

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AS A DETERMINANT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Tourism infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure is a component of regional touristic product. Infrastructure is comprised of basic devices, buildings and service institutions, whose existence is crucial to the proper operating of economy and society. Infrastructure is divided into:

- technical, including basic devices used in transport, communication, gas, heat, power and road industry, etc.,
- social, including devices and institutions connected with education, culture, science, health, physical culture and tourism, public administration.[1] [Gaworecki., 2003].

Touristic virtues form the basis for attracting tourists, they also give direction for tourist movement and form its spatio-temporal structure. Nevertheless, activities aiming at protection and adaptation of touristic virtues are necessary in order the touristic movement could appear while complementary touristic goods serve for this purpose and are defined as tourism infrastructure. Tourism infrastructure is a range of devices and institutions constituting material and organizational basis for tourism development. It comprises four basic elements: accommodation facilities, food and beverage facilities, accompanying facilities and communication facilities.[2] [Panasiuk A., 2007].

Tourism infrastructure of region in general comprises four elements at the destination or related to the destination, which enable tourists staying and using attractions, like:

- accommodation facilities – hotels, lodges, apartments, hostels, campings;
- gastronomy facilities– restaurants, bars, cafes;
- transport at the destination,
- service in the range of active leisure – ski resorts, sailing schools, golf clubs;
- retail network;
- other services (information, equipment rental companies).

To explain the structure of tourism infrastructure entirely, it should be presented in accordance with two criteria, namely in two approaches:

- generic,

- from the point of view of financing its creation jointly with its exploitation rules.

In case when the basic function of infrastructure elements is tourist movement servicing, the elements are included in the tourism infrastructure. When the elements are dedicated to other socio-economic needs, which are used not only by tourists, they are included in paratourist infrastructure, the existence of which is dependent on tourism development.

Therefore, the structure of tourist infrastructure consists of four elements:

1. Typically touristic infrastructure:

- accommodation facilities,
- other facilities for arrivals servicing,
- tourist information,
- trails,

2. Paratourist infrastructure:

- transportation facilities– roads and transport points,
- local facilities, including communal and public transport,
- trade and service facilities, including craft,

3. Elements, which cannot be unequivocally classified, their function and results serving the purpose for which they had been built:

- gastronomy,
- accompanying facilities: sport and leisure, culture, entertainment.

Modes of passenger transport of particular transport branches are elements, which are hard to be unequivocally classified but they are the basis and they influence the tourist regions and service accessibility. From the point of view of transport operating structure and its infrastructure, modes of transport are treated as transport suprastructure.

In tourism sector, the passenger transport is crucial means of access to the region of touristic perception and movement. Regular communication should be treated as an immanent element of an offer referring to the reception region and communication within. Irregular conveyances and private transport can not be classified in the range of touristic region's function. Therefore, from the tourism economy point

of view, modes of transport should be treated like an element supplementing transportation, enabling the realization of communication accessibility function.

The second criterion of tourism infrastructure classification results from recognition of its managers, where the basis is financing of infrastructure creation and the rules of its exploitation. Therefore, the infrastructure is classified into:

1. Commercial:
 - hotels,
 - gastronomy,
 - tourist arrivals servicing,
2. Public:
 - road,
 - communal,
 - trails,
3. Mixed (public-commercial):
 - information,
 - accompanying.

The above mentioned criteria of classification altogether present the structure of tourism infrastructure. The listed elements are parts of regional tourist product. They create touristic brand and influence the level of regional economy development. In practical studies connected with creation of programs and strategies of tourism development in Poland, especially in particular regions and local regions, the term brand tourism infrastructure was implemented [3] thanks to the Polish Tourism Development Agency. Minding the presented approaches classifying the infrastructure elements, this term could be appropriate for elements of commercial infrastructure, where the final effect

of servicing occurs (e.g. accommodation service in a brand hotel network). However, the term seems to be unsuitable for public and mixed infrastructure, namely occurring in tourist regions. The brand category is treated collectively as a function of tourism product in spatial approach. Only tourist products of region could be tourist brands while using a proper tourism infrastructure.

Entities creating tourism infrastructure

The structure of tourism infrastructure unequivocally points the participation of entities responsible for its creation.

Commercial entities like hotels or restaurants, create and exploit objects for servicing their clients (tourists). Public entities (self-government units and state entities) develop techno-social infrastructure not only for tourists servicing but also, or rather first of all, for creation of the conditions for local regions and regions development minding society (including tourists) and economy (including tourism economy entities).

