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PROSPECTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BORDER TOWNS OF LVIV OBLAST

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Abstract

The definition of the sustainable tourism is considered. The purpose of the integrated spatial formation of the CBR, and its priorities are considered. The criteria for tourism development are analysed. The options for the development of touristic agglomerations are proposed. The problems that hinder the development of effective tourism and recreation industry are analysed and key objectives of local policy to encourage the development of tourist activities are identified.

Key words

Lviv Oblast, town, sustainable tourism, cross-border region, touristic agglomeration.

1. Introduction

The most recent trends and forecasting studies by the World Tourism Organisation indicate that cities will continue to be in high demand by tourists of all sorts, and the problems associated with the handling of these tourists will have to be more systematically tackled by all parties concerned.

Cities face, therefore, a double challenge. Firstly, they have to be able to respond to the expectations and needs of the growing numbers of tourists who are attracted to their rich and varied array of cultural, business, entertainment, shopping, sports and other attractions; furthermore, they need to continuously renovate and improve such facilities in order to maintain their share in the competitive tourism market and the benefits resulting from it. Secondly,

cities have to ensure that tourism is developed and managed in such a way that it benefits the resident population, does not contribute to the deterioration of the urban environment but rather to its enhancement, and does not become a financial burden to the local authority.

Towns play an important role in the spatial organization of the society and form the largest group among all urban settlements. They are especially important for the further development of tourism. Historical towns are especially highlighted in this category. Every small historical town, especially in the Western region of Ukraine, is a separate page in the annals of Ukraine.

The objects of the research are border towns of Lviv Oblast. The aim of this work is to consider border towns as a centres of tourist agglomerations.

Lviv Oblast is the old settled area, which is located at the crossroads of important trade routes. The ancient system of settlements, which arose first as a fortresses and were strategical points in the defence system around the community were formed, subsequently started to concentrate handicrafts and manufacturing. A significant influence on the formation of towns of Lviv Oblast have natural factors: topography, climate, forested areas, soils, mineral resources. In combination with the features of historical development, they played a decisive role in the shaping of the settlement system. The topography and proximity to groundwater affected the location of the settlements, their size and other features in elevated areas. The towns of Lviv Oblast have a rich architectural, historical, and cultural heritage and for a considerable historical period were comfortable for human residence.

2. Ukrainian-Polish cross-border region

Border areas of the Lviv Oblast are the part of the Ukrainian-Polish cross-border region (CBR). It embrace: from the Ukrainian side, Volyn and Lviv Regions, from the Polish side – Lublin and Podkarpackie Voivodeships. The total area of the Ukrainian part of the CBR is 42.000 km², and the population is about 3.8 million people. The Polish part of the CBR has the total area of 63.000 km² and the population amounts 5.5 million people (Губеня, 2013).

The purposes of the integrated spatial development of the CBR:

- overcoming the negative trends of social, economic and environmental development, which have occurred in the past;
- maintaining an efficient socially- and ecologically- oriented use of natural and historical-cultural identity, resources, demographic, and production capacity;
- effective use of complementary capacities of the Ukrainian and Polish parts of the region;
- increasing the attractiveness of the region for people's lives and investments, its competitiveness with the European and the global community.

In modern conditions and in the framework of the CBR, a priority task can be the spatial organization of the of 30-km strip of land along the border which is a subject of the regime of simplified crossing of border for citizens of Ukraine. The regime was imposed in 2009 (Mały Ruch Graniczny..., 2009). There

is an increase in the intensity of tourist traffic (from the Polish and Ukrainian sides), and there is a certain recovery in business activities.

The length of the state border within Lviv Oblast is 258 km. The border crossings are at: Rava-Ruska–Hrebenne, Krakovets–Korczoza, Shehyni–Medyka) and in one checkpoint local value (Smilnytsia–Krościenko). The crossings (except Krakovets–Korczoza), are the road and rail transport.

In Lviv Oblast the border strip covers a large part of the territory of Sokalskyi, Zhovkivskyi, Yavorivskyi, Mostyskyi, Starosambirskyi and Turkivskyi Rayons, has an area of over 7500 km² and the population of 537 thousand people. There are 15 cities, 9 towns, and 708 villages (Kawalko, 2011).

Among the urban settlements, there are historical cities: Belz, Dobromyl, Zhovkva, Rava-Ruska, Staryi Sambir, Sudova Vyshnya, famous resort areas – Nemyriv and Shklo, and the main city of the Lviv-Volyn Coal Basin – Chervonograd. There are various elements of historical and architectural heritage: the remnants of the ancient downtown fortifications, defensive yards, the elements of planning, landscape and architectural complexes. Individual monuments have been preserved in more than eighty settlements.

The criteria for the tourism development are the presence of objects that respond to the following requirements:

- uniqueness, singularity, the absence of analogues in other regions;
- wide popularity;
- cognitive value, relationship to important historical events, prominent personalities of the world history;
- the high artistic value of the object itself and it's environment;
- conservation of the objects and theirs preparedness to show;
- usability and accessibility of the location of these objects.

3. Sustainable tourism and touristic agglomerations development

According to the definition, *sustainable tourism* can be define as a tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Sustainable tourism should:

- make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity;
- respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
- ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (Making Tourism..., 2005).

