

CONDITIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE KOZŁOWO COMMUNE, PROVINCE OF WARMIA AND MAZURY

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Abstract. Sustainable and environmentally-friendly tourism can provide stable foundations for the development of rural areas with poor transportation links, poorly-developed tourist infrastructure, insufficient marketing and promotion and no integrated tourist products. Forms of land use associated with the natural values of the tourist space and of those creating potential for development of tourist infrastructure account for approx. 40% of the area of the Kozłowo commune. There are few forests in the rural areas of the commune and it has no outstanding tourist value, but the vicinity of other attractive areas of Warmia and Mazury, as well as the presence of Lakes Kownatka and Szkotowskie can help it to develop its own tourist infrastructure. The development of tourism in the commune requires adopting relevant planning assumptions and a sustainable development programme, taking into account the close association of rural area development with the natural environment. In effect, such actions should contribute to social development and its stimulation in the rural areas of the commune.

Key words: sustainable tourism, rural areas, Warmia and Mazury

INTRODUCTION

The principle of sustainable development is the foundation of ecological policy in Poland and encourages the ecological transformation of sectoral politics, which assume pressure on the environment in the form of direct or indirect exploitation of its resources. The main priority is, among the methods of realization of ecological politics, the use of so-called „good management” practices and environmental management

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systems which enable combining industrial effects with ecological results [Hakuć-Błażowska and Turkowski 2011]. The assumptions also apply to the tourist sector in which alternative forms of tourist activities are developed and contrast with commercialized mass tourism. Each form of tourism which helps to create a harmony between the need to protect the environment, local communities and tourists and helps to preserve the natural and cultural resources for future generations may be regarded as “alternative” [Kurek 2003]. This approach to tourism leads to the creation and development of the concept of sustainable tourism. The major assumptions of development of sustainable tourism are aimed at ensuring its economical efficacy through protection and rational exploitation of both the natural and cultural environment with simultaneous improvement in the quality of life of local communities. It is therefore connected with the assumptions of sustainable development of rural areas in accordance with the Common Agricultural Policy detailed in “Regional Rural Development Programme for years 2007–2013”. The directions of reforms of EU politics in the development of rural areas are included in “Rural Areas and Agriculture Development Strategy for years 2007–2013 (with forecast elements until 2020)”. Current EU policy strongly emphasizes the need for sustainable development of rural areas. The major aim is to improve living and working conditions of rural communities through economic growth which respects the need for environmental protection.

This aim can be achieved through realization of partial goals such as supporting sustainable development of rural areas, improving the competitiveness of agriculture and strengthening of the food processing industry in order to enhance food quality and safety. Sustainable development of rural areas can be supported, among others, through diversification of business activities to provide alternative sources of income, development of different forms and directions of non-agricultural activities which use local resources, human capital, local specificity and cultural heritage and the development and promotion of rural tourism based on local unique values and traditions. Mobilization of local communities in rural districts and improvement of social infrastructure, together with revival of countryside and with preservation of rural cultural heritage, are equally important for the development of sustainable tourism.

Sustainable tourism involves a wide concept of environmentally-friendly tourist development both in the countryside and in large cities (small tourist destinations and large recreation centres); this concept is therefore related to all known types of tourism subject to “ecological transformation” [Brelík 2011]. In rural areas, a significant role is attributed to the development of recreation, specialist and sightseeing tourism and their active forms which utilize specific values and resources of the Polish countryside [Jagusiewicz and Byszewska-Dawidek 2010]. The forms of tourist activities in rural areas exclude mass tourism and thus over-exploitation of the natural and cultural environment should not be a major issue. However, the development of rural tourism should, above all, respect the principles of environmental protection and consistently implement the idea of sustainable development [Mysiak 2004]. Local authorities should primarily support local forms of tourism closely related to the countryside and its unique character. These forms include agritourism, ecotourism and rural cultural tourism [Jagusiewicz and Byszewska-Dawidek 2010] as well as aquatourism [Czarkowski et al. 2012].

Protection and sustainable utilization of the natural environment directly concern tourist values which form an essential part of the tourist potential and determine tourist attractiveness. Tourist qualities include the features and components of the geographical environment which are of particular interest to tourists. The assumptions of environmental protection involve utilization of natural and cultural resources through skilful exhibition with simultaneous preservation in an unchanged condition. The accomplishment of these aims requires essential investments, particularly in rural districts [Brelík 2011].

This paper presents the theoretical concept of sustainable tourism in relation to sustainable development of rural areas. This concept tries to determine the potential for development of sustainable tourism in rural areas located in Warmia and Mazury based on the example of Nidzica county and the Kozłowo commune.

