

## THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONCERNING THE ZEMPLÉN DESTINATION

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### SUMMARY

The eastern part of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, which includes the southern part of the historic Zemplén County and the area of Abaúj County situated to the east of the River Hernád, is provided with extremely significant tourist attractions. These attractions include both the natural environment and man-made phenomena. Half of the county's tourist attractions (54) are situated in Zemplén County.

Driven by the regional and economic development possibilities offered by tourism, Zemplén Local Enterprise Foundation and the towns of Sárospatak, Sátoraljaújhely, Szerencs and Tokaj, along with their statistical districts, submitted an application to the Hungarian National Tourist Office (Magyar Turizmus Zrt., hereafter referred to as "HNTO"). The aim of this application was to obtain financial support for the development of tourism in the Zemplén Region.

Due to the support received from the HNTO, it became possible to prepare the Tourism Development Programme of the Zemplén Region in 1997.

### 1. THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE ZEMPLÉN REGION TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN ARE DETAILED BELOW, BASED ON THE THEMATIC ORDER OF THE STUDY:

- 1.1. First of all, we achieved the sub-separation of the Zemplén Region in the framework of a tourism-related state evaluation of the Zemplén tourism destination. In connection with the external separation plan of the county's Tourism Development Strategy, we forwarded a modification proposal with regard to the internal borders of the sub-regions:
  - In the case of Tokaj-Hegyalja, on the basis of legal regulations concerning the so called closed wine area.
  - Regarding Taktaköz-Harangod, we suggested that four settlements, situated on the bank of River Hernád, belonging to the Tokaj-Hegyalja sub-region should be reclassified as belonging to the Taktaköz-Harangod sub-region.

Moreover, we prepared a land register of settlements in certain tourism sub-regions in order to develop a SWOT analysis, objectives, and development suggestions which may concern the more precisely designated regional sub-units.
- 1.2. We considered the following topics during the evaluation of the tourism situation in the Zemplén Region:

- the history and culture of the region
  - the natural endowments of the region:
    - terrain
    - climate
    - water
    - quality of the landscape
    - mineral resources
    - flora and fauna.
  - Endowments created by humans:
    - economic situation
    - tourism infrastructure
    - catering and retail services
    - cultural endowments
    - sport and hobby facilities
    - local and small-scale regional programmes
    - tourism organisations
  - Tourism-related settlements and tourist “attractions”.
- 1.3. Based on an analysis of the state evaluation regarding tourist “attractions”, tourism-related settlements and infrastructure; we pointed out that Zemplén Region has the capacity to host significant numbers of both foreign and domestic guests, as it has the infrastructure, endowments and attractions appropriate for a holiday destination. 84 settlements from the 104 settlements in the region can be considered holiday resorts and there are two settlements which specialise in tourism. Out of the 5 towns which have advantages concerning international tourism, there are three (Sárospatak, Sátoraljaújhely, Tokaj) that have the basic conditions to meet the necessary demands. In the region of Hollóháza and Vizsoly, there are also settlements which are suitable for further development.
- 1.4. When examining the demand for tourism, the characteristics of foreign demand can be divided into the following categories on the basis of a national middle-term tourism marketing strategy:
- Related to the product:
    - business travel
    - health and wellbeing
    - special interest
    - the preference of holidaymakers for riverside accommodation.
  - Related to the target groups:
    - young tourists having holidays for fun
    - world travellers
    - tourists of the future
    - tourists who prefer staying at home instead of going on holiday
    - groups interested in traditions.
- Regarding the Zemplén Region, improvements in the “special interest” and “health and wellbeing” product groups are expected. Meanwhile, in the case of target groups,

the number of world travellers and young people travelling for fun seems to be increasing significantly.

