

Supporting Development of Tourism by Local Municipal Self-Governments within the Naturally Valuable Areas of the Lubelskie Voivodship

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Abstract

The aim of the work is to diagnose the activity of local governments in supporting tourism development in naturally valuable areas of the Lubelskie Voivodship (Poland). The study area consisted of 30 municipalities with the highest natural value in the Lubelskie Voivodship selected for the study based on the value of the indicator developed by D. Guzal-Dec in the study of the natural value of rural and urban-rural communes within the Lubelskie Voivodship. A questionnaire interview was used for the diagnostic purposes of the survey. Interviews were completed in 2013. The research material comprised 30 interviews with mayors and staff dealing with environmental issues in municipal offices. Websites of the surveyed communes were an important source of information. In the surveyed group, approximately 75% of the authorities declared their preference for tourism as the main direction of development of their commune. Detailed analysis of the use of various instruments of support led to the conclusion that about 50% of them actively support tourism, of which about 30% have a planned policy manifested in a comprehensive application of the instruments of support. It seems, therefore, that strategies of cooperation for the development of tourism should be systematically and rationally utilized, especially in communities with high natural potential and less favorable non-natural conditions for tourism development.

Keywords: supporting tourism, local self-government, natural valuable areas, Lubelskie Voivodship

Introduction

Today local authorities play an important role in shaping tourism development. It is a result of political changes that took place in Poland in the 1990s. Broad decision-making powers were then assigned to self-governments, making them actual guardians of their territories. In addition to the basic tasks related to ensuring an adequate level of technical infrastructure and social and existential services, they are responsible for shaping local socio-economic policies.

Many Polish communes recognized tourism as the main factor in their socio-economic development, seeing an opportunity to stimulate local entrepreneurship in the development of this sector, along with reducing unemployment and so on. Supporting local government, especially in the early stages of tourism development, should include (Krupa and Soliński 2006, 325–327):

- adapting local law, particularly with regard to land use planning
- creating organizational structures operating for the development of tourism in the commune
- promoting tourism development among commune residents
- creating a favorable atmosphere for tourism investment
- tourism promotion of communes
- stimulating development of tourism infrastructure
- encouraging the formation of inter-commune local partnerships for the development of tourism

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Establishment of cooperation in this area is particularly important, since it allows more efficient use of limited resources and effective implementation of the tasks that often go beyond the given commune.

An important issue, from the point of view of self-government, are the instruments available to it in the management and development of a tourism economy. Tools of impact on various spheres of life, in the end creating the reality of tourism, have a variety of forms. They cover both own tasks and own initiatives (undertaken voluntarily).¹ A comprehensive overview of the impact of instruments of local government on tourism is given by R. Pawlusiński (2005). He divides them into five groups and lists:

- planning instruments (studies of conditions and directions of spatial management, local development plans, strategy for socio-economic development of the commune and tourism strategy)
- financial instruments (the budget plays the most important role in this group)
- organizational—legal instruments
- institutional instruments (creation or participation in various institutions whose function is to develop tourism (e.g., in tourism organizations, associations, or clusters))
- informational instruments (promotion)

Analysis of the impact of these instruments on the development of a tourism economy, and their real use, became the basis of many studies. The above-mentioned Pawlusiński R. evaluated the participation of local communities of the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland in the process of tourism development. The author's research shows that tourism support by local authorities is varied. Despite all governments of the surveyed communes being interested in growth within the tourist sector in their managed area, only a few are active in this field (Pawlusiński 2005, 173).

Interesting research was conducted by M. Bednarek-Szczepańska (2010) in the Lublin region. She assessed the role of local entities in the development of rural tourism. Her analysis covered local activities supporting the activity of entrepreneurs and the local community, local government activities in cooperation with other entities, and activities of local governments within promotion. The examples presented in the paper well illustrate the scope and capabilities of the various instruments used by local authorities.

