

Sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube

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Executive summary of the regional SoA report



WP4 / Action 4.1.2.

Bakony and Balaton Regional Tourism Nonprofit Ltd.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following document summarizes the main result of PP5's (Bakony and Balaton Regional Tourism Non-profit Ltd.) Regional State of the Art analysis. We focus on the status quo and the SWOT analysis in this document.

2 TRANSPORT SYSTEM

The Central Transdanube region has good transport connections: The bus companies and the train company make a link between the region's different parts and to the other part of our country as well. Even the connection between our region and the bigger cities outside of the country like Vienna, Bratislava, Venice, etc. can be featured very well. Two Pan-European Corridors, 2 highways and 3 main roads can be found in the region, which ensures a good accessibility to other European countries. There is only one weak point in the network: the transport connection between the southern and northern part of the region is low. The cities and their neighbourhood have a frequency from an hourly to more often bus connection, but the frequency of trains is lower. The country can be characterized as a centralized road and train network where the centre is the capital city, Budapest. Three shipping company operates in the region (on Danube, Lake Balaton and Lake Velence), which provide different services for regular transportation and tourism also. Most of them have got a regular timetable with scheduled shipping.

Related to the quantity and quality of public transport the analysis found out that:

- less quantity in public transportation during weekends and national holidays and peripheral villages
- missing cooperation between transportation companies related to time tables and information
- missing intermodal transportation nodes
- low quality of public transport services.

The success factor to overlap these missing points could be the development of multimodal transport nodes and a common route planner for buses, trains and other types of public transportation (and of course with the improvement of communication among them). The main contingencies can be the future financing options and possibilities, delay in cooperation.

As we analysed the bike system in the Central Transdanube Region we found that although the developments of last years (extension of bicycle path network) a connection between each bike paths (sometimes within settlements and mostly between them) is missing. Related to the services there are lacks in the resting-places, bicycle parking, rental (a network is missing) and reparation opportunities. Good point that there is a possibility of bike transportation in most of the local and regional trains and special ticket offers for bikers.

3 INFORMATION SYSTEM

In general tourists can get information about all sort of transport connection in local information offices. These can be found on the bigger cities or villages but they can also be reached by phone. As we analysed the transportation part, a journey planner including all trains (also international connections) can be found on MÁV's (Hungarian national train company) website (available on three languages: Hungarian, English and German). The bus companies have got a common website where a collection of their different timetables and their common route planner is available. It contains the national and international buses also (available in Hungarian and English). As we mentioned earlier a co-planner for buses and trains is missing. There is only a website which collects the different links of these route planners. On the bikers part there is a huge lack of information. The website of DMO's includes bicycle paths and some related information, but a collection for a whole region is missing. One website operates which offers routes, includes maps, description and accommodation offers, but this is available on Hungarian and contains not all of the possible routes in Central Transdanube.

Local DMO's, the national park and Hungarian Tourism Plt. have local tourism information bureaus at main attractions where the information service is also available for tourists. They operate websites that contain information about attraction, accommodation, restaurants and other services. The website www.bakony-balaton.hu has lots of information regarding sights and activities in the region. There is also an online tool to search for and book accommodation.

The following success factors were defined to overlap the mentioned missing points:

- sharing information among organisations
- clear on-board communication and real-time information by transport companies
- easier access to fare and scheduled information by transport companies
- collected information about a whole destination
- real time and actual information about tourism services
- using of new ways of communication instruments
- multilingual information service special focus for nationality of incoming tourists
- one information portal collecting schedules of transport companies with standards for tourist offer and services should be implemented.

4 TOURISM SECTOR

Tourism plays a relevant role in Central Transdanube Region's economy, which shows the 796 927 number of tourist arrivals (Source: KSH) in public accommodations in 2012. The number of tourism overnights in public accommodation establishments was 2 254 727 in 2012 regarding the whole region (Source: KSH). A high degree of seasonality is typical for the region: the high season is summer. There are a wide variety of accommodation's types and touristic offers. From these PP5's hot spot (Node 'A') is High-Bakony Landscape Protection Area within the Bakony and Balaton Region. Its strengths are the great variety of tourism products (culture, active holiday, and gastronomy) and the infrastructural developments that were realised in the last years. BBTDM chose Tata city as node 'B'. It's a city full of history and there were several developments regarding bike paths and services.

Negative facts related to tourism industry are the decrease of number of tourism nights and the parallel marketing activity of attractions by more institutes with low level of cooperation. Referred success factors for this field are the followings:

- taking into consideration the new tourism trends (such as seeking for authentic experience, interaction with locals, slow tourism)
- cooperation of tourism and transport companies creation of new offers/packages
- thematic packages along the main tourism products
- real time, actual and harmonized information service of different companies about packages
- harmonizing the promotional activities of all stakeholders.

5 RELEVANT FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

In the financial period 2007-2013 were a lot of funding options both for tourism and transport sector. As we see the tourism part the most of the funds was available for developing new attractions, renovating accommodations but also some funds was newly available for establishing and developing destination management organisations. Other important issue was the building of new bike paths and creation of new services (product development).

Weaknesses and threats are in the framework conditions:

- The parallel operation of the new and old tourism marketing organisations and the low level of cooperation of tourism and transport companies mean a problem.
- The financial sustainability of the new DMO's can be dangerous to the new system also.
- The development of lower-older roads will be not part of the 2014-2020 financial periods, so transportation sector have to face other financial background.
- Related to legal framework there is a delay in elaboration and acceptance of tourism law.

Success factors can be in the organizational, legal and financial framework:

- making strategic alliances among transport companies
- planning of financial resources to have a sustainable operation after tenders
- co-financing of project and common project (transport and tourism companies together)

- local economy should be included/made a contribution to initiatives and services, but should also have benefits out of the project
- co-operation of different transport companies.

New things can come to life at the end of the changing organizational structure by bus companies.

6 CONCLUSION

The above-summarized findings of the regional status-quo and state of the art analysis are going to be the main outputs for further strategic developments in the Central Transdanube Region.