

EVALUATION OF THE USE OF EU FUNDS AS A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FACTOR IN BORDER DISTRICTS OF LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP

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- tourism
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Abstract:

The European Union's tourism policy involves promotion of sustainable development rules, which results in, among others, donating UE funds for initiatives contributing to tourist development of the areas. The aim of this publication is to evaluate quantitative, qualitative and spatial absorption of EU funds in terms of tourism in the following border districts of Lublin Voivodeship: Biała Podlaska, Włodawa, Chełm, Hrubieszów, and Tomaszów Lubelski. The level of absorption of funds allotted for development of particular forms of tourism in the region corresponded, to a large extent, to diagnosed needs and indicated directions of tourism development in border districts of Lublin Voivodeship. Funds within RPO 2007- 2013 constituted one of key factors of tourist economy growth and development in the discussed area, and contributed to the increase in its competitiveness in the tourist market.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism currently constitutes one of economy sectors with the fastest development pace, resulting from ongoing social and cultural transformations. It applies particularly to areas of a rich natural and cultural heritage, and the areas with the insignificant anthropopression indicator. Besides the aforementioned factors of tourism development, commitment of local administration and communities of the region, which create an internal area of tourism supply, exert a significant influence on dynamics of tourism development. These features result in enormous development potential of tourism and its interdisciplinarity, which affects a lot of areas of life. As stated by Gołembski [4], multidimensionality of contemporary system of tourism development contributes to its increasing influence on many areas of economy, social life, and cultural transformations. The sphere of this system embraces not only countries and regions, but also global space. Panasiuk [7] pays special attention to one more important aspect, he claims that tourism shapes, to a large extent, employment structure. It is estimated that in areas with a developed tourist function there are even several people employed in and outside tourism per one bed. However, this indicator is considerably verified by level of seasonality of tourist services. These advantages are more and more frequently noticed by local and regional authorities, which regard activation of tourism demand as an opportunity to develop many sectors of economy. Tourist activity is an element connecting rural areas with urban ones, and allowing for strengthening economic and social cooperation, including regions subject to convergence [8]. Rural and urban-rural areas without explicitly prevalent urban centres, like in the case of the analyzed area, are frequently characterized by a very low level of own income, which enables to take advantage of opportunities resulting from geographic location, natural values and tourist attractiveness. Limited own income is frequently a cause of high unemployment and outflow of qualified

staff to bigger urban centres, or even their emigration abroad. Local development might be stimulated by opportunities resulting from EU membership and programmes devoted to equalization of opportunities and removal of disproportions in development of individual regions.

EU funds for tourism in Lublin Voivodeship

EU tourism policy involves promotion of sustainable development rules, which results in, among others, donating UE funds to initiatives encouraging development of tourist areas based on values considering interests of both natural environment, economic entities, inhabitants and tourists. Sustainable development of tourism contributes to improving life quality of European society, and should be considered at all levels of tourist policy.[7] Poland, as a EU member country, has a real opportunity to increase its development potential, thanks to help from EU funds. Benefits of EU membership are becoming more and more apparent. Poland is a country regarded as one of the greatest beneficiaries of EU regional policy. Conditions and appropriateness of the use of structural funds by Poland were determined and included in the National Cohesion Strategy 2007-2013, on the basis of the National Development Strategy for the years 2007- 2015 [8]. The main aim of that document was to present conditions of the growth of competitiveness of knowledge economy and entrepreneurship, leading to the increase in employment, as well as the growth of social, economic and spatial cohesion. In the National Cohesion Strategy there is indicated the significance of the use of spatially variable natural and cultural conditions for development of tourism and hospitality. What is important for development of the country and the increase in employment levels is the development of service sector, including tourism and culture. It will also contribute to raising life quality by participation in tourism and by improving the condition of technical and social infrastructure, including infrastructure of culture, sport and tourism. As a result of analyzing forms and rules of tourist economy financed from EU funds in Lublin Voivodeship, there were identified the following financial resources:

- Investment Programme and Environment
- Operational Programme Innovative Economy
- Operational Programme Development of the Eastern Poland
- Regional Operational Programme of Lublin Voivodeship
- Operational Programme of European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism
- Rural Development Programme for the years 2007-2013
- Cross Border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007-2013
- Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme for the years 2007- 2013

Characteristics of Lublin Voivodeship in terms of development potential of tourism

Lublin Voivodeship is located in the eastern part of Poland. This is a big (over 25 thousand km²) but relatively sparsely populated region - in terms of population density (87 people per km²) the Voivodeship takes the 12th position in the country. The region is characterized by one of the lowest urbanization rates in the whole country, which amounts to 47% (14th position in Poland). In the administrative division of the Voivodeship there are distinguished 4 towns with district rights (Lublin, Chełm, Biała Podlaska, Zamość), 16 municipalities, 21 urban-rural communes and 172 rural communes. Lublin Voivodeship is located on the eastern outskirts of European Union, far from main development centres of Europe and Poland. It has a direct border with Belarus and Ukraine, thus determining the external border of the European Union within the section of almost 470km. Border location might be a source of both chances and dangers for the region. One of the conditions of

overcoming the peripheral character of the voivodeship should be comprehensive development of cross-border contacts with Belarus and Ukraine, and improvement of transport accessibility of the voivodeship in the national and international system. Lublin Voivodeship has a favored location in the tourist map of the country. As one of five voivodeships in Eastern Poland it has a metropolitan centre, 17 landscape parks and two national parks. The region has not yet been discovered in terms of tourism, but it takes only 259th position out of 284 regions of European Union. In 2014 it was visited by 1.6 mln tourists, which gives it 12th position in the country [1].

On the basis of the evaluation of management condition and development potential, the following features should be regarded as main development opportunities of tourism and hospitality :

- diversified natural environment, resulting from a specific physical-geographic and phytogeographic location of the region;
- well-preserved unique cultural heritage
- significant bio-climatic values, mineral water resources and quite well-developed spa treatment
- border location determines, among others, development of border and cross-border tourism

Main problems limiting the use of the above-mentioned potential include:

- insufficient accommodation base for massive, specialized and conference tourism;
- insufficient system of tourist information;
- failure to take advantage of the potential of cultural values of small historic towns of the region
- bad technical condition and lack of proper protection of many valuable sacral facilities, especially rural ones (monuments of borderland culture)

A separate issue is development of tourism in protected and naturally valuable areas. On the area of Lublin Voivodeship there are located two national parks and 17 landscape parks. Intensive tourist movement concentrated on a small space and its intensification, combined with a low standard of many accommodation and tourist infrastructure facilities, might lead to disastrous impact of residential tourism on nature. An unfavorable phenomenon in tourism in these areas is outright prevalence of forms of collective tourism and limiting a tourist season, in most of cases, to summer months. Consequently, in the regions visited by many tourists, there occurs a local concentration of recreational centres, individual summer buildings and holiday recreation. Lublin Voivodeship is rich in cultural heritage facilities, but a number, performed functions, state of preservation of many historical sites contribute to the fact that tourist movement usually lasts for one day only. There are some activities that could bring opportunities of extending tourists' stay in this area:

- creating tourist products dedicated for specific market segments, i.e. products of the following types of tourism: urban and cultural, active and specialist, business, educational, ecotourism, agrotourism, weekend tourism, health, pilgrimage, transit tourism,
- creating new tourist products in the areas not used so far, in order to diversify and evenly canalize tourist movement in the region
- routes connecting Lublin Voivodeship with routes in the neighboring regions (also in Belarus and Ukraine)
- revitalization of municipalities and facilities of historical and cultural significance

Turist attractiveness of border districts of Lublin voivodeship

In the context of full autonomy of local governments, local authorities' interest in the growth of tourist activation of districts and communes is becoming crucial. Transformations of Polish agriculture, decline in profitability of production, and problems with adaptation to market economy contributed to the increase in unemployment and deterioration of standard of living of rural inhabitants. Therefore, there has emerged the need of activating rural population towards undertaking various actions in accordance with the idea of multi-functional development of rural areas [6]. Properly led tourist policy might contribute, to a significant extent, to extending the offer of tourist products and increasing tourist attractiveness of the area.