- 1.5. The main features of the domestic demand relevant for our region – based on the evaluation of questionnaires made for the County Tourism Development Strategy – are as below:
- Our primary objective is to extend the length of people’s stays in the region. The main group we are targeting in order to fulfill this aim are middle-aged parents who have two children and a university education.
  - The frequency of visits can be increased mainly in category of trips.
  - Opportunities to travel by car and the provision of safe parking places strongly influence final attitudes.
  - As travel agencies (direct sales) do not play a significant role in encouraging tourism in the region, this sector should be also improved.
  - In order to boost tourism in the Zemplén Region, the following 8 target groups and their demands should be taken into consideration: young people travelling for fun, including those with both low and high salaries; young families interested in the region’s traditions; active middle-aged people who wish to relax; more passive middle-aged travellers who want a cheap holiday; older people who are recovering from illnesses; more active older people who wish to have a rest; and well-off older people who are interested in the traditions of the region.
  - The public image of Zemplén, along with its towns and products, all have to be considered and kept in mind.
- 1.6. When analyzing the regional SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) we examined not only the region’s good and bad points, but also the competitiveness of the region and its sub-regions.

1. table:  
SWOT analysis

	Bodrogköz		Taktaköz Harangod		Tokaj Hegyalja		Mountains of Zemplén	
	G	W	G	W	G	W	G	W
1. Location, approach	5	3	4	1	7	3	3	5
borders of the country	X	X			x			x
mountains	x				x		x	
river, flood area	x		x		x			
airport					x			
appropriate public road	x	x	x	X	x			x
railway		x	x		x	x		x
cycle path	x		x			x	x	x
tourist trails					x	x	x	x
2. Sights	9	1	5	0	15	0	14	1
a.) natural	5	0	3	0	6	0	7	0

Undisturbed area	X		X		x		x	
mountains					x		x	
shore	x		x		x			
woods, parks	x						x	
geological					x		x	
wildlife	x						x	
landscape					x		x	
environmental protection	x				x		x	
cultivated land			x					
<b>b.) Cultural and economical</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
Monuments	X	X	X		x		x	
historic monuments					x		x	
architecture, settlement					x		x	
art, culture					x			x
museums					x		x	
folklore, traditions	x				x		x	
product			x		x		x	
profession	x				x			
enterprise zone	x				x		x	
<b>3. Programmes</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Events	X				x			
hiking	x		x		x		x	
open-air					x		x	
pool	x				x			
horse-riding	x		x		x		x	
hunting			x		x		x	
sport facilities					x		x	
camping								
wine-tasting, wine-road					x	x		
gastronomy	x				x			
narrow-gauge railway in the forest							x	
<b>4. Accommodation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
Hotel		X		x	x		x	X
guesthouse		x		x	x		x	x
camping		x		x	x		x	
youth hostel		x		x	x		x	
summer cottage		x		x	x		x	
village guest hosting	X		x		x		x	
<b>5. Catering</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
Restaurant		X		x	x		x	x
bistro		x		x	x		x	x
pub	X		x		x	x	x	

confectioner's coffee-bar		x x		x x	x x		x x	x x
6. Services	0	3	0	2	3	1	0	3
Car ski-lift		X						x
retail		x		x	x	x		x
health		x		x	x			x
7. Human resources	0	3	0	2	4	2	4	2
Point of view getting old, migration		x		x	x	x	x	x
mixed minority language skill		x		x		x	x	x
experts					x		x	
professional training		x			x			
hospitality					x		x	
8. Local environment	1	4	1	3	3	3	2	3
road network		X		x	x			x
having public utilities infrastructure	X	x x	x	x	x	x	x	x
efficient organisation								x
relaxing places								
safe car-parking						x		
valuable landscape of the settlement		x		x	x	x	x	
public security								
9. Information	1	1	0	1	3	2	2	1
Existing fame publication	X				x x		x x	
information tables		X		x		x		x
Tourinform offices					x	x		
10. Institutions	1	3	0	0	2	2	2	2
small regional professional	X	X x			x	X	x x	x
travel agencies		x			x	x		x
11. Marketing	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	2
sale marketing		X		x		X		x
investment					x			
distance		X				x		x