Strengthening of European integration processes contributes to the growth of interest in visiting the border areas. There are several touristic agglomerations, which, under the appropriate management, are able to serve to the travel needs of visitors. Between the settlements on both sides of the border, near the checkpoints, works regular socio-economic relations which are based on the service of cross-border tourist traffic and it is a initial stage of the formation of small cross-border agglomerations (tab. 1).

Rava-Ruska touristic agglomeration has a significant natural and historical-cultural potential (the landscape of Roztochia, unique mural painting in the wooden church in the village of Potelych, the wooden church in the village of Volya Vysotska, ensemble of the Krekhiv monastery, nearby is situated Belz – one of the oldest cities in Ukraine).

Yavoriv touristic agglomeration is known for its therapeutic resorts – Nemyriv and Shklo, scenic views of Yavoriv National Park and “cosmic landscapes” of the abandoned sulphur mines. “Yavoriv Lake” is the largest recreation waterbody in Lviv Oblast, which is a flooded sulphur quarry. Here in the village of Prylbychi was born Andrey Sheptytsky

Tab. 1. Touristic cross-border agglomerations

	Ukraine	Poland
The centre of agglomeration	Rava Ruska	Tomaszów Lubelski
Border crossing	Rava Ruska	Hrebenne
Settlements	Uhniv, Belz, Potelych, Volia Vysotska, Krehiv, Rava Ruska	Lubycza Królewska, Bełzec, Tomaszów Lubelski
The centre of agglomeration	Yavoriv	Jarosław
Border crossing	Krakovets	Korczowa
Settlements	Nemyriv, Shklo, Cherchyk, Nahachiv, Yavoriv	Lubaczów, Radymno, Munina, Jarosław
The centre of agglomeration	Mostyska	Przemyśl
Border crossing	Shehyni	Medyka
Settlements	Sudova Vyshnia, Volytsia, Tvirzha, Malniv, Buhovychi, Hostyntseve, Husakiv, Mostyska	Krasiczyn, Żurawica, Przemyśl
The centre of agglomeration	Dobromyl	Ustrzyki Dolne
Border crossing	Smilnytsia	Krościenko
Settlements	Khyriv, Nyzhankovychi, Stara Sil, Nove Misto, Skelivka, Staryi Sambir, Dobromyl	Solana, Lesko, Ustrzyki Dolne

Source: Жук, 2014; Посацький, 2010.

– Metropolitan of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Famous writer Osy Makovey was born in Yavoriv. Wooden churches were preserved in the villages of Voroblianychi, Hrushiv, Velykopole.

Mostyska touristic agglomeration offers the objects of fortification lines of the First and Second World Wars and numerous architectural monuments. Compared to other parts of the border zone here is the most developed service infrastructure for the international traffic, but its facilities are primarily concentrated along the motorway Shehyni – Lviv.

Dobromyl touristic agglomeration is characterized by the interesting landscape of the Carpathian mountains foothills, picturesque villages, historical monasteries (Khyriv and Dobromyl), monuments of sacral architecture (Жук, 2013; Посацький, 2010).

The concept of cross-border tourist agglomerations formation is provided for their accession to larger urban entities in the Western part of Lviv Oblast which belongs to the CBR. Such border tourist agglomerations are linked by the common status of border crossing, local border traffic. Subsequently, there will be the ability to build a specific infrastructure of tourist services at the border zone, which will create jobs for the local population.

Positive effects of tourism in small towns of Lviv Oblast:

- creates employment opportunities for local people;
- promotes cultural awareness and can help preserve local culture and traditions;
- income from tourists can be used to develop local infrastructure and services;
- foreign currency can help local people;
- natural features that attract tourists in the first place can be protected using income from tourism.

The analysis of the status and prospects of development of tourism and recreation in small towns showed the problems that hinder the development of effective touristic and recreation industry:

- unsatisfactory condition of the general infrastructure of small towns (roads, water supply and sewerage, heat supply, contamination by the domestic waste) and inadequate development of communication infrastructure (availability of telephones and communications, informatization and access to the Internet, transportation);
- lack of qualified personnel and low quality of training of existing staff;
- insufficient informational support and promotion of tourism;
- low level of business activities in touristic and recreational sphere in small towns owing to excessive tax burden;

- problems of preservation and maintenance in proper condition of cultural and historical sites, which are representing the touristic value, owing to lack of public funding;
- lack of coordination of planning documents for the recreational sector in small towns;
- lack of cluster formations in the tourist and recreational sector, which would allow to accumulate financial, human and logistical resources to provide comprehensive travel services (Васильців, 2014).

4. Summary

Sustainable tourism is about re-focusing and adapting. A balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning ensure that tourism can be managed. This requires thinking long-term (10, 20+ years) and realising that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible. Economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development must include the interests of all stakeholders including indigenous people, local communities, visitors, industry and government.

Conversion of small historical towns into modern tourist centres is a complex task that can be solved only by joint efforts of all stakeholders, municipalities and the national government (Програма розроблення містобудівної документації..., 2011). Only with this cooperation are possible quick improvements. The key objectives of local policies that will stimulate the development of tourism are:

- creation of hotel, transport and service infrastructure in small towns;
- formation of characteristic tourist products;
- development of local institutions to support tourism;
- search and attraction of internal and external resources;
- protection and lobbying of common interests of small historical towns.

Effective actions for the development and promotion of tourism will contribute to the sustainable development of these territories. The historical past of border towns is a good prerequisite for their development. A skillful management of tourism agglomeration will contribute to the development of border areas of the two countries.

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