Development of tourism within naturally valuable and protected areas must be conducted with the participation and support of authorities and their staff, as well as representatives of local authorities and local community. That will favor conducting a reasonable tourism policy based on the principles of sustainable development. We need to develop environmentally friendly forms of tourism using unique natural and cultural-ethnic values. The aim should be to describe and promote local tourism products (Krupa and Soliński 2006, 319).

The aim of the paper is to diagnose the activity of local governments in supporting tourism development in the naturally valuable areas of the Lubelskie Voivodship, Poland.

1 Material and methods

The study area consisted of 30 municipalities² with the highest ecological value in the Lubelskie Voivodship selected for the study based on the value of the indicator developed by D. Guzal-Dec within her study of the natural value of rural and urban-rural communes of the Lubelskie Voivodship. The conceptual basis for constructing a set of indicators of ecological value was determined by the pressure-state-response model, based on a triple division according to the criteria of cause and effect. Underlying this approach is the conviction that human activity puts pressure on the

1. See: Żek, Marcin, Planowanie strategiczne w turystyce na poziomie lokalnym – koncepcja projektu badawczego. Projekt „Turystyka dla regionu – zintegrowany program rozwoju doktorantów” współfinansowany ze środków Unii Europejskiej w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego. [@:] http://www.turyzmdlaregionu.eu/gfx/turystyka/userfiles/_public/artykuly_1/zek_poprawiony.pdf.

2. The group of 30 self-government units selected in the cited research includes: Janów Podlaski, Konstantynów, Józefów, Łukowa, Obsza, Dzwola, Janów Lubelski, Modliborzycze, Janowiec, Kazimierz Dolny, Wąwolnica, Kraśniczyn, Wilków, Dębowa Kłoda, Sosnowica, Steżycza, Lubycza Królewska, Susiec, Tarnawatka, Tomaszów Lubelski, Rossosz, Sławatycze, Urszulin, Włodawa, Adamów (Zamojski County), Krasnobród, Łabunie, Skierbieszów, Stary Zamość, Zwierzyniec.

natural environment and is the cause of its degradation. Public reaction to these changes is manifested in the conscious creation of principles and implementation of a sustainable development policy (Stanny and Czarnecki 2011, 166).

D. Guzal-Dec, following T. Bajerowski, based the natural value assessment of rural communes on the three following parameters: the “power of the organic” forms of land use, pollution of the environment and the degree of degradation of individual elements of the environment and the degree of conservation of natural elements of the environment (Suchta 1997, 75–90). The procedure is described in detail by Guzal-Dec (2013).

The study used a method of diagnostic survey with a questionnaire interview. Interviews were completed in the period of November–December 2013. The research material comprised 30 questionnaires of interviews with the mayors and employees involved in environmental issues in municipal offices. Additional sources of data included:

- websites of the surveyed communes
- websites of Local Tourism Organizations of the surveyed communes
- websites of cooperation projects implemented under Local Action Groups (LAGs), including the surveyed communes within the LEADER partnership
- Local Data Bank of the Main Statistical Office—data on income and expenditure in tourism from municipal budgets

2 Results

General declarations of local governments show that rural tourism is the main preferred direction of development in the surveyed communes. 68,4%³ of respondents showed preferences for the development of nature tourism, and 75% of the total for agri-tourism. Therefore the activity of governments in promoting tourism was analyzed. The first of the analyzed areas of activity is the use of local planning instruments. In the group of the 30 surveyed communes, a study of conditions and directions of spatial development was prepared in 22, and zoning plans for the entire area of the commune were prepared only in 13 of them. This phenomenon is adverse in the context of the possibility of area investment management. The basis for targeting development based on the function of tourism is a strategic plan for tourism development. This is a prerequisite and an essential condition for any further activity in the area of tourism support. In the case of the surveyed communes, 13 had tourism development strategies, including five individual distribution strategies for the area of the given municipality.