GUIDELINES ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

“Directions for Tourism Development until 2015” [Kierunki rozwoju... 2008] created in 2008 by The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation is the major document on development planning for the tourism sector in Poland compatible with the realization of strategic aims of the European Union. According to this document, sustainable tourism should involve tourist activities which respect the natural environment and preserve its values in the long term [Hakuć-Błażowska and Turkowski 2011]. Under the terms of the guidelines in “Directions for Tourism Development until 2015” [Kierunki rozwoju... 2008], the activities of local authorities in Warmia and Mazury include:

- recording entries in the register of tourist organizers, middlemen and their control,
- granting the qualifications of tour courier and tourist guide,
- qualification of hotel facilities for individual types and categories and control of these buildings,
- operating regional recreational and sporting institutions, coordinating activities,
- cooperating in tourism development and creating new tourist products and promoting tourist potential,
- coordination and development of tourist information network in the province,
- cooperation with tourist institutions on the national, provincial, county and commune level,
- organizing and supervising recreation of children and adolescents,
- realization of recreational and tourist tasks through educational activities within school hours (including the idea of „green schools”).

The basic assumption detailed in “Directions for Tourism Development until 2015” [Kierunki rozwoju... 2008] involves the approach to tourism as a discipline closely connected to numerous developmental processes and the creation of tourism that will also remain in conformity with other objectives of social and economic growth on the county level. Therefore, the competences of the county include:

- managing sporting, tourist and recreational institutions in the county,
- managing youth hostels,

- registration, supervision and financial support of sporting associations and tourist organizations located in the county,
- financial support of high-ranked sporting, recreational and tourist events organized in the county,
- cooperation in planning of spatial development and creation of sporting, recreational and tourist facilities,
- coordination of actions and support of life-guarding,
- organizational and financial support of associations and tourist organizations in the county,
- promotion and cooperation in the development of qualified tourism and other forms of active tourism in the county,
- realization of recreational and tourist tasks through educational activities within school hours (including the idea of „green schools”).
- cooperation in promotion of tourism development in the county.

The guidelines presented in “Directions for Tourism Development until 2015” [Kierunki rozwoju... 2008] are aimed at building solid foundations for the tourism industry. They formulate declarations of harmonic and sustainable development of the tourist sector, particularly on the lowest levels of territorial administration. The commune therefore has the following competences in tourism:

- recording entries in the register of camping sites and other hotel facilities and the right for supervision and control,
- management, renovation and transformation of sporting and tourist facilities and equipment which belong to the commune,
- creating favourable conditions for tourist business activities in the commune,
- managing sporting, tourist and recreational institutions in the commune,
- financial support of sporting and tourist associations located in the commune,
- planning of spatial development and creation of sporting, recreational and tourist facilities,
- organizational and financial support of associations and tourist organizations in the commune,
- modernization and management of major technical (e.g. transportation) and social infrastructure on the provincial level,
- realization of recreational and tourist tasks through educational activities within school hours (including the idea of „green schools”).
- activities aimed at environmental protection and preservation of cultural heritage,
- promotion of the commune.

This list indicates that many tasks which influence the development of tourism are within the competence of territorial authorities.

Tourism creates the possibility of development of rural areas in the Warmia and Mazury region which are characterized by a poor transportation network, underdeveloped tourist infrastructure, insufficient marketing and promotion and a lack of integrated tourist products [Hakuć-Błażowska and Turkowski 2011]. Rural tourism compatible with the concept of sustainable development may become an important tool which will enable preservation and growth of social, cultural and the natural

environment while encouraging industry in Warmia and Mazury. The rural areas of Warmia and Mazury have precious natural, cultural and sightseeing values. These resources are under-exploited, both nation-wide and in Warmia and Mazury, despite their uniqueness and biodiversity – which are unparalleled in Europe and the rest of the world [Sawicka 2010].

THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF NIDZICA COUNTY

The basic sources of data on the development of the tourist potential of the county are “Tourism Development Strategy of Nidzica County”, “Local Development Plan of Nidzica County for years 2004–2013” and “Strategic Plan of Development of Nidzica County”. Furthermore, the publication “Tourism in the Province of Warmia and Mazury in 2009” issued in 2010 by The Statistical Office in Olsztyn is a valuable source of information concerning tourism in Nidzica county.