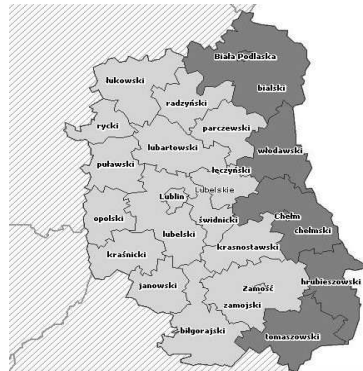


Fig. 1. Border districts on the map showing administrative division of Lublin Voivodeship [16]

The evaluation of tourist attractiveness of border districts was conducted by means of evaluation of tourist attractiveness of communes prepared by Tucki [9], with a proposal of tourist regionalization of Lublin Voivodeship. The features of the area included in the research procedure were divided into three groups: tourist values, tourist management and transport accessibility. The use of methods of comprehensive comparative analysis enabled to determine a tourist potential, including, among others, tourist and cultural attractiveness and condition of development of tourism material base. Not all the districts have the same tourist attractiveness scale, districts with interregional and national significance include the district of Tomaszów and district of Włodawa. The communes distinguished by a special tourist attractiveness include: Bełzec, Lubycza, Tomaszów Lubelski, Susiec and Tarnawatka. That district, in terms of a number of accommodation facilities and provided overnight stays, takes ninth and seventh position out of 20 districts of Lublin Voivodeship [10]. The direction of development of that district should be residential tourism, active tourism: hiking, cycling, horse riding, skiing and nature-based tourism in the protected areas. Despite a satisfying condition of accommodation base, development of all-year accommodation base is important in terms of development of winter tourism. A proper direction of development, for a district distinguished by tourist attractiveness, should be development of educational tourism and the use of transit character of the area. The other district with interregional and national significance, distinguished by its tourist attractiveness, is the district of Włodawa, which, in terms of geographic location, embraces the western part of the Łęczna-Włodawa Lake District. In the Lublin region that area is regarded as one of main areas of tourist reception, which is distinguished in tourist space by development of tourist phenomena. Sustainable development of tourism contributes to socio-economic activation of the inhabitants. Development of tourism contributes to a real opportunity of limiting high unemployment amounting to 23% (2014). That district, in terms of a number of accommodation facilities and beds provided, takes third and fifth position among districts of Lublin Voivodeship [10]. A particularly important tourist function is performed by eastern communes of the district of

Włodawa: Włodawa commune, Hanna commune, Wiryki commune. Leading directions of development of tourism are water-recreational tourism, and maintenance and promotion of cultural events referring to multicultural heritage, particularly of the town and surroundings of Włodawa. In order to enable a more effective use of tourist potential, that area should have diversified accommodation base, meeting requirements of tourists differentiated in terms of financial status and needs, with a well-developed catering, sport-recreational and cultural facilities. The eastern part of the district should distinguish complex tourist information centres for the whole Łęczna-Włodawa Lake District, which, thanks to intensified promotion, may become a significant recreational area in the scale of the country. The other border districts: Biała Podlaska, Chełm and Hrubieszów, according to Tucki [9], perform a role of areas of regional and local significance. In the district of Hrubieszów, with a dominating agricultural function, effective tourist development is a result of a lack of tourist traditions, a small range of cultural values, a relatively low level of development of accommodation base and a weak transport accessibility. The alternative for agriculture in this region with relatively homogenous natural values might be development of parks of active tourism, including summer and winter centres with downhill skiing, especially in the western part of the district embracing a fragment of Działy Grabowieckie with a very diversified relief. The district of Chełm, like the district of Hrubieszów, is characterized by the smallest number of accommodation places and provided beds in the voivodeship. The district of Chełm includes the river Bug area, and, because of high natural values, tourist development of the area should go towards educational tourism in the protected naturally valuable areas. Development of transit tourism services has a development potential only in Dorohusk. Improvement of a low standard of base which accompanies tourist development of the region, and especially water-recreation infrastructure, might contribute to improvement of attractiveness of tourist offer of the region. The district of Biała Podlaska is located in the eastern part of the Southern Podlasie Lowland. In that area there might simultaneously develop centres of transit tourism (because of a border crossing in Terespol), as well as various forms of active cycling and hiking tourism. What presents itself as particularly attractive are densely forested areas of the commune of Rokitno. Protected areas of that area are distinguished by a high level of accompanying infrastructure, a big number of educational routes allow functioning of nature-based and educational tourism. An important problem in tourist movement services is not a number of accommodation facilities, since the district takes the fifth position among districts of Lublin Voivodeship in this respect, but a problem is a low standard of accommodation base.