Production of local tourism products was not widespread enough in the surveyed communes, it seems to be just a consequence of the lack of grounds for strategic planning activities for the development of tourism. A very important but an often-underrated way to support and promote tourism is having branded tourism products (Bołtromiuk 2011, 289). In the case of the surveyed communes great natural and cultural values are still little used by local communities as a lucrative, branded tourism product. Nonetheless, there were some positive changes and activity undertaken in this area (activity undertaken by seven local governments).

The activity of Local Governments within the use of institutional instruments in inter-commune cooperation in order to develop tourism should be well assessed. A manifestation of this collaboration included the so-called Local Action Groups (LAGs), Local Tourist Organizations (LOT) and tourist clustering—the “Picturesque Spa Resorts—Polish Eastern Spa Resorts” and the “Land of Loess Canyons.”

Hampered implementation of activities related to the development of tourism was undoubtedly caused by organizational and staffing reductions in municipal offices. This has limited the scope of use of organizational and legal instruments. In the case of only two communes, an independent position was devoted to tourism development. Most frequently, promotion of tourism was dealt

3. [In the journal (in both Polish and English texts) European practice of number notation is followed—for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style). Furthermore in the International System of Units (SI units), fixed spaces rather than commas are used to mark off groups of three digits, both to the left and to the right of the decimal point.—Ed.]

with by employees engaged in other tasks/competencies. Organizational and staffing difficulties certainly also affected the level of promotional activity undertaken by authorities. Only two municipal offices (Włodawa, Sosnowica), in addition to their official website, had a tourist online portal.⁴

Negatively depicted is the efficiency of municipal budget spending on tourism (average for the period 2008–2013). In the case of only two communes, the value of the indicator—tourism incomes/expenditure on tourism—was greater than 1. It should be noted that in the case of this indicator current expenditures can bring lucrative proceeds with a lag, so it gives only a general picture of the efficiency of public spending for this purpose. The activity of local governments in obtaining external funding should be well assessed.

Detailed information on the activities taken by the surveyed self-governments for the development of tourism is included in table 1. The author referred to the classification proposed by Pawłusiński (2005), extending the scope of the instruments of creation of tourism products.

The greatest activity in tourism support in the analyzed areas was found in: Janów Lubelski, Zwierzyniec, Kazimierz Dolny, Włodawa, Józefów, Krasnobród, Janowiec, Janów Podlaski, Urszulin and Sosnowica, communes with relatively favorable conditions for tourism development.

Examples of the most interesting individual actions undertaken by local governments examined in the framework of ROP Lublin for 2007–2013 include: “Józefów Park – active tourism product development,” “Geotouristic Trail of Roztocze Środkowe”—the municipality of Józefów, “The promotion of cultural and tourism values of the city of Włodawa – three borders and three cultures,” “Tourist center of Sosnowica,” “Nature zoom – promotion of sustainable development of the Janów lands,” “Construction of a recreation park – zoom of nature”—Janów Lubelski, “Protection of natural ecosystems of the Janów Forests”—Janów Lubelski, the “Stone Forest in Roztocze as a branded tourist product of the Lublin region”—the municipality of Lubycza Królewska, “Urszulin – after work, Polesie”—promotion of local brands as part of a regional brand.

The support of local governments in the municipality of Janowiec is also noteworthy with reference to the project “Introduction of a new tourism product in the form of the Botanical Gardens of the Recreation Park ‘Magic Gardens’.” Support for a private investor concerned finding a suitably large complex of plots (about 12 ha) and changing the land use plan, the investment implementation lasted 4 years—it was finished in 2014.)

The potential of natural areas (resources and natural assets) requires sustainable use in the process of economic development. This potential often exceeds the area of one commune and is located in several neighboring communes. Therefore, active cooperation in tourism development is needed for this potential to be used.

