



Students' Scientific Conference

Possible ways of entrepreneurial adaptation in Health Tourism, especially in Békés County *(Facing new challenges)*

Miron Szilágyi

Supervisor: Dr. Imre Simon

Banská Bystrica

2012

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1. Introduction

My aim is to show the opportunities in Health Tourism, through the possible ways of corporate adaptation carefully considering the destinations in county Békés.

In my work I have included scientific researches, monographs, theses available in this particular area and further information based on my own research.

2. Some general thoughts*

Truism owing to its potential for growth and due to the fact that it is a product that can only be consumed locally, takes on an important role as a strategy for local development. The tourism is a sector that maintains local development because it generates jobs, increases the income of workers and stimulates capital investments through new business opportunities, which results in the establishment of new organizations, including SMEs. The development of tourism can also bring many negative impacts as well. For instants noise, water and visual pollution, property speculation, increased violence, loss of local identity and culture, etc. The direction and intensity of the impact (be it positive, negative or both) mainly depend on the local people and their organizations or corporation. The characteristic of tourism activity is closely linked to culture and nature.

The main hypothesis is that tourism activity should be one of the main sources of sustainable regional development, with positive effects on the creation of jobs, the generation of income and improvements in the quality of local life. To achieve this goal we have to make up institution network which are mutually strengthen the different actors.

Three elements of local development that comes from tourism are: society, the environment and the economy.

Tourism differs from other productive activities because it links together almost all field of activity id est.: entertainment, trade, transport, lodgings, travel agencies, crafts, supporting services, in addition the infrastructure (roads, airports, energy, etc.).

*(The introduction chapter is based on the paper: Sieglinde Kindl da Cunha, João Carlos da Cunha (2005). and completed by the author)
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The concept of cluster is adapted to the specific characteristics of tourism activity, whose product is linked to its local base and to the joint action of an agglomerate of enterprises involved in the region's tourism product.

“Tourism cluster is a group of highlighted tourism attractions within a limited geographic space provided with high quality equipment and services, social and political cohesion, and linkage between productive chain and associative culture, and excellent management in company nets that bring about comparative and competitive strategic advantages.” (Nordin S. (2003).)

The relations between enterprises and institutions and a tourism cluster can be understood in two ways horizontally and vertically.

. **Horizontal** form by the creation of **strategic alliances**, where agreements can be of two kinds: on one side, the agreements between enterprises that have the same principal activity, i.e. among enterprises that deal with lodging, entertainment, transport and catering. On the other side, the agreements between enterprises working with the same group of customer satisfaction, but offering different product components to the customers;

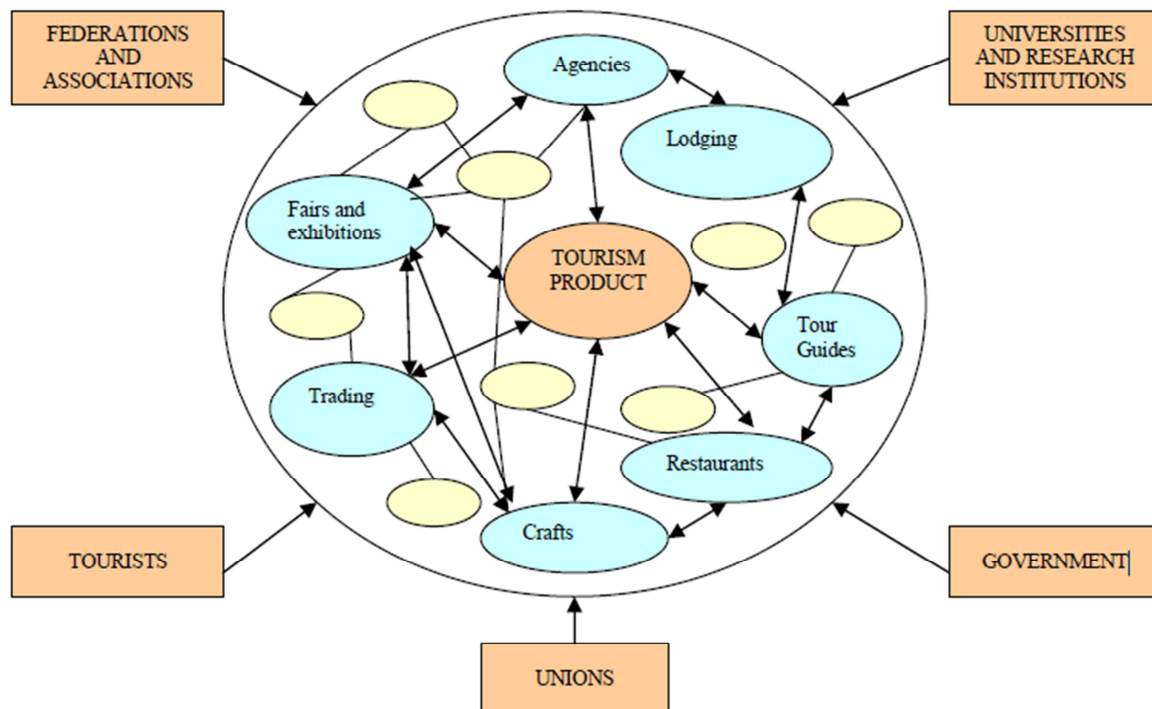
. **Vertical** – by the creation of **strategic nets**, where there is the establishment of a unilateral supplier customer relation among the partners in such a way that the object activities of the agreement are fulfilled by one of the parts, which gives its *output* to the other in exchange for a payment.