European Union funding of projects which create conditions for development of tourist economy in border districts of Lublin Voivodeship

The highest opportunities of tourist investment funding at regional level have been created by Regional Operational Programmes, whose assumptions correspond to development plans of individual voivodeships, and they are consistent with assumptions of regional strategic documents. Voivodeship local governments were provided with broad competences in that respect, related to realization of Regional Operational Programmes. Development of tourism of related fields was supported by investing almost 100 mln Euro in Lublin Voivodeship. Within the RPO there were concluded 862 agreements, including 162 concluded in Lublin Voivodeship.

Tab.1. Invested European funds as part of realization of RPO actions of Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

Activity	Number of projects	Total value of projects in PLN	% of project co-financing
1.5. Investment donations in the field of tourism	153	508 723 312	30 %
3.2. Revitalization of degraded urban areas	49	423 032 458	56 %
7.1. Infrastructure of culture and tourism	86	578 014 125	65 %
7.2. Promotion of culture and tourism	21	23 263 032	76 %
7.3. Interregional cooperation	14	6 485 079	68 %

Source: Tourist audit of Lublin Voivodeship, Lublin 2015

Beneficiaries from the public, private and non-governmental organization sector could apply for financing tourist investments, mainly within three axes(1,3,7) and their actions.

Priority Axis 1. Entrepreneurship and innovations.

Action1.5. Investment donations in the field of tourism

The aim of the action 1.5 was to increase competitiveness of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises acting in the sector of tourism and hospitality, which resulted in the growth of tourist attractiveness of the voivodeship. Among realized investments there were projects of building and extending accommodation and catering base, adaptation of historical sites for tourist purposes, development of sport and recreation, and spa infrastructure, as well as projects concerning developing and launching of new tourist products.

Tab. 2. Axis I Entrepreneurship and innovations

Action 1.5 Investment donations in the field of tourism			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	13	46 541 194	13 686 326
Chełm	4	14 805 440	4 076 318
Hrubieszów	2	8 137 221	3 001 580
Tomaszów Lubelski	3	5 896 798	2 932 811
Włodawa	12	40 137 882	13 587 319
In total	34	115 518 535	37 284 354

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of RPO of Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

Priority axis 3. Attractiveness of urban areas and investment areas

Action 3.2 Revitalization of degraded urban areas

The aim of the action was to increase investment attractiveness by providing support for revitalized areas and investment areas. The towns of the region have a development dynamics that used to decrease, and their negative image was strengthened, among others, by phenomena such as: degradation, or unsatisfying condition of historical heritage objects in towns, growing decapitalisation of the majority of housing stock. After transformation they might encourage development of various forms of economic activity and revitalization of tourist services.

Tab.3. Axis 3 Attractiveness of urban areas and investment areas

Action 3.2 Revitalisation od degraded urban areas			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	4	28 362 301	14 169 715
Chełm	3	13 664 145	7 050 208
Hrubieszów	1	10 714 431	7 418 210
Tomaszów Lubelski	2	12 935 456	8 696 080
Włodawa	0	0	0
In total	10	65 706 333	37 334 213

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of RPO of Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

Priority axis 7. Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.1. Infrastructure of culture and tourism

The aim of this action was to improve tourist attractiveness of the region and increase availability of cultural goods, by improving technical condition of historical heritage objects and cultural facilities, and development of tourist base.