The surveyed governments actively participated in regional partnerships for the development of tourism. Particularly interesting examples are innovative partnerships implemented under the project: “Five bays – a sea of attractions” and “Welcome to Gotania – a design and promotion project of a supra-regional brand of Hrubieszów, Tomaszów and Zamość.”

The aim of the project “Five bays—a sea of attractions” was to expand the existing trails, combining them into a single network of hiking trails joining the five lagoons located in the communes participating in the project. The proposed tourist attractions include, among others: a rope park and an outdoor fitness area. All of the designed facilities will be adapted to the needs of people with disabilities by building suitable structures of ramps, and proper surfacing. To facilitate the use of the proposed tourism space a monitoring system will be introduced, with info-kiosks and multimedia boards, as well as Wi-Fi hot spots.⁵

“Welcome to Gotania – a design and promotion of a supra-regional brand of Hrubieszów, Tomaszów and Zamość”—involves building socio-economic capital through the construction of a supra-local brand which is to be associated by investors and tourists with the potential of the Hrubieszów, Tomaszów and Zamość region. Based on the results of historical research and archaeological excavations, the assumptions are that tribes known as the Goths will be the direction of the brand development, they inhabited the area where the project is implemented.

4. In the framework of Lublin ROP projects

5. See information presented at <http://www.frampol.pl/>.

Tab. 1. Promotion of tourism development undertaken by the surveyed communes

Selected manifestations / types of activity	Indicated in the following communes
Planning	
having a study of conditions and directions of spatial development	Stary Zamość, Zwierzyniec, Łabunie, Tomaszów Lubelski, Lubycza Królewska, Sławatycze, Tarnawatka, Krasnobród, Janowiec, Kazimierz Dolny, Wąwolnica, Adamów, Skierbieszów, Dębowa Kłoda, Sosnowica, Urszulin, Włodawa, Konstantynów, Janów Podlaski, Łukowa, Janów Lubelski, Dzwola
having a land use plan (for the whole commune)	Janów Podlaski, Łukowa, Obsza, Tarnawatka, Adamów, Krasnobród, Łabunie, Janów Lubelski, Modliborzyce, Janowiec, Kazimierz Dolny, Wąwolnica, Józefów
having a strategy for tourism development	Kazimierz Dolny, Janów Lubelski, Włodawa, Urszulin, Sosnowica, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Zwierzyniec, Krasnobród, Konstantynów, Rossosz, Janów Podlaski, Sławatycze
Creation of tourism products	
co-creation of local tourist products (traditional)	Józefów, Wilków, Janów Lubelski, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny, Włodawa, Tomaszów Lubelski, Rossosz, Sławatycze
co-creation of branded tourism products	Zwierzyniec, Kazimierz Dolny, Lubycza Królewska, Janów Lubelski, Urszulin, Józefów, Włodawa
Financial	
effective spending / efficiency of budget spending on tourism (average for the period 2008-2013) the value of the indicator: tourism incomes/expenditures on tourism > 1	Włodawa- 7,32, Janowiec - 2,55 (Józefów, Janów Lubelski, positive indicators below 1)
(obtaining external funds for development of tourism) implementation of projects to promote tourism within the Regional Operational Program (ROP) Lublin 2007-2013 (number of projects)	Zwierzyniec (3- number of projects), Kazimierz Dolny (3), Janowiec (2), Dzwola (1), Lubycza Królewska (1), Modliborzyce (1), Janów Lubelski (4), Sosnowica (1), Włodawa (3), Urszulin (4), Krasnobród (3), Józefów (3), Susiec (1), Adamów (1)
(obtaining external funds for development of tourism) implementation of projects to promote tourism within the OP DEP 2007-2013 (number of projects) Operational Program Development of Eastern Poland	Józefów (1), Janów Podlaski (2), Konstantynów (2), Sławatycze (1), Kraśniczyn (1), Susiec (1), Zwierzyniec (2), Tomaszów Lubelski (1), Skierbieszów (1), Łabunie (1)
Institutional	
inter-municipal cooperation in order to develop tourism	Józefów, Janów Podlaski, Konstantynów, Sławatycze, Kraśniczyn, Susiec, Zwierzyniec, a Tomaszów Lubelski, Skierbieszów, Łabunie, Krasnobród, Rossosz, Dzwola, Włodawa, Sosnowica, Urszulin, Modliborzyce
cross-sectorial cooperation in the framework of the LAGs	all surveyed communes
participation in LTOs	Lubycza Królewska, Susiec, Tomaszów Lubelski, Kraśniczyn, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny
tourism clustering	Krasnobród, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny
Organizational	
a dedicated office (rank of tourist economy/tourism in the municipal office's organizational structure – an independent position or a department)	Janów Lubelski, Kazimierz Dolny
Information and promotion	
maintaining a tourism portal	Włodawa, Sosnowica