Such companies show an intern configuration that generally includes:

- a) a set of tourist attractions that draw non-resident attention;
 - b) the concentration of tourism service companies: restaurants, accommodation, transport services, crafts, travel agencies etc.;
 - c) sectors providing support to tourism services;
 - d) suitable and low-cost infrastructure (roads, energy, health services, etc.);
 - e) companies and institutions that provide specialized qualification, information and financial capital;
 - f) intern agents organized into class associations;
 - g) government agencies and other regulating bodies that impact tourism agglomerations.
- (Rodrigues, 2001, p. 307)

Tourism does not depend only on the main attraction (beaches or historical sites), but also on the comfort and service of hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, airports, other modes of transport and so on. A bad performance of one may compromise the success of the others. The Figure No1 summaries the whole complexity of the tourism cluster approaches.

Figure 1: Elements of tourism cluster



Source: Sieglinde Kindl da Cunha, João Carlos da Cunha (2005).

When we think about cluster sustainability of local development we should keep on our mind the ecological and environmental, economic, socio-cultural and political-institutional sustainability:

3. Health Tourism

What do we mean under Health Tourism?

It is a journey in order to maintain or improve the condition of a person's body, mind and soul.

Divisions:

- medicinal tourism
- wellness tourism
- fitness

As it may seem above health tourism can be divided into 3 division. The first is medicinal tourism, which can be further divided into health-preserving and healing tourism.

What do we mean under the idea of health preservation? A kind of medical care which provides preventive services for people, who are still in good health, such as advice on

healthy nutrition, adequate and regular exercises, demand for active free-time occupation, since one cannot only spend their free-time lying in front of the television set, changing channels by remote control with both hands, drinking beer from cans. The active ways of leisure could include book-reading, to maintain our brain, language learning, listening to music, or doing exercises to music. There also exist special fields of medical treatment such as nerve surgery (spinal surgery, spinal operations), where cassettes for regeneration are available, on which professionals give instructions for exercises accompanied with music. Existing medical institutions (hospitals, sanatoriums) should be involved in the preventive process, utilising private capital assets.

Medical tourism has a long-established past in Hungary, especially in Trans-Danubia, or looking back further in the past, mainly medicinal tourists visiting here from Austria what we call medicinal tourism. These tourists attended and still attend particularly dental treatments to settlements near the border. This tendency covers the whole area of the country nowadays, for gynaecological examinations and operations they come to Budapest and surroundings, whilst in the eastern part of the country those who suffer from locomotory diseases find their healing in hospitals and private clinics in the eastern cities of Hungary. The development of further possibilities in this area - medicinal tourism – is the primary aim, since the transformation of healthcare around 2007-2008 greatly altered the positional opportunities of Hungarian therapeutics. More income can only be expected if we attract tourists who want to recover from far and wide.

As for wellness tourism we have to examine the existing spas in order to acquire a picture about their possible involvement into the project. Békés County possesses at least ten spas which correspond to the standards of wellness. Wellness may particularly popular mainly with young, well-off families, with a larger demand on long-weekends, in contrast with older generations who prefer spas.

