

Tourism potentials in the cross-border area Hungary – Croatia

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Abstract

This paper analyzes tourism potentials and possibilities in the cross-border counties which are included in the survey: Koprivničko – križevačka county, Varaždinska county (Croatia), Somogy and Zala (Hungary). Unlike Croatia dominated by maritime tourism, Hungary to the great extent develops all forms of continental tourism. In the present global competitive environment, tourism development should be based on knowledge, innovation and promotion, whereas development of regional cross-border area can be based on mutual development of cross-border tourism as innovative model of tourism development in general. In this respect, cross-border tourism will develop local tourism environment which supports and establishes a portfolio of the regional tourism product and in this way represents an important segment in development of the cross-border area. The basis of development of the cross-border tourism are natural beauties and environment, rich cultural heritage and developed wine growing and wine production.

Key words: *cross-border area, tourism, survey.*

Introduction

On July, 1, 2013 Croatia become a member state of the European Union, which implied significant changes in all spheres of Croatian economy, including the tourism sector as well. Besides mass tourism, better known under abbreviation (Sun, Sea, Sand) the last decades were marked by the beginning of diversification on the tourism product and development of new kinds of tourism, such as rural, health, transit tourism, and many others. Unlike Croatia dominated by maritime tourism, Hungary to the great extent develops all forms of continental tourism. In

the present global competitive environment, tourism development should be based on knowledge, innovation and promotion, whereas development of regional cross-border area can be based on mutual development of cross-border tourism as innovative model of tourism development in general.

Research methodology and procedure

The research¹ was carried by means of a survey questionnaire which was compiled solely for this purpose on the representative sample of entrepreneurs and citizens of the residential area, taking into account a proportional number of informants in each analysed county, which amounted to the total of 313 informants: 171 from Croatia, and 142 from Hungary. The survey questionnaire consisted of 20 opened and closed questions. The survey questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, research related to the image of the region, tourism potential in the region – current state and plans.

About the cross-border area Hungary – Croatia

Cross-border area Hungary - Croatia analysed in this study includes Zala county, Somogy county, Koprivnica-Krizevci and Varazdin county. This area has a significant tourism potential which is not sufficiently used. *Zala county* is one of the 19 Hungarian counties and it belongs to the region of western Danube. Primary share of the county tourism activity is carried out by Hévíz because of its natural thermal lake. Besides other thermal spas (primarily spa complex in Zalakaros) this area offers some other tourism attractions: untouched nature (National park Balaton-felvidék, Nature reserve Small mud lake (Hung. Kis-Balaton) and rural tourism (primarily in the ethnographic region Göcsej). Baroque palace of the Festetics family is located in Keszthely. The fact that international airport Sármellék is located in Zala county is of great significance for further tourism development. *Somogy county* is located in south-west Hungary, in southern Danube region (Dél-Dunántúl), alongside with the Croatian border, which is to some extent natural, since it is composed of the Drava river in the South and Blatno jezero (Mud lake) in the North-West. Hunting, medical and rural tourism represent account for

¹ This research was carried out within „INVEST – PRO“ project: IPA Hungary-Croatia cross-border cooperation programme 2007 - 2013. HUHR/1101/1.2.5/0003.

high quality tourism in the county. *Koprivnica-Krizevci county* is located in north-west Croatia. Regarding tourism, it is important to mention the significance of Naive art gallery in municipality of Hlebina, town of Krizevci with its St. Anne Church, Greek Catholic Cathedral and St. Cross Church. Furthermore, Koprivnica is famous for its Museum of Food "Podravka", and Đurđevac for its old town and Lacković Gallery. *Varazdin County* is located in north-west Croatia. It encompasses the area along river Bednja between the mountains Ivančica and Kalnik and river Drava. Varazdin falls within the most beautiful and best preserved baroque units in Croatia (Old Town, City hall). Since 1971 it has been a home of the famous It hosts music festival Varazdin baroque evenings. With reference to tourism excursions, due to its numerous tourism activities Varazdin County belongs to the most attractive parts of continental Croatia.

Tourism potentials of the cross-border area - current state

According to Demonja and Ružić (2010,28.) there are numerous tourism activities based on which it is possible to create various forms of tourism, such as cultural, health, recreational-active, water (wellness, water sports, fishing), wine, hunting, religious, agro tourism and other. The aforementioned forms of tourism are characteristic for rural areas. The informants were asked to express their opinion on which of the forms of tourism they find most attractive for tourists in their counties, marking each form with grades starting with 1 (most attractive) to 9 (least attractive). Table 1 indicates that the most attractive forms of tourism in Varazdin county are cultural and wine tourism, whereas the informants found agro tourism and religious tourism least attractive. Other forms of tourism mentioned by the informants included hiking and tourism of visual and musical arts. Informants from Koprivnica-Krizevci county ranked the offered forms of tourism very differently, resulting in the fact that there are slight deviations in average ranks between hunting, recreational (active), wine and cultural tourism singled out as the most attractive forms of tourism. These informants found health and religious tourism least attractive. Other forms of tourism mentioned by the informants included winter, equestrian, cycling tourism, naive art tourism, as well as tourism linked with meetings of motorcyclists. Informants from the counties of Somogy and Zala were unique in their answers, finding health and water tourism (wellness, water sports, fishing) most attractive in their counties, and religious tourism least

attractive. Informants from Somogy county also listed the so called „party tourism“ as an attractive form of tourism.