Source: own study based on research websites of the surveyed communes, Local Data Bank of the Main Statistical Office - data on income and expenditure in tourism from municipal budgets, and information published at <http://www.minrol.gov.pl/> on October 15, 2014.

^aIntra- and inter-sectorial cooperation, examples: the municipality of Zwierzyniec, Sports and Recreation in Zamość, the Zamość Museum, the Air Club in Zamość, the Municipal House of Culture in Zamość—the project entitled “Virtually around Roztocze.” [a:] <http://roztocze.wkraj.pl/>.

The many achievements of the Goths is intended to be remembered and used by the governments for the creation of economic and cultural assets. The initiative taken by partners to create a brand strategy using a coherent visual identity system, create compatible promotional plans and investment will help to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the region. Actions of the partners will be supported by an association—a Local Tourist Organization which will be created as a result of this project by local governments (project partners), entrepreneurs, and individuals.⁶

A collaborative and promotional project important for the development of tourism in the region is entitled “Zwierzyniec and Narol, leaders of the development of the Roztocze culture and tourism.” Its objective is the development of tourism, new cultural initiatives and the promotion of the Roztocze area. The project objectives include strategies for long-term cooperation of Narol and Zwierzyniec for the development of cultural tourism of the Roztocze region, tourism development strategy for the municipality of Zwierzyniec and updating the tourism development strategy for the municipality of Narol, development of brand strategy, a promotional film, development and adoption of a common travel guide for Roztocze, promoting adventure tourism (including cycling) with descriptions of routes, nature trails, bike paths and tourist attractions, development and release of a joint album presenting the most important attributes of the municipalities of Narol and Zwierzyniec, creation of an extensive website for tourists and investors, promotional materials, and organization of a conference on the development of culture and tourism of Roztocze.

Another project worth mentioning is dedicated to the development of naturally valuable areas in the region of Eastern Poland, entitled: “Areas of special natural interest being a growth factor of Eastern Poland.” The aim of the project was to establish cooperation between local government administration, scientific and business environments and NGOs focused on regional development with particular emphasis on the Natura 2000 sites in the valley of the Bug and to develop shared long-term developments and cooperation with particular emphasis on the endogenous potential of the Bug valley. The project involves among others: the municipalities of Konstantynów and Janów Podlaski.

An interesting project, assuming the use of local resources and natural values in economic development, is one called: “The wealth derived from nature—the use of local potentials and tourist values of the Janów Lands.” The project implementation will include the following activities: certification of local products, a virtual tour of the Janów Lands—a panorama of multimedia presentations, combined into a logical whole (descriptions in four languages), a map of the Janów Lands—an electronic version of the application for installation on mobile devices, tourist information, a tourist passport of the Janów Lands—an electronic version with the ability to download, print, read, etc., organization of ten promotional events, including a Nature Zoom, Festival Paps called “Gryczaki,” an album release presenting tourism and investment in 4 languages and development of a concept of functional and spatial development strategy for the project entitled the Janów Incubator.