Tab.4. Axis 7 Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.1 Infrastructure of culture and tourism			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	5	22 372 550	12 954 406
Chełm	3	17 530 690	12 078 461
Hrubieszów	1	288 228	201 759
Tomaszów Lubelski	2	5 061 348	3 311 022
Włodawa	6	16 227 150	10 817 766
In total	17	46 874 966	39 363 414

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of RPO of Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

Priority axis 7. Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.2. Promotion of culture and tourism

The aim of this action was to promote regions of high tourist and cultural attractiveness. Projects submitted for implementation were aimed at improving the image of Lublin Voivodeship, by activation in the field of promotion and tourist and cultural information.

Tab.5. Axis 7 Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.2 Promotion of culture and tourism			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	2	879 095	592 645
Chełm	1	1 007 322	704 441
Hrubieszów	0	0	0
Tomaszów Lubelski	1	250 953	169 727
Włodawa	3	2 290 916	1 916 049
In total	7	4 428 286	3 382 862

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of RPO of the Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

Priority axis 7. Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.3. Interregional cooperation

Effective interregional cooperation, realized within the action, was aimed at improving quality of human resources and encouraging development of the economy of the region, thus

affecting growth of public confidence and citizens' activity, and increasing institutional capability of the region.

Tab.6. Priority axis 7. Culture, tourism and interregional cooperation

Action 7.3 Interregional cooperation			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	1	584 192	408 934
Chełm	2	853 779	590 721
Hrubieszów	0	0	0
Tomaszów Lubelski	2	2 34 127	155 963
Włodawa	0	0	0
In total	5	1 672 098	1 155 618

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of RPO of the Lublin Voivodeship in the years 2007-2013

In the rural areas of the discussed districts there might be realized development of tourist functions, which is proven by steadily increasing interest in rural tourism, as well as agrotourism. Especially in the economically weak areas, functioning and future of rural families will depend, to a large extent, on extra workplaces besides agriculture. In Lublin Voivodeship tourists have 222 agrotourism facilities at their disposal [15]. It is worth mentioning that this result is over two times higher than a national mean, thus making the Lublin region a leader in terms of a tourist offer in rural areas. [14] Within the PROW 2007-2013 resources beneficiaries might get support in that respect within the realization of action from axes 3 and 4. They are concerned with village revitalization, improvement of condition of cultural and natural heritage, and improvement of accessibility of communal services. It is aimed at activation of inhabitants of rural areas by building a social potential in the village. Such action is supposed to strengthen a feeling of local community, and to strengthen social capital in the rural areas.

Tab.7. Rural Development Programme Priority Axis: 3 and 4

Action: Life quality in rural areas and variety of rural economy			
district	Number of projects	Value of projects in PLN	EU funding in PLN
Biała Podlaska	53	4.588 388	2 181 510
Chełm	31	2 066 967	1 407 448
Hrubieszów	34	2.870 954	1 490 091
Tomaszów Lubelski	28	2 450 779	1 437 635
Włodawa	20	1 965 713	1 221 306
In total	166	13 942 801	7 737 990

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of: www.archiwum.prow.lubelskie.pl/mapa-projektow/

Tab.8. The use of EU funds within RPO and PROW in the years 2007-2013 in the discussed districts

Programme	Number of projects	General value in PLN	EU funding in PLN
RPO	72	248 775 228	117 918 816
PROW	166	13 942 801	7 743 990

Source: own elaboration on the basis of: www.archiwum.prow.lubelskie.pl/mapa-projektow/

Conclusions drawn from the attempt to conduct qualitative, qualitative and spatial absorption of EU funds in the field of tourism in border districts of Lublin Voivodeship

- Level of absorption of EU funds for development of individual types of tourism in the region corresponded, to a large extent, to diagnosed needs and indicated directions of tourism development in border districts of Lublin Voivodeship.