Table 1. Forms of tourism attractive to tourists

	VŽ	KKŽ	Somogy	Zala	Total
Cultural	2,2	4,3	3,7	4,4	3,7
Health	5,0	6,8	2,2	1,6	3,9
Water	4,8	5,0	3,3	2,9	4,0
Wine	2,4	4,0	5,3	4,5	4,1
Recreational (active)	5,0	3,9	3,6	4,0	4,1
Hunting	4,2	3,9	4,0	4,5	4,2
Agro tourism	6,5	5,1	4,6	4,6	5,2
Religious	6,5	6,0	7,5	7,6	6,9

When asked in which way the visitors can obtain information regarding various sights located in the area that the informants live in, the informants were asked to select four out of the total number of answers, for which they thought to be the most significant and recognizable to tourists (table 2). If we observe the research results as a whole, it can be concluded that the four most important means of obtaining tourism information are websites, local population, former visitors of the destination and printed materials. Publications and magazines, as well as Internet forums are considered a less recognizable source of information.

Table 2. Most important means of obtaining information about various tourism sights

	HR	HU	Total
Websites	124	72	196
Local population	125	46	171
Former visitors of the destinatio	84	57	141
Printed materials	60	73	133
TV, radio	56	44	100
Travel agency	23	66	89
Websites of tourism associations	60	26	86
Acquaintances	27	53	80
Tourism exhibitions, fairs	58	14	72

	HR	HU	Total
Internet forum	11	54	65
Tourist guide	11	38	49
Publications and magazines	13	16	29

Most important means of obtaining information

Table 3. Interesting activities within the 20 km radius

	VŽ	KKŽ	HR	Somogy	Zala	HU	Total
Cultural manifestations	46	40	86	14	14	28	114
Wine and gastronomy	31	37	68	11	27	38	106
Hunting	8	47	55	22	21	43	98
Sightseeing	34	30	64	9	22	31	95
Horse riding	3	28	31	29	29	58	89
Exhibitions and museums	29	26	55	5	25	30	85
Rural tourism	22	38	60	12	13	25	85
Baths	4	20	24	20	34	54	78
Fishing	9	35	44	12	13	25	69
Cycling	16	25	41	10	17	27	68
Health tourism	9	1	10	15	43	58	68
Festivals and manifestations	13	14	27	15	23	38	65
Beaches	2	3	5	21	36	57	62
Folklore traditions	21	24	45	6	5	11	56
Historical monuments	28	18	46	3	6	9	55
Walking, hiking	4	13	17	8	21	29	46
Educational paths	0	5	5	2	4	6	11
Rowing	1	0	1	0	1	1	2
Passive holidays	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Organised programmes with tourist guide	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

The most interesting activities

The informants were also asked to single out four activities in the 20 km radius, for which they think the tourists would be the most interesting in (table 3). If we observe the overall results, it can be concluded that the first four activities in the 20 km radius which could be attractive for the tourists of the cross-border area include cultural manifestations, developed wine production and gastronomy, hunting and sightseeing in general. Organised programmes with a tourist guide, passive holidays, rowing and educational paths are considered less interesting or non-existing.

Tourism potential of the cross-border area

Almost all informants (95,8%) agree that tourism development and investment can contribute to economic development of the cross-border area. The informants believe that the most attractive tourism forms at the moment include cultural, health, water and wine tourism. However, future development of the cross-border tourism would primarily be based on recreational/active, cultural, water and agro tourism (Table 4).

Table 4. „Which type of tourism would you primarily develop in the region“

Tourism type	VŽ	KKŽ	Somogy	Zala	Ukupno
Recreational (active)	9	39	26	39	113
Cultural	38	23	16	35	112
Water	21	23	17	34	95
Agro tourism	0	38	9	24	71
Health	7	10	30	21	68
Wine	25	24	7	12	68
Hunting	13	26	4	3	46
Religious	4	9	0	0	13
Other		Winter tourism	Ecotourism		

In order to further develop various types of tourism in the cross-border area it is essential to include all the interested and responsible parties in the field of tourism, environment and heritage of the analysed counties. If we observe the overall

research results, it can be stated that the informants of all analysed counties agree that local self-government (towns, municipalities), local population and local entrepreneurs should be included in tourism development (scheme 1). Some differences relate to the fact that Croatian informants are of the opinion that it is the local self-government that triggers development of tourism activities, whereas Hungarian informants put the local entrepreneurs on the first place.