In terms of an infrastructure effect (tourist infrastructure), another important venture is entitled “Cycle routes in Eastern Poland.” Those are five regional projects forming a coherent cycling route running across five voivodships: lubelskie, podkarpackie, podlaskie, świętokrzyskie and warmia-mazury. The projects involve, among others: Józefów, Janów Podlaski, Konstantynów, Sławatycze, Zwierzyniec Susiec, Kraśniczyn.⁷

In addition to intra-sector cooperation, self-governments of the surveyed communes undertook a number of activities aimed at developing cross-tourism. A common platform for joint activities in the field of self-development of resources and values of natural communes in the process of their development were associations called Local Action Groups. The surveyed governments included a total of 13 such associations.

Local Action Groups, which affiliated the surveyed communes, dealt mainly with the protection and promotion of local natural and cultural heritage and the promotion of the tourism function of LGDs. These associations have joined the 12 cooperation projects in the field of tourism develop-

6. See: <http://www.gotania.pl/>.

7. See: <http://www.polskawschodnia.gov.pl/>.

ment, including one of an international scope. The number of cooperation partners ranged from 2 to 12. Their subjects are shown in table 2.

The projects therefore primarily invested in tourism infrastructure and promotion of tourist attractions. Their scope included: designation of and marking trails, organizing a Festival of Traditional Products, a culinary guidebook, organization of canoeing, meeting folk artists, organizing camps for youth, including a Youth Academy of Cultural Heritage, conducting folk art workshops, photography workshops, issuing a tourist guidebook, participation in fairs promoting tourism and a series of television programs and press articles.

Tab. 2. The scope of cooperation projects implemented by the LAGs uniting the surveyed communes

Title of the project	Scope of this project
TEAM Tourism-Ecology-Activity-Management	Mapping and marking a new and innovative system of bicycle trails in the Biała Podlaska region, creating innovative forms of cooperation of three sectors "House of the Region"—and promoting these activities in the country and abroad.
"Welcome to Roztocze"	Preparation and publication of a Roztocze tourist guide, installing information boards, participation in the Krakow Tourist Salon, fairs, a conference summarizing the results.
Eco-museum of the Lublin Region "Living Tradition"	Designating objects forming an Eco-museum, creation of tourist passports and promotional leaflets, a website, training administrators of facilities.
Establishment of a Canoe Trail—"Along the ancient Wieprz Valley"	Creating a network of a tourism product in the form of a marked canoe trail and organizing joint promotion of the trail through the creation of a Polish-English portal, printing a tourist guide with a map and organizing canoeing events.
The extraordinary charm of Rivers—Tourism NURT	Organization of canoeing, photography workshops and a photo contest, promoting a local folder edition of the river and local action groups
In the footsteps of the past—the historical and cultural heritage of the Central and Eastern Lublin region	Conducting an inventory, renovation and marking of the historical and cultural resources, issuing a Regional Atlas of the project area, developing a Multimedia Guide as an extensive application containing proposals of routes, description of interesting places, photos and videos allowing you to schedule tours, a multimedia guide functioning as a stand-alone web portal associated with LAG partner parties.
"Taste the Tradition"	Organizing cooking workshops, the implementation of a series of programs entitled "Taste the Tradition" on Lublin TV, a culinary guidebook, organizing festivals of traditional products entitled "Taste the Tradition."
"Treasures of Nature and Culture"	Development and publication of an album, developing promotional and interactive design of an information site, preparation of large information boards, purchase and distribution of promotional materials, organization of conferences, preparation of a promotional film, publishing articles in the local press.
"Cooking, an attraction of the Region"	Development and printing of a culinary guide, organizing culinary workshops
"Between Bug and Wieprz"	Developing a website, development and distribution of a folder, production of promotional spots.
"Virtual Tourist Area"	Promotion of LAG areas through an innovative tool, a "virtual walk"—among others, a panorama using the modules.
"Our heritage attraction"—DNA	Participation in trade fairs, conferences promoting the tourist offer of the area, involvement of local communities in restoring and preserving cultural heritage (scientific camps, a Youth Academy of Cultural Heritage called "Mazik"), meeting the tourist industry, issuing a tourism folder, meetings with local artists from different regions