Source: Dankó L.: *Tourism Development Plan Concerning the Zemplen Region In: Tri-Border Regional Economic Co-operation USAID-Zemplen LEF, Sátoraljaújhely, 1999. pp. 129-144.*

A SWOT analysis was completed separately, which includes the *development objectives* related to the four sub-regions:

- Development objectives for Bodrogköz:
  1. Infrastructure development (public transport, narrow-gauge railway, sewage treatment, the collection and disposal of rubbish)
  2. Creating accommodation facilities, such as village guesthouses and campsites (with meals provided)
  3. Establishing an information network
  4. Publishing maps
  5. Training and retraining in tourism, primarily in the area of village tourism
  6. Designation of cycle paths along public roads
  7. Opening a border crossing
- Development objectives for Taktaköz-Harangod:
  1. In order to harmonize tourist programmes, cooperation will be necessary in the cross region of River Tisza and Hernád
  2. Designation of cycle paths along public roads
  3. Establishing an information network
  4. Improving accommodation in villages along the river banks, as requested by tourists
- Development objectives for Tokaj-Hegyalja:
  1. Creating real regional cooperation with the participation of local governments
  2. Improving the conditions of tourist accommodation
  3. Developing infrastructure through the establishment of Tourinform offices and of local TDM associations in Abaújszántó, Tokaj, Sárospatak and in Sátoraljaújhely
  4. Preparing and distributing marketing and PR publications
  5. Training in tourism, as well as retraining and further training,
  6. Improving the conditions for tourists who have come to bathe in thermal baths and spas (thermal tourism)
- Development objectives for Zemplén-Mountains:
  1. Developing quality accommodation facilities
  2. Renovating tourist trails
  3. Organising the landscape
  4. Developing an information network
  5. Improving opportunities for hunting
  6. Improving marketing activities
  7. Developing conditions suitable for horse-riding tourism
  8. Supporting the operation of mountain-bike and skiing clubs
  9. Creating tourism programme units
  10. Training local tour managers
  11. Preparing appropriate brochures, which include information concerning accommodation facilities
  12. Creating rest stops, lavatories and rain shelters
  13. Designating and building cycle paths (Eurovelo 11A),
  14. Training village hosts and hostesses
  15. Putting up outdoor information notice boards
  16. Organising cultural programmes

17. Contributing to the reconstruction of a narrow-gauge railway on an entrepreneurial basis
18. Supporting an organization aimed at encouraging coordination and cooperation
19. Supporting the renewal of the traditional wood industries (e.g. charcoal burning, making barrels, the wood industry)
20. Organising ecological training programmes for professionals
21. Creating car-free zones in the Zemplén National Park
22. Integrating wood and game farming with the development of tourism
23. Rebuilding youth-hiking tourism in Zemplén and in its expanded region
24. Improving trade and hospitality services
25. Developing a Slovakian-Hungarian border-crossing road at Hollóháza.

1.7. Based on the SWOT analysis and the development objectives summarized above, we formed our vision of tourist development in the Zemplén Region according to the following considerations:

- target groups
- accessibility of the tourist destinations
- supply of tourism products
- hosting capacity
- regional and location environment
- shareholders

We summarized the requirements of products to be developed in the table below:

2. table  
Products to be developed

Type of tourism service	Bodrogköz	Taktaköz - Harangod	Tokaj-Hegyalja	Mountains of Zemplén
Business travel:				
* Conferences, seminars	+	+	+	+
* Incentive			+	+
Health and Wellbeing tourism:			+	
* Thermal tourism	+	+		+
* Village tourism			+	+
* Youth tourism				
Social interest:				
* Hiking tourism			+	+
* Cycling tourism	+	+		+
* Sport tourism	+			+
* Hunting tourism	+	+		+
* Cultural tourism			+	
* Tours to castles, historic sight tourism			+	+
* Wine tourism, harvest programmes			+	

Holidays near the river:		
* water sports	+	+

Source: Dankó L.: Development Tourism Zemplén's In.: Marketing-kaleidoszkóp ME Marketing Intézet Miskolc, 2006. pp. 405-425.