Fitness is one of today's fashionable sports, as it can be done simply, in any circumstances. It does not require big investment; the emphasis should be made on training of professional coaches. Nowadays a lot of fitness halls of suitable quality can be found nationwide and only those can stay alive where the training is led and monitored by properly qualified professionals

2.1. The Importance of Health Tourism

In autumn and in spring the main tone is (welter in) therapy and medication while summer usually uses by thousands of families who want to leisure. In winter principally prevention get tone. Medication and wellness all parts available every time of the year.

Health Tourism contains much more things such as it makes an easier regional concentration. Unfortunately, Hungary still have a big problem with tourism. Because every part of Hungarian tourism working in Budapest, Dunakanyar and Balaton. These are the most valuable parts of tourism in Hungary. Some other areas which are far from the main centres unfortunately do not have enough chance to feel the positive part of rural tourism. But maybe Health Tourism can help to solve these problems. Our country has a huge amount of thermal water so there are some opportunities to build wellness centres or hotels every part of the country.

In every other health resorts or health places there is a limited time which is necessary for healing and its attached to medical therapy.

- Typical services which are in connection with healing
- Minimal limited stay time

Medical tourism has a general current infrastructure in our country. The Nationwide Medical Checkout has a strong function but its only works for complaint and extant diseases which needs much more development. Supports will still get enough functions and the service packages are still so popular. These are also need development.

4. Wellness tourism and its elements

The concept of wellness combines technology and the human consciousness. These two parts of wellness tourism are in a strong connections and it makes a unified health saving program which provide success and entertainment. Holistic approach: physical, pneumatic, intellectual health, ecological and social balance

Most important parts:

- regular exercise
- healthy diet

Elements:

- health keeping

- interdisciplinary explanation (mental, physical, biological) which can make a health union

5. New forms of supporting the health tourism

5.1. Thermal health tourism clusters of the Southern Great Plain

At the end of December in 2003 the association of several institutions made a decision to create a cluster. The main goal was to collect enough medical and wellness hotels, pensions, service centres. The **Thermal Cluster and its headquarter was established in the 5th of November in 2004, in Gyula town (Békés County)**. “Gyula is a spa town with a historical atmosphere, one of the two landmarks of the town is the fortified Gothic Brick Castle; the other is the Castle Bath, which goes back fifty years. This is the most important spa on the Southern Great Plain. The ‘four-generation spa’ offers an ideal opportunity for rest and recreation for all ages, from young children to senior citizens. Located in an 8, 5-hectare protected woodland the Bath has seven outdoor, ten indoor pools and one semi-covered pool. There is a wide choice of recreation and entertainment including, among other things, a wave pool, a children’s water paradise, an indoor wellness and adventure centre and an Olympic-size pool. Curative power: The waters contain alkaline hydrogen carbonate and chloride beneficial for the treatment of locomotive-diseases, rheumatism, post-traumatic rehabilitation, local neural diseases, gastric complaints resulting from hyperacidity, and inflammatory gynecological disorders. The following services are available at the Baths: medicinal and refreshing massage, underwater jet massage (tangentor), mudpack therapy, electrotherapy, physiotherapy, magneto therapy and carbonated bath.” (Forrás: http://www.countypress.hu/kep/delalfoldi_furdok.pdf)

28 firms/institutions of **Csongrád County** neighboring country of Békés, established a health and tourism cluster, operating mainly in the healthcare and tourism sectors, offer complex health tourism services of the highest professional quality within the framework of the so-called HUNGAROMED CLUSTER. The managing firm of the Cluster is the Hungaromed Ltd. which performs tasks of administration, organization, public relations and marketing. The leading medical institution is the Albert Szent-Györgyi Clinical Centre of Szeged University. Expertise in travel services is ensured by Proko Travel Agency.

Service areas: medical & dental care, balneotherapy & spa, screenings, rehabilitative therapies, surgeries & one-day interventions, tourist programs, wellness & recreation services,

specialties of the region (culture, arts and crafts, gastronomy, wine etc.). (Forrás: <http://www.hungaromed.com/>)

The main goals to organise these clusters was: Make a much more successful Health Tourism in the Southern Plain in the native and in the international market competition.

5.2. The Széchenyi Recreation Card

The idea of the Széchenyi Recreation Card was brought up in the spring of 2010 by the Széchenyi Club Economic developer company. Their concept was discussed and consulted later by professional and labour organizations, and members of the Ministry of National Economy. As a result of consultations a legal solution was formed, which inserted the card into the „fringe benefits” section of the personal income-tax act, as a new element of the cafeteria system.

