic references to them, like presenting dinosaurs from all over the world or displaying exotic animals. Moreover, the products refer to local natural and cultural assets, which is expressed, i.a., in the following products:

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> *Bałtów Tourist Complex – JuraPark Dinosaur Park. Bałtów Menagerie (Zwierzyniec Bałtowski), Szwajcaria Bałtowska, Prehistorical Oceanarium (Prehistoryczne Oceanarium) –* <http://www.juraparkbaltow.pl>, accessed on: 26 February 2014.

Kamienna river raft trips, Stary Młyn mill, Sabathówka – the world of ancient Slavic gods and demons, Amusement Park, etc.<sup>7</sup>

The discussed actions and products were made possible thanks to the activities of local inhabitants, but above all because of the development of well thought-out action programmes within the municipality, but also in cooperation with a Local Action Group “Krzemienny Krąg”, uniting 9 municipalities, with the Bałtów municipality performing the role of the leader. The activities are based on a development strategy whose vision has been adopted in the following wording: “We perceive the region as an area of sustainable socio-economic development – eco-development based on clean natural environment, historic and cultural heritage, which thanks to partner cooperation between local authorities, businesses and social organizations will create conditions for better quality of life for its current and future inhabitants, and for tourists visiting it – conditions for attractive rest and recreation”.<sup>8</sup> It should be emphasized that mission and strategic objectives have been developed simultaneously with the manner and instruments of their accomplishment, encompassing:<sup>9</sup>

- developing new tourist products;
- building tourist infrastructure;
- providing advisory services and conducting trainings in the field of tourism industry;
- acting in favour of creation of conditions for attractive rest and recreation for tourists;
- promoting the region, its assets and tourist offer;
- researching municipality tourist market and providing the results to entities;
- ensuring conditions for efficient sales of local tourist products, including on-line reservation system.

Actions contained in the discussed strategy facilitate functioning of tourism entities but also their cooperation which is emphasized in the operational mission with the following wording: “The Local Action Group “Krzemienny Krąg” is a way of solving economic, social and ecological problems of the region

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> *Lokalna Strategia Rozwoju na lata 2009–2015 dla Lokalnej Grupy Działania “Krzemienny Krąg”* [Local Development Strategy for the years 2009–2015 for the Local Action Group “Krzemienny Krąg”], Bałtów 2008, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 41 et seq.

in a partner manner, consisting in consolidating resources, competences and possibilities of the local authorities, economic and social organizations, with the aim of developing integrated and coordinated actions in order to efficiently carry out the joint vision”.<sup>10</sup> Cooperation between tourism entities facilitate their start, especially in conditions where possibilities of entering a new market independently are limited or where the operational risk is too high. Such needs arise especially in local economy (in regions inhabited by low-income population which is capable of assessing its capacities and requirements associated with conducting operations and competing in the market. Such is the case also with the discussed strategy encompassing several municipalities, specifying the scope and forms of cooperation in line with the adopted local development policy. This operational model is worth disseminating as it enables engaging resources and strengthening actions.

### **3. Forms of cooperation between tourism entities**

Cooperation between tourism entities can be discussed in various aspects, while the primary ones include the place of operations which influences the type of cooperation and form of partners' association. As far as place of operations is concerned, international, national, regional and local markets should be taken into consideration, depending on which determinants of cooperation change. In the case of local and mostly regional markets, cooperation between tourism entities encompasses in particular:

- bridging gaps in resources and skills;
- educational and advisory activities;
- enhancement of developed products' quality;
- joint preparation of products, including creation of new products;
- joint supplies;
- tourist activities marketing and products sales.

The discussed actions generally apply to competitive entities, only bridging gaps in resources and skills is complementary in nature. Undertaken activities, like in the case of the Local Action Group “Krzemienny Krąg”, aim at facilitating conducting tourism activities and increasing their competitiveness. Therefore, a significant role – apart from primary operations, associated with tourist prod-

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 41.



ucts preparation – is played by educational and advisory activities supporting qualifications and skills of tourism industry entrepreneurs. A training program in the field of agro-tourism in Austria may serve as the example, encompassing the following modules:<sup>11</sup>

1. *Tourism and agro-tourism* – the issue of conducting tourism activities and the place of agro-tourism, economic and tourism policy, tourism organizations.
2. *Social leadership development* – leadership, motivation, engagement, impact on shaping interpersonal relations, formation of teams, development of group and its dynamics, integration and way of communicating.
3. *Management and decision-making* – problem identification and solving, decision-making and planning, organizing, executing and controlling.
4. *Capital and finance management* – funds sources, estimation of required capital, cash flow, balance sheet, insurance and accounting, etc.
5. *Product development* – current situation, review of resources and possibilities of further actions, market research and determination of future clients' needs, regulations and standards applying to a given product, product technology, development plan with respect to a product and its components.
6. *Market development* – promotion strategy, including advertising and publications, marketing plan (market segments, services classification, competition assessment, sales forecasts) and delivery deadlines.
7. *Client care* – care for the client and their servicing, distribution system, manner of communicating with the client, including provision of feedback on the offered products and their enhancement.

In Poland, similar actions are also undertaken with respect to rural tourism. Agro-tourism or rural tourism associations provide support as regards preparation of tourist products,<sup>12</sup> thus facilitating operations to agro-tourism farms and rural tourism businesses, including their activities aimed at preparation of quality

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<sup>11</sup> See: N. Gannon, *Szkolenie w dziedzinie agroturystyki [Agro-tourism training]*, in: *Agroturystyka a rozwój wsi. Wprowadzenie do rozwijania przedsięwzięć agroturystycznych [Agro-tourism and rural development. Introduction to developing agro-tourism ventures]*. Wydawnictwo Centrum Doradztwa i Edukacji w Rolnictwie [Rural Advisory and Educational Centre Publishing House], Kraków 1993, pp. 97–98.