Attention should be paid to the need or even necessity of cooperation between commercial and public entities. Involvement of commercial entities in taking up public financed activities for creation of infrastructure is also possible, e.g. through public-private partnership. [4] [Zysnarski J.,2003].

Thus it is necessary to pay attention to the sources of financing the tourism infrastructure and to the participation of tourism economy entities in this financing (figure 1).

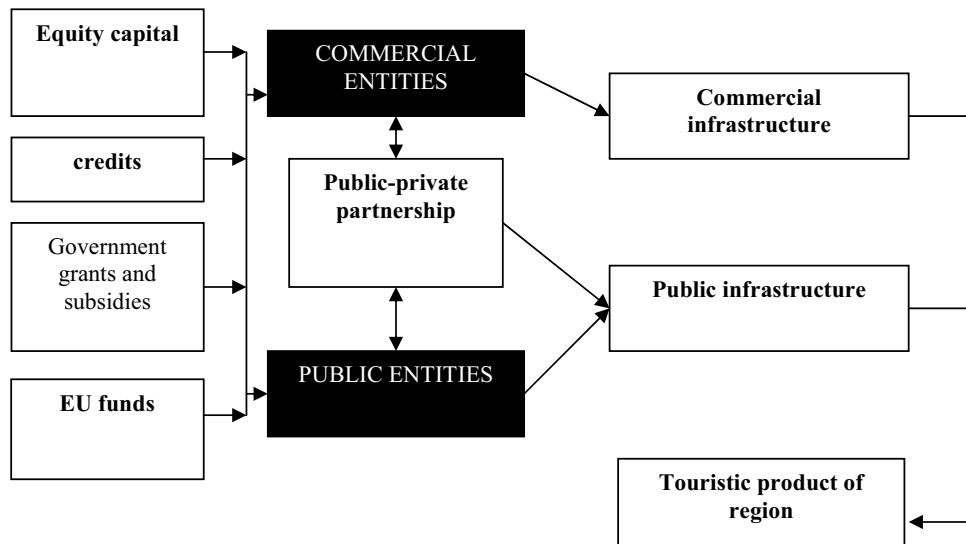


Figure 1 Entities financing tourism infrastructure development and sources of financing.

Source: *self-composed*

Accordingly to the figure 1, both commercial entities (entrepreneurs) and public entities are involved in creation and financing the tourism infrastructure. Minding realization of their own assignments and market aims, they create the elements of tourism infrastructure simultaneously having the possibility of taking up joint ventures through the public-private partnership. Activities in this field are directed at the public infrastructure, which supports the utilization of commercial infrastructure (e.g. access roads to hotels) or co-create tourist function of the region, namely local infrastructure in tourist cities (pavements, promenades, piers, tourist information, etc.). Moreover, the self government units' responsibility is coordination of tourism infrastructure components created by particular entities.

Tourism infrastructure in region's development

Concluding previous considerations it should be stated that tourism infrastructure is an integral component of touristic product of the region. The quality parameters of tourism infrastructure, expressing themselves inter alia in suitable technical state, suitable capacity for tourism movement, should be considered to create a proper standard of tourism infrastructure (figure 2).

Figure 2 demonstrates the position of tourism infrastructure created by commercial and public entities independently as well as in cooperation, creating the regional tourist product aimed at target market, namely tourists.