According to this the Széchenyi Recreation Card „is a means of payment issued by the entitled institution, with which the employee can buy services on the debit of their employer – from an entitled distributor.”

In a given year with preferential taxation maximum 300.000 Forint support can be transferred to the Széchenyi Recreation Card. The regulations regarding to fringe-benefits in the personal income-tax act in force in 2011 the employer bound to pay 16 per cent personal income-tax after the value of support multiplied by 1, 19, no other tax is needed.

Until now we have not made any difference between participants in foreign or nationwide health tourism. Considering our national possibilities potential consumers were helped with tourist cheques which could not fully come up to expectations, eventually it overgrew itself, and we notice the Széchenyi Card instead as a possible solution, which came into force since 1 January 2011. We expect that consumer groups that wish to take part in health and wellness tourism could fully use the opportunities offered by the Széchenyi Card. For this reason we need all the householders, wellness baths and spas, and all the organisations or institutions join, because it is the basic condition for the Recreation Card. According to research conducted by the Hungarian Tourism Zrt. demand should be increased with decreasing the costs of maintenance the same time. Presumably the fact, that among our neighbouring countries and compared with the European Union the level of V.A.T. is the highest, will not favour to carry out these aims. A further rise of the tax (prospectively to 27%), will probably not motivate a decrease in maintenance costs, and the increase of demand will not exercisable.

The above mentioned (presumably 27%) raise will consequently make the services more expensive, that will not generate attraction. Price of services should be raised to compensate the increase of V.A.T. I believe tourism could be boosted by decreasing V.A.T. The consequence would result more marketable hotel services, because the growth of guest nights could be raised with more favourable prices. (I would decrease the present 18% V.A.T. content to 10%.) The state incomes would become smaller. But the incomes were not really smaller because guest nights would also attract important V.A.T. contents with purchasing other services, such as catering or other products linked to the destination.

7. Opportunities in Békés County

It seems to be a good idea to launch a unique Touristic Destination Center aiming to promote the thermal baths and the all possibilities including even the investment to utilize the thermal water resources. Let us take Békéscsaba into consideration. It would be expedient in the city's center to develop a wellness hotel as Békéscsaba is the county seat. Békéscsaba itself has a good spa but on top of that Gyula town is in the neighborhood, only 10-15 minutes driving and in Gyula have running wellness hotels for many decades. There is in the city center of Békéscsaba an old socialist-fashioned empty hotel building called Körös Hotel, it's high time to demolish it and to have instead of it a new five –star –hotel. That plot has many advantages , good logistics and even a huge page for parking for cars and buses. In my opinion, a spa hotel would boost development of the tourism in Békés County.

It would be necessary to make changes in the present situation urgently; it's sure that to make such an improvement necessary to have investors and a strong commitment and-support from the community bodies. There is many other possible agendas, but does not is starts anything until all necessary goodwill and intentions are not laid together. A swallow does not do summer!

Acknowledgement

Research was supported/subsidized by the TÁMOP 4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-011 „Development of a complex educational assistance/support system for talented students and prospective researchers at the Szent István University” project.

Abstract

In my paper I show some accomplished projects and opportunities in the field of health tourism in Békés County lay down thoughts on, how can we use the cluster approach for development of our national or regional tourism?

I made a general overview of tourism, especially health tourism. I introduced a tractate why the health tourism is so important, how we can develop it, and what can/should do the investors and community bodies to achieve a significant improvement.

First of all, there are still some parts in health tourism, which need much development. Well, I think corporates should make a cooperation, which can help to improve health tourism and achieve sustainability. I strongly believe that without cooperation let me say without clusters there are no chances to go forward.

In the paper I made a brief description of the **Thermal Cluster the Southern Great Plain** which was established in the 5th of November in 2004, in Gyula town (Békés County) and the **Hungaromed Cluster** (Csongrád County) operating mainly in the healthcare and tourism sectors and offer complex health tourism services of the highest professional quality. I also made a review one of the newest feature to support recreational activity of people called **Széchenyi Recreation Card**

Acknowledgement

Research was supported/subsidized by the TÁMOP 4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-011 „Development of a complex educational assistance/support system for talented students and prospective researchers at the Szent István University” project.

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