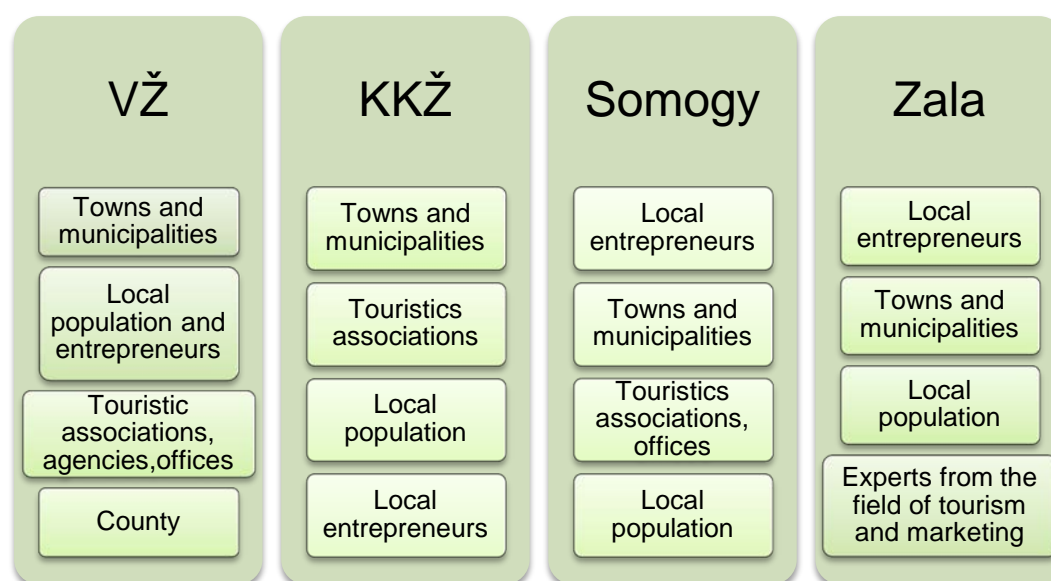


Figure 1. Stakeholders of tourism development in the analysed cross-border area

Conclusion

This paper about tourism potentials in the cross-border area Hungary-Croatia identifies local tourism peculiarities of the cross-border area which could be useful for the joint strategy of tourism development of this area. Opinions and ideas of the local population and entrepreneurs indicate that tourism development is inseparable from characteristics and capacities of the local social structure. Different kinds of tourism should be developed in the analysed counties based on the existing tourism offer which, in some segments, represents unused potential. Recommendation for development of the cross-border tourism includes the need for continuous education on advantages of life and work in the cross-border area through preserving and promoting specific characteristics of the tourism area in creatively designed tourism product.

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Introduction:

Unlike Croatia dominated by maritime tourism, Hungary to the great extent develops all forms of continental tourism. In the present global competitive environment, tourism development should be based on knowledge, innovation and promotion, whereas development of regional cross-border area can be based on mutual development of cross-border tourism as innovative model of tourism development in general.

Method:

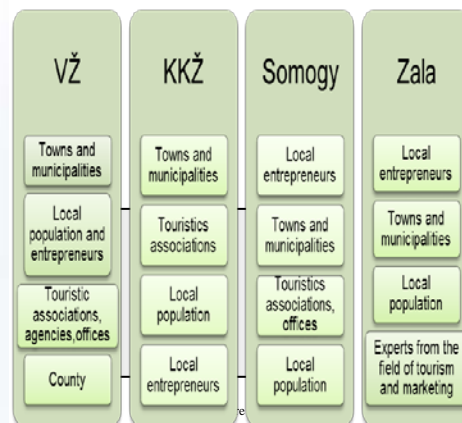
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Results:

„Which type of tourism would you primarily develop in the region?“

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Hunting	13	26	4	3	46
Religious	4	9	0	0	13

Stakeholders of tourism development in the analysed cross-border area



Discussion:

TOURISM POTENTIALS - CURRENT STATE

- The basis of development of the cross-border tourism are natural beauties and environment, rich cultural heritage and developed wine growing and wine production
- Unfavourable circumstances for tourism development are related to poor promotion, poor traffic infrastructure and lack of financial assets

TOURISM POTENTIALS – FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- The most attractive activities for the tourists of the cross-border area are cultural manifestations, well developed wine production and gastronomy, hunting and sightseeing
- Future promotional activities should be oriented towards construction of the regional tourism portal, joint representation on the market (advertising, manifestations, fairs etc.) and continuous maintenance of the existing communication resources

Conclusion:

Tourism potentials in the cross-border area Hungary-Croatia identifies local tourism peculiarities of the cross-border area which could be useful for the joint strategy of tourism development of this area.

Opinions and ideas of the local population and entrepreneurs indicate that tourism development is inseparable from characteristics and capacities of the local social structure.

Different kinds of tourism should be developed in the analysed counties based on the existing tourism offer which, in some segments, represents unused potential.

Recommendation for development of the cross-border tourism includes the need for continuous education on advantages of life and work in the cross-border area through preserving and promoting specific characteristics of the tourism area in creatively designed tourism product.

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