** treated as the means of forming the tourist region's communicative availability*

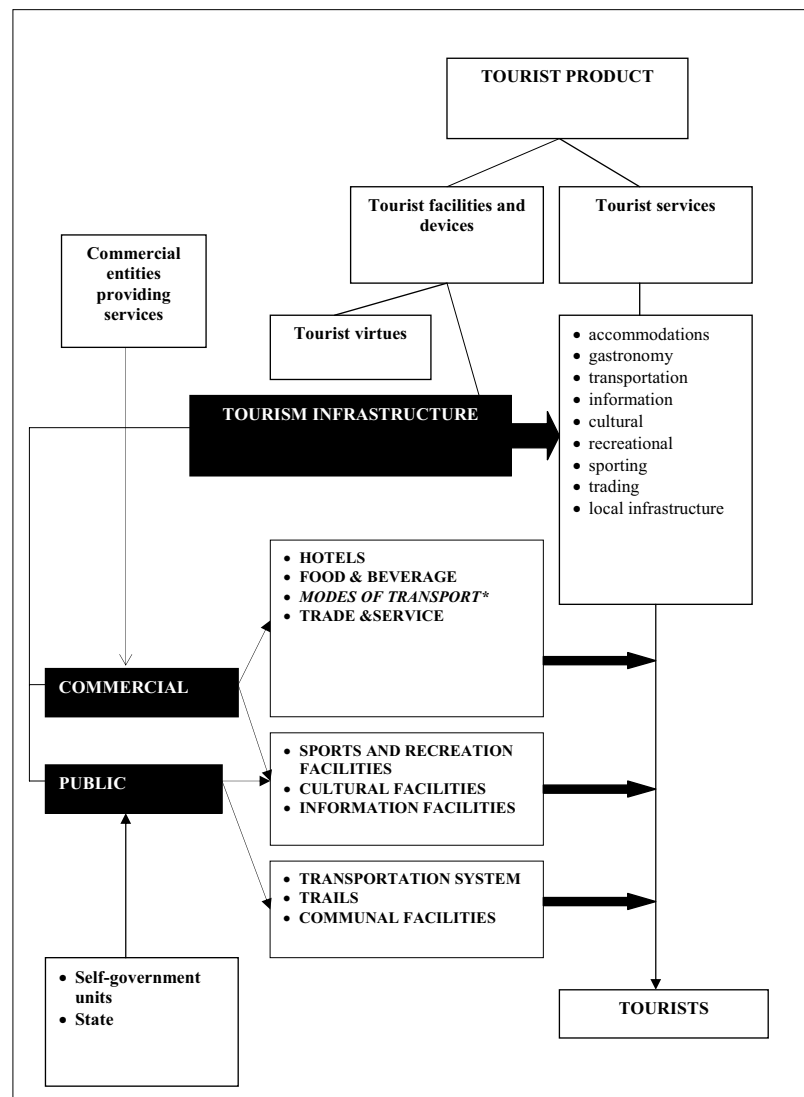


Figure 2 The position of tourism infrastructure in the structure of tourist product

Source: self-composed

Figure 3 presents the sequence of elements, ipso facto, actions decisive for influence of tourism infrastructure on incomes of: entrepreneurs providing

tourist and paratourist services, regional and local self-government units and inhabitants and therefore on regional development.

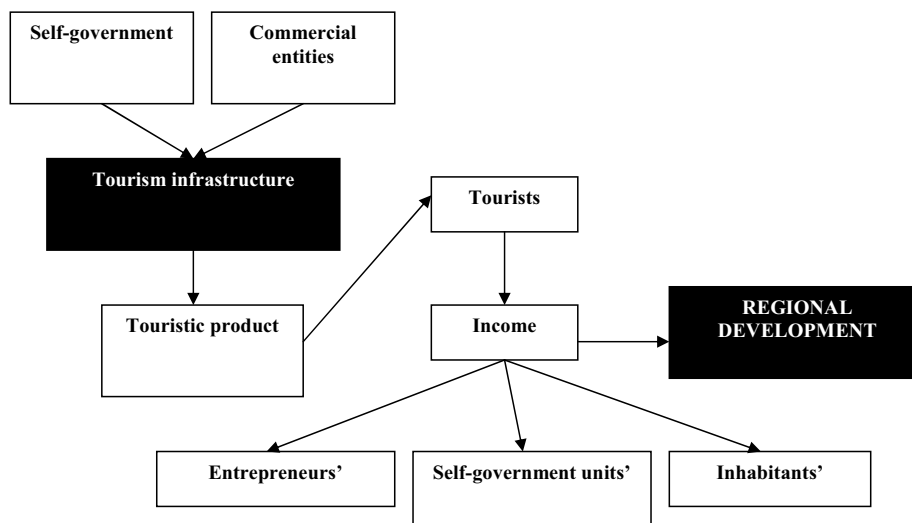


Figure 3 Tourism infrastructure as a determinant of regional development

Source: *self-composed*

The presented drawing suggests a significant influence of tourism infrastructure on regional development. Though it should be remembered that the tourist movement is necessary so that the elements of infrastructure could create regional development. The higher tourists' interest in tourist region the higher income from tourism in regional economy. The height of this income depends on, inter alia, the structure of touristic movement (domestic, foreign), average length of stay, motives of arrival, etc. The answer for the range of characteristics determining gained income is obviously a state (saturation and standard) of tourism infrastructure.

References

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Tourism Infrastructure as a Determinant of Regional Development

Summary

Tourism infrastructure is a basic component of regional tourist product. It decides the amount and structure of tourist movement. The structure of tourism infrastructure is formed by public entities as well as commercial ones. The local government units' assignment is coordination of emergence of components of tourism infrastructure created by particular entities. In the article the components

of tourism infrastructure were classified and its position in the structure of regional tourist product was pointed out. Besides the tourist movement activation, infrastructure is a determinant of regional development.

Key words: Economics of tourism, regional development, tourism infrastructure