Source: own elaboration based on data published at:

<http://www.kajakiempowieprzu.pl/>,

<http://www.ekomuzeumlubelszczyzny.pl/>,

<http://www.lgd-kram.pl/>,

<http://www.dna.lgd-region-wloszczowa.pl/>,

and the websites of the surveyed LAGs on October 15, 2014

The surveyed group included seven governments creating Local Tourism Organizations (three): the Krasnystaw LTO, the Roztocze LTO and the LTO called the “Land of Loess Canyons.” The Krasnystaw LTO’s objectives include others:⁸ creation of the tourist image of the area, creating new and promoting the existing local tourism products and popularizing environment, history in the country and abroad, popularizing local traditional culinary products, taking measures to increase revenues from the development of tourism and sightseeing for local government units and other members, increasing of agro-tourism and improving the quality of their services, integration of local government units, individual persons, institutions and organizations interested in the development of tourism and sightseeing in the area of LTO, development of sports and recreation activities county residents and popularizing tourism and sightseeing among students of all of the stages education and types of schools for young people and adults, creating a system of tourist information and incorporating it into the national “IT” management system, developing programs and participating in projects aimed at the promotion and development of tourism and sightseeing, developing and multiplying cultural heritage, implementation, supporting and awakening civil initiatives for social and cultural development, dissemination of activities of comprehensive development, education and promotion of leisure time activities for children, youth and adults, promoting comprehensive and sustainable development: social, cultural, economic, support and promoting agriculture and local business and any initiatives lowering unemployment.

The statutory objectives of the Roztocze LTO included:⁹ creating a tourist image, providing training to environments working to promote tourism, integrating environments of local, economic and professional self-government and persons, institutions and non-governmental organizations interested in developing Roztocze tourism, promoting increase of revenues from tourism, promoting and taking action towards ecology, environmental and cultural protection of Roztocze, creating and promoting an information system, tourist promotion and booking activity to improve tourist infrastructure, development and implementation of strategies for tourism development in the area of Roztocze, initiating and creating social and economic activities for the development of tourism, rural activation of Roztocze and adjacent areas through the development of non-agricultural economic activities within its area, as related to tourism and culture, creating conditions for the emergence and promotion of tourism products, coordination of activities for the promotion of tourism undertaken in Roztocze, promotion of active, healthy forms of recreation, helping the members of the Association in obtaining Structural Funds.

The main objectives of the “Land of Loess Canyons” LTO included:¹⁰ creating an integrated system of information, promotion and booking, helping members of the organization in the acquisition and use of structural funds, promoting improvement of tourism infrastructure and the development and implementation of strategies for tourism development.

It is therefore necessary to indicate a very broad (and close) objectives of, in particular the Krasnystaw LTO and the Roztocze LTO, including promotional, informational, educational, investment, integration, culture-creating activities to promote sustainable development. Slightly narrower, but thematically close, was the range of the objectives determined by the “Land of Loess Canyons” LTO.

The most developed form of inter-sectorial cooperation is cluster membership (e.g., the Krasnobród spa resort). The innovative Health and Tourism Cluster “Spa Resorts—Pearls of Eastern Poland,” a member of which is the Krasnobród municipality, was established pursuant to the Agreement of 5 June 2009. The cluster initiative joined local governments of the 5 spa resort communes of podkarpackie, świętokrzyskie and the Lublin regions. The purpose of the cluster is to create a collaboration platform for the participants to carry out joint projects financed from their own funds, European funds and other domestic and foreign funds, especially dedicated to: scientific research, joint investment projects, activities related to the development of new technologies, as well as cluster promotion of brands, products and services.