Nidzica county is located in the southern part of Warmia and Mazury along the border with the province of Mazowieckie. It is one of the most forested areas in the region (in third place after Szczycieński and Pilski counties). There are four nature reserves in Nidzica county: Prof. Roman Kobenza’s Springs of the Łyna River, Orłowo Małe Lake, The Inanimate Nature Reserve “Koniuszanka” and The Floral Reserve “Koniuszanka II”. The county also hosts 23 natural monuments, including the largest glacial erratic in Mazury, called “Kamień Tatarski”. The zones of protected landscape help preserve the natural and aesthetic values of the environment. In Nidzica county there are four such areas: The Zone of Protected Landscape of the Napowidzko-Ramucka Forest, The Zone of Protected Landscape at Mielno Lake, The Zone of Protected Landscape of the Valleys of the Nida and Szkotówka Rivers, and The Zone of Protected Landscape of the Valley of the Orzyc River. Tourists interested in sightseeing may visit the 14th century Teutonic Castle in Nidzica along with the churches and temples, cemeteries and kurgans located in the Janowiec Kościelny commune. Moreover, tourists may participate in cyclic or occasional cultural events such as the “Marathon Mazovia MTB” Cycling Race, The Festival of French Prose and Songs, Nidzica Days, The National Festival of Fantasy, Summer Castle Concerts, Jazz Evenings, The Festival of Small Theatre Formations, The Tournament for The Mace of the Grand Master Winrych von Knirpode and The International Biennial of Lithographs of the Baltic Countries. The Cultural Centre in Nidzica organizes many local events, i.e. a castle evening event, art shows and others.

Nidzica county has a better transport network than other parts of Warmia and Mazury, but the number of train and bus links is limited and the surface of many roads is in poor condition. The number of parking zones is insufficient and their location is often inadequate (i.e. incompatible with places most frequently visited by motorized tourists). Many interesting places are located in inaccessible areas or accessible only on foot or by bicycle. In Nidzica county, tourist services are provided by entrepreneurs who run small hotels and private lodgings, agritourist facilities, travel agencies and tourist information offices. Despite excellent conditions for the development of this

sector, the tourist accommodation base is still limited and incompatible with the needs and requirements of tourists. There are no hotel facilities with a large number of accommodations (over 200 places). The facilities with over 100 places are available only in summer. The county also lacks centres suitable for organizing conferences and training for higher numbers of participants and, therefore, such events are held in neighbouring counties. No centre/hotel is equipped with a swimming pool. Tourist group accommodation is located only in two communes: Nidzica and Kozłowo. The gastronomic base of Nidzica county is poorly-developed and is concentrated mainly in Nidzica; many services are seasonal. Information on cuisine, particularly on traditional dishes, is not provided and regional gastronomic service does not cater to the specific needs of children and people travelling through the county. Information on connections between local food producers and gastronomic service is not available. Nidzica county offers tourist trails for pedestrian, cycling and canoe sightseeing trips. Pedestrian tracks include the paths in the natural reserve, "The Springs of Łyna River", the educational path in the reserve "Koniuszanka II" and the sightseeing path in "Orłowo Małe Lake" reserve. There are five cycling trails: "Wokół Gminy Nidzica", „Szlak Tatarski”, „Szlak Bursztynowy”, „Kurhanów” and „Szlak generała Samsonowa” as well as one canoe track on the Łyna River. Moreover, natural and educational (forest) paths are mapped out: the forest track in the natural reserve "Koniuszanka II" (Wikno), the "Dąbrówka" nursery in the Municipal Forest Complex in Nidzica and the Landscape and Geomorphologic Reserve, "The Springs of Łyna River". Both the number and management of tourist trails in Nidzica county are insufficient. The area is deficient in small tourist infrastructure: camping sites, shelters, washing facilities, zones for building bonfires, identification of sightseeing points, parking zones, resting places (benches, tables) and piers on lakes. There is a lack of marked cycling tracks separated from the motorized transportation network.

The tourist values of Nidzica county mark this area out for significant development of the tourism sector if actions are undertaken aimed at professionalization of tourist services (starting from data collection and service coordination and finishing on the level of customer service) and the integration of subjects (people and institutions) involved in the development of tourism. The offers combining natural, historic and cultural values are special tourist attractions of the county. Therefore, the strategic concept of the tourist sector is to create an attractive tourist offer for complex customer service: "The active, integrated and thrifty Nidzica county provides great conditions for development and recreation". Actions aimed at developing the tourist potential of Nidzica county have been mainly concentrated on modernization of the tourist infrastructure and enhancement of the qualifications and professionalism of personnel involved in tourist services. The development of technical infrastructure in Nidzica county includes modernization and investments in the tourism sector. It enables preservation of the most precious natural values as well as long-term investments in the management of attractive areas and in the development of the tourist accommodation base. The priorities are the investments in sustainable development of tourism, utilization of natural resources aimed both at their protection and ecological education and support of agritourism. The strategic plan for development of Nidzica county

involves investments in culture and tourism that will enhance its attractiveness. It is planned to map out new water, pedestrian and riding trails as well as to mark existing cycling tracks, to build shelters, parking zones and sightseeing points, to map out educational paths (botanical, faunal and ornithological), to mark monuments, to place information boards in foreign languages, to create a network of seasonal gastronomic facilities on tourist trails and to set up new camping sites.

POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN KOZŁOWO COMMUNE

The basic data on the status and potential for development of the tourist sector in the Kozłowo commune are outlined in the strategic documents on the county and commune level, among others, in “The Analysis of the Distribution of Tourist Functions in the Province of Warmia and Mazury”, “Local Development Plan of Nidzica County for years 2004–2013”, “Tourism Development Strategy of Nidzica County”, “The Assessment of Ecological Status and Recreation Potential of the Kozłowo Commune (Nidzica county) with Emphasis on Surface Water”, and “Plan of Local Development of the Kozłowo Commune”.

The Kozłowo commune is located in the south of the province of Warmia and Mazury, in Nidzica county. The western part of the commune borders on the Grunwald commune (Ostróda county) and the Działdowo commune (Działdowo county). The northern border of the county neighbours on the Olsztynek commune (Olsztynek county). On the eastern side, the Kozłowo commune is adjacent to Nidzica and Janowiec Kościelny communes and to the south with the Hłowo-Osada commune. Kozłowo is the biggest village and the administrative centre; its area covers 245 km². It was established in 1328 and is located near Działdowo-Nidzica route 545. In the Middle Ages, a knight’s estate constituted the area of Kozłowo. The functional and spatial arrangement divides the commune into two parts: the northern area with agricultural lands, forests and lakes, and the southern area with agricultural lands and forests.

In the Kozłowo commune, forests cover 3390 ha with a forestation index of 13.34%, which makes this commune the most-sparsely forested area in the province. The forests do not constitute dense complexes and cover limited areas throughout the commune. Kozłowo borders areas of high tourist value: to the east, with the complex of Napiwodzko-Ramucka forest, to the north with the historic complex of the Grunwald battlefields and to the west with the Dąbrowskie Lakes. The commune also borders on the “Wzgórza Dylewskie” Natural Park.

Surface waters, including lakes, rivers and low retention reservoirs, significantly influence the tourist attractiveness of this region. The area of water reservoirs and water quality play an important role in the development of recreational, active or qualified (sailing, canoeing, bathing) forms of tourism. Lakes Kownatki and Szkotowskie, connected with a current which constitutes the source of Szkotówka River, are potentially attractive; this complex of reservoirs is a special resort in the lakelands with recreational values, fishing potential and relatively clean water. These resources enable the development of tourism and recreation and associated infrastructure.

In the tourist season, the recreation centre in Kownatki with its supervised bathing beach is open to the public. There are also unguarded bathing areas. Agritourist facilities are located in Szkotowo and on the shore of Lake Kownatki. In summer, the beaches are visited by approximately 20,000 tourists [Ocena stanu... 2011].

The two kurgans (earthen mounds) located near Pielgrzymowo are the only archaeological monument in the commune (registered in The Provincial Office for Monument Conservation in Olsztyn). The other monuments mostly include sacral objects and historic military cemeteries. Tourists may visit the churches dating back to the beginning of 19th century in Dziurdziewo and Sarnowo, the baroque church in Kozłowo, the churches in Sławka Wielka and Turowo, the wood and brick church built in 1740 in Zaborowo and the 19th century manor house and church in Szkotowo. The attractive sightseeing objects also include parks and manor lands under conservation located in Kozłowo, Sarnowo, Turowo, Turówko and Zabłocie Kozłowskie.

Areas under different forms of preservation are a major factor contributing to the development of recreational and qualified tourism. Protected areas reflect the uniqueness of natural values of the environment and its purity. These qualities are an important incentive component in planning and realization of tourist and recreational initiatives. Furthermore, landscape and nature preservation significantly limits the possibility to transform the environment, which in turn enables conservation of qualities important for the development of tourism in rural areas. In the Kozłowo commune, two (out of four in the county) zones of protected landscape were created: The Zone of Protected Landscape in Mielno Lake and The Zone of Protected Landscape of the Valleys of the Nida and Szkotówka Rivers. The zones of protected landscape cover 34.11% of the commune's area. These rural areas of high natural value include the lakeland region and river valleys with surrounding areas. The northern part of the commune belongs to the West-Pomeranian Junction Area of the National Ecological Network.