<sup>12</sup> See: E. Kmita-Dziasek, *Partnerstwo dla turystyki wiejskiej [Partnership for rural tourism]*, Wydawnictwo Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego w Brwinowie Oddział w Krakowie [Brwinów Rural Advisory Centre Kraków Branch Publishing House], Kraków 2011.

tourist products. Support in this scope is provided also by rural advisory centres which in this manner pursue the objectives of rural and tourism policy.

Cooperation between tourism entities operating in various markets, including national and international ones, and entities pursuing complementary activities, results from different conditions. In this case, cooperation is primarily based on the following prerequisites:

- access to tourist assets and specialist skills;
- access to the market or its extension;
- globalisation of tastes with respect to tourism;
- globalisation in products preparation;
- operational risk mitigation.

The selection of an entity for cooperation of tourism entities is also determined by a variety of factors, but it is based on price in connection with ensuring continuity and security of provision of services and deliveries, timeliness of offers execution along with their quality and compliance with the order. Taking these factors into consideration, collaborating tourism entities usually pursue the strategy of close and long-term cooperation, focusing on selected providers and tour operators<sup>13</sup> who implement the objectives of a concluded agreement in the best manner. The main benefits of development of cooperation between tourism entities, especially small ones, like in tourism, are as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- increasing allocation of resources and capital and ensuring more flexible operations;
- shortening of the concept preparation and tourist products development cycle;
- gaining increased bidding power through consolidating efforts and strengthening impact on the market;
- consumer investing;
- decreasing costs of product preparation and their sale through the use of scale and scope benefits;
- achieving a competitive position, etc.

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<sup>13</sup> See: R. Baran, *Strategie wobec dostawców i pośredników [Strategies towards providers and agents]*, in: *Strategie marketingowe [Marketing strategies]*, W. Wrzosek (ed.), PWE, Warszawa 2004, pp. 96–101.

<sup>14</sup> See: A.P. Wiatrak, *Organizacje sieciowe – istota ich działania i zarządzania [Network organizations – the essence of their operations and management]*, “Współczesne Zarządzanie” 2003, Iss. 3, pp. 10–12.

In addition, it should be taken into consideration that currently such cooperation may also be the result of organizational restructuring and organization leaning by way of outsourcing and lean management. Perceiving a tourism stakeholder from the point of view of value chain makes it possible to identify individual links of the chain and perform actions associated with them by various entities depending on the size of gained added value.<sup>15</sup> As a result, it leads to costs reduction but also to changes in the organizational structure and work organization as well as management quality improvement.

## Conclusion

The conducted considerations result, i.a. in the following conclusions:

1. Cooperation between tourism entities may have various forms and scopes, regardless of their size, while it primarily applies to tourist products preparation.
2. The cooperation should be based, in particular at the current stage of development of tourism entities in Poland, on tourism policy pursued on the national, regional and local level through adopted tourism development programmes and strategies along with implementation tools.
3. Support within the scope of tourism policy tools may appear irrespectively of the efforts of tourism entities, or even exceed their efforts and promote particular forms of cooperation and types of operation.
4. Such support and area development management (with respect to a region or a local structure) will not only benefit cooperation between tourism entities, but also development of joint actions model and cooperation management which will enable the participants to effectively and efficiently accomplish the established objectives and tasks.
5. Joint actions create enhanced possibilities of product preparation and innovations implementation, operational scale extension, products quality improvement, adjustment to the environment, risk management, etc., and favour a change in the current manner of organization and management.

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<sup>15</sup> K. Klineciewicz, *Organizacje bez granic – łańcuchy dostaw, sieci i „ekosystemy”* [Organizations without borders – deliveries chains, networks and “ecosystems”], in: *Nowe kierunki w zarządzaniu* [New directions in management], M. Kostera (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 118 et seq.

6. Successful and beneficial cooperation requires mutual trust and loyalty of the partners manifested in quick exchange of information necessary for coordination of actions in businesses and management, as well as settlements.
7. Formulated objective of cooperation, rules of conducting it and established manner of communicating between tourism entities limit the possibility of a conflict and risk associated with their joint activities.

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## UWARUNKOWANIA I FORMY WSPÓŁPRACY W TURYSTYCE

### Streszczenie

Na treść artykułu składają się następujące zagadnienia: czynniki określające współdziałanie i współpracę podmiotów turystycznych, formy tej współpracy oraz oddziaływanie na jej zakres ze strony państwa i samorządów terytorialnych. Z przeprowadzonych rozważań wynika, że podstawą współpracy podmiotów turystycznych, niezależnie od ich wielkości, jest przygotowanie produktów turystycznych i działań związanych z jego doskonaleniem, obejmujących wprowadzanie innowacji, poprawę jakości produktów i poszerzenie oferty. Ponadto w podmiotach o małej skali działania przedmiotem współpracy jest wypełnianie luk w zasobach i umiejętnościach oraz działania edukacyjno-doradcze, a w podmiotach o większej skali działania – poszerzanie rynku zbytu oraz uzyskanie dostępu do walorów turystycznych i specjalistycznych umiejętności. Istotną rolę w kształtowaniu tej współpracy ma polityka turystyczna prowadzona na szczeblu kraju, regionu i w skali lokalnej poprzez programy i strategie rozwojowe działań turystycznych i narzędzi ich wdrażania.

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka, podmioty turystyczne, współpraca