- What is apparent is a big activity in terms of obtaining EU funds in the districts of Biała Podlaska, Włodawa and Tomaszów Lubelski, with a well-developed tourist function, and significant resources of tourist values and an increasing tourist movement.
- Obtaining financial resources from EU funds by the analyzed districts undoubtedly contributed to intensive development of tourist functions. There increased a number of all-year accommodation places in tourist facilities, in the years 2007- 2013, in all the districts, and especially in the districts of Biała Podlaska (increase by 234 accommodation places) and Włodawa (increase by 98 accommodation places) [2]
- Intensive investment activity in tourism contributed to the increase in a number of foreign tourists using accommodation in tourist facilities in the years 2007-2013. The highest increase was observed in the districts of Chełm (by 2159 tourists) and Biała Podlaska (increase by 1531 people). [2]
- What is also significant is the activity with regards to obtaining financial resources for development of tourism in the immediate neighborhood of bigger towns of the discussed area, e.g. Włodawa, Chełm or Biała Podlaska, which is important for shaping a direction of tourist movement and building tourist offers, among others offers of weekend tourism.
- Resources within RPO 2007- 2013 constituted one of basic factors of growth and development of tourist economy in the discussed border districts of Lublin Voivodeship, thanks to which there occurs the increase in competitiveness of those areas in the field of tourism. However, their value constituted only 2% of general value of RPO project for the discussed districts in the years 2007-2013.
- What is interesting about analyzed funds for tourist activities in the discussed areas is the image of absorption of funds from the Regional Operational Programme in the years 2007-2013, within which there was obtained the amount of 234 200 218 zł, in 73 projects, with a general value of investment financing amounting to 118 550 461 zł.
- What supports development of tourist functions in the discussed rural area is the increasing interest of inhabitants in rural tourism and agrotourism.
- Resources obtained for that purpose from the Rural Development Programme for the realization of 166 projects did not exceed, in total, a value of 7% of funds obtained in that respect from RPO. In the years 2014-2020 PROW resources will still perform a function of stimulator of development of tourist services in rural areas. The objectives will be realized within 6. Priority PROW „Social inclusion and poverty reduction, and promotion of economic development in rural areas”.
- All the discussed districts (Biała Podlaska, Chełm, Tomaszów Lubelski, Włodawa), excluding the district of Hrubieszów, used the resources from the Operational Programme of Eastern Poland, within which there was created the eastern cycling route Green Velo. It was built within the programme „Cycling routes in Eastern Poland”, in V Priority axis: Sustainable development of tourist potential, based on natural conditions, Action V.2 Tourist routes. Total value of the project amounted to approximately 274 000 000 PLN., and investment costs in the discussed districts exceeded 54 000 000 PLN.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of quantitative, qualitative and spatial absorption of EU funds in border districts of Lublin Voivodeship has a significant influence on determining opportunities of their functioning and activity in the field of shaping policy of sustainable development, and complex management of tourism development in this area. Lublin Voivodeship, with respect to development of tourist economy, takes only 259th position out of 284 EU regions. In 2014

it was visited by 1.6 mln tourists, which means it has a 12th position in the country [1]. Border districts with a better and better transport accessibility are emissively and receptively interesting regions not only for a national market, but also for Belarus and Ukraine, whose lands are characterized by connections with a tourist offer of the discussed area. It is possible to indicate strong relations between tourist natural and cultural attractiveness. In terms of natural attractiveness, a basic unit for common functioning of that area and border regions is, for instance, Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve, so-called "Western Polesie". However, in terms of cultural connections, connections with Lvov, a town whose heritage has been the object of outstanding interest of Poles, should be put first. The other area of cross-border cooperation might be the use of potential of the Brzeska Fortress, whose significant part is located in Belarus, and elements of fortification system, so-called Przedmoście Terespolskie, are located on the Polish side of the border. That neighborhood is a source of an exceptional opportunity to develop tourist potential of that area. Heading towards effective and lasting boosting of processes occurring in tourist economy there must be identified key actions requiring improvement, that is to say:

- connecting tourist and tourist-like services, which would create complex impressions from the stay in that area,
- strengthening promotion and commercialization of tourist products,
- improving of space in small towns and villages, with a view to needs and requirements of tourists,
- creating an opportunity to increase profitability of work in the sector of tourism.

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