8. See: <http://www.kraina.org.pl/>.

9. See: <http://www.roztozewita.pl/>.

10. See: <http://www.kraina.org.pl/>.

This cluster is of a service nature—it is to develop treatment services and spa tourism in conjunction with eco-tourism, cultural tourism and active tourism. The subject of competitive cooperation within clusters is to create innovative, comprehensive tourism products and promote a common brand of products and the cluster. In addition, clusters aim at spreading a positive image of Polish eastern spas, exchanging experience and disseminating the best practices in cluster cooperation and promoting the idea of clustering. Initiators of clusters desire to participate in them not only as entrepreneurs providing spa services, but also a broad range of travel services in various categories of tourism (eco-tourism, active tourism, cultural tourism), as well as local governments and non-governmental organizations for the development of tourism and regional development.

The Spa cluster initiative is one of the first supra-regional initiatives of this type. Activities during the project were to provide for the development of a set of model, competitive solutions, able to be used in different spa communes, in particular in Eastern Poland, for spas to become centers of economic development, not only locally, but also regionally and supra-regionally.¹¹

A cluster-type cooperation was also undertaken by the “Land of Loess Canyons” LTO. It is currently created by local commune partners: Janowiec, Kazimierz Dolny, Karczmiska, Końskowola, Puławy, Opole Lubelskie, Poniatowa, Nałęczów, Wojciechów, Wąwolnica and the city of Puławy. The prepared functional and spatial strategy for tourism development in the LTO functioning within the Powiśle region is at the stage of public consultation.

Conclusions

In the group of the 30 communes around 75% of the representatives of local authorities declared their preference for tourism (natural, rural tourism) as the main direction of development of the municipality. Unfortunately, a detailed analysis of the use of various instruments of support leads to the conclusion that about 50% actively support tourism, of which approximately 30% have planned support policy manifested in the comprehensive application of support instruments.

The greatest activity in the analyzed areas showing tourism support was noted in: Janów Lubelski, Zwierzyniec, Kazimierz Dolny, Włodawa, Józefów, Krasnobród, Janowiec, Janów Podlaski, Urszulin and Sosnowica, communes with relatively favorable conditions for tourism development. A specific example of comprehensive actions taken by a commune is the Janów Lubelski municipality, it was also distinguished as particularly active in this field in the research conducted by M. Bednarek-Szczepańska (2010).

To summarize the analysis of the use of cooperation strategy to support tourism by local governments one should point to the high activity within the intra-sector cooperation and LAG-type partnerships. Cluster-type cooperation is a little more advanced form, not yet so popular. An overview of the surveyed commune activity shows some signs of rehabilitation and innovative use of natural resources in the process of economic development. Comprehensive strategies for cooperation in development processes are, however, not used by all local governments, as examples we can identify: Zwierzyniec, Janów Lubelski, Janów Podlaski, Kazimierz Dolny, Janowiec, Wąwolnicę, Krasnobród, Tomaszów Lubelski, Włodawa, Wilków, Rossosz or Konstantynów. It seems that in the surveyed communes the widely-understood local resources and natural and cultural values of the environment in directing the development of tourism are still not adequately used. Collecting and systematizing information on the environment, making a detailed statement of its resources and values in terms of their use in tourism activities can be the starting point for a more informed and original approach to the promotion of the unique natural and cultural heritage of communes.

It seems, therefore, that we must systematically and rationally use the strategy of cooperation for the development of tourism, especially in communes with a high potential of their environment, but with no developed brand and characterized by lower communication availability—communes with less favorable non-tourism development conditions.

11. On 13 March 2013, the Innovative Health and Tourism Cluster, the “Spas of the Pearl of Eastern Poland” was awarded the Bronze Medal of Excellence in Cluster Management. These awards are granted by the European Cluster Excellence Initiative (ECEI).

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