The Kozłowo commune does not hold events of a national or international scale that have a great impact on the tourist products of the region or on the creation and development of a tourist accommodation base. The Commune Cultural and Sporting Centre and The Commune Public Library are the major cultural centers in Kozłowo. The majority of events are organized on a local scale.

The Kozłowo commune does not offer tourist pedestrian trails. The "Szlakiem Kurchanów" cycling track runs through the commune; it was mapped out based on the existing archaeological sites and monuments. This track of medium difficulty level runs for 30 km through the villages of Kownatki, Kozłowo, Michałki, Pielgrzymowo, Szkotowo, Turowo and Zaborowo.

As far as the concentration of tourist accommodation is concerned, Kozłowo is ranked far below the average for the whole province. The intensity of tourist traffic, both in the commune and in Nidzica county, is much lower than the average value for the province. However, the average duration of tourist's stay in Kozłowo was higher than the average recorded for the province of Warmia and Mazury [Analiza rozmieszczenia ... 2011].

Under the terms of the Act of 8 March 1990 on local self-government (Art. 7, section 1) the commune has the authority to fulfil the collective needs of commune, which include sporting activities and tourism as well as recreational areas and sporting equipment. In the commune in 2010, the expenditures on tourism constituted less than 0.05% of total expenses, but only 36.4% of this amount was spent [Zarządzenie nr 11/2011... 2012].

SUMMARY

“Tourism Development Strategy of Nidzica County” states that tourism in Nidzica county is perceived as an integral part of the complex strategy for development and constitutes an important contribution to the preservation of the commune’s qualities and the creation of products that stimulate the systematic growth of the job market. Therefore, detailed actions planned on the basis of this document should be monitored in the context of their compatibility with the concept of sustainable development and the priorities outlined in “Strategic Plan of Development of Nidzica County”. The Kozłowo commune does not have any particular tourist qualities. The proportion of land use related to the natural advantages of tourist areas and creating the potential for development of tourist infrastructure amounts to approximately 40% of the commune’s area. The rural areas in Kozłowo are characterized by limited forestation and lack of special tourist values. However, the vicinity of other attractive regions of Warmia and Mazury, as well as the presence of the Lakes Kownatka and Szkotowskie, may contribute to the development of the commune’s tourist base and essential infrastructure. The growth of the tourism sector in the commune requires adopting accurate planning concepts and a programme of sustainable development to respect the close relationship between the management of rural areas and the environment. The support of rural tourism is one of the tools of sustainable development due to the close correlation between rural areas and the environment and it may stimulate social development and mobilization of rural areas. Furthermore, it will allow for diversification of business activities in this region with other non-agricultural initiatives.

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UWARUNKOWANIA ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU TURYSTYKI WIEJSKIEJ NA PRZYKŁADZIE GMINY KOZŁOWO (WOJEWÓDZTWO WARMIŃSKO-MAZURSKIE)

Streszczenie. Turystyka zrównoważona, przyjazna środowisku może stanowić trwałą podstawę rozwoju obszarów wiejskich, które charakteryzują się słabą dostępnością transportową, niedorozwojem infrastruktury turystycznej, niedostatecznym marketingiem i promocją oraz brakiem zintegrowanych produktów turystycznych. W gminie Kozłowo (województwo warmińsko-mazurskie) ok. 40% powierzchni stanowią formy użytkowania terenu związane z naturalnymi walorami przestrzeni turystycznej oraz tworzące potencjał dla rozwoju infrastruktury turystycznej. Tereny wiejskie gminy Kozłowo charakteryzuje stosunkowo nieduże zalesienie i brak wyjątkowych walorów turystycznych. Jednak sąsiedztwo innych atrakcyjnych obszarów Warmii i Mazur, jak również obecność systemu jezior Kownatki i Szkotowskiego, może stanowić przesłankę do rozwoju własnej bazy turystycznej oraz niezbędnej infrastruktury. Rozwój funkcji turystycznej gminy wymaga przyjęcia w dokumentach strategicznych odpowiednich założeń planistycznych i programu zrównoważonego rozwoju uwzględniających ścisły związek zagospodarowywania obszarów wiejskich ze środowiskiem przyrodniczym. W efekcie powinno przyczynić się to do rozwoju społecznego oraz aktywizacji obszarów wiejskich gminy.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka zrównoważona, obszary wiejskie, Warmia i Mazury

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