- 1.8. In order to put the tourism marketing conception of the region into practice, we determined what tourism marketing “instruments” would be useful. Most of the “instruments” we are going to use are from the sector of communication, since the marketing instruments of product, price, and distribution require concrete entrepreneurial decisions which would first need us to generate cooperation on a public level.

## **2. SECONDLY, BASED ON THE VISION OUTLINED ABOVE, WE DEFINED REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TASKS BOTH IN GENERAL AND FOR SPECIFIC PRODUCTS**

In order for each product to be developed, we indicated an institution, an enterprise or representative that is in charge of the improvements on a regional level and that can become the facilitator of a managed or spontaneous process.

### *A) General development tasks:*

- 2.1. To explore, conserve and introduce place(s) of interest we need:
- To make known the region's tourist attractions, to ensure their publication and distribution on information leaflets.
  - To save, renovate and establish tourist attractions in the region.
  - To encourage organisations which specialise in saving local attractions, as well as supporting them financially and professionally.
  - To reorganise private collections so as to make them presentable to the public.
- 2.2. To create tourism programme units we need:
- To elaborate and develop the five products that determine the tourism-related demands of the region (wine routes, thermal tourism, village tourism, water tourism, hunting tourism) in a coordinated system.
  - To initiate further health and wellbeing programmes, cultural and entertainment programmes, ecological and hunting programmes based on natural endowments, activity programmes that raise awareness of cultural traditions, as well as practical programmes based on economic endowments.
  - To improve factory tours by explaining the technology used and making shopping available on the premises.
  - To establish special services to host businessmen and groups from workplaces.
  - To develop regional products from the small regional programmes according to demand.
- 2.3. To improve accommodation conditions we need:
- To increase the number of campsites, village or paying guesthouses, and providers of public accommodation that are accredited and mentioned in brochures.
  - To modernize and renovate buildings providing accommodation.



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- To increase the number of beds, to improve the professional and technical levels in hotels and guesthouses, and to improve the quality of the various services these places provide.
  - To organise a network of the places providing accommodation and to integrate these places with other tourism services.
- 2.4. To improve the capacity and quality of hospitality services we need:
- To assist in setting up small restaurants whose characteristic features are traditional for the local rural area.
  - To utilize canteens owned by local governments for tourism purposes in rural areas.
  - To increase the technical and professional quality of the restaurants available, to improve their internal decor, and the design of menus and their translation into foreign languages.
  - To indicate special local dishes and beverages on the menu by increasing the use of local products.
- 2.5. To improve the tourist infrastructure we need:
- To develop rental services (cars, bikes, boats, and other sport equipment).
  - To expand the network of, and the selection of goods available in, souvenir shops.
  - To create a network of bureau de changes, ensuring their accessibility in terms of their physical locations and opening hours.
  - To extend the service provided by information offices such as tourist information offices, tour operators and local tour guides.
- 2.6. To strengthen the organizational infrastructure we need:
- To act as a guide in the organization and activities of the Zempléni TDM Szövetség (Zemplén Tourism Destination Management Association).
  - To develop and support the network of sectors dealing with tourism within the framework of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
  - To promote the integration of entrepreneurial activities.
  - To establish tourism offices in small regions and to link these offices to the county's professional network.
- 2.7. To promote active tourism we need:
- To clarify the tasks of the different organisations that promote tourism (travel agencies, tour guides).
  - To ensure the tourists enter the country in an unproblematic way, and to ensure the activities of travel agencies meet the economic and legal requirements.
  - To organise programmes that ensure the unproblematic entry of tourists into the country.
  - To organise the transfer of products to their markets by involving local governments, entrepreneurs and other system operators, and utilizing their contacts.
- 2.8. To develop the environment of the region and its settlements we need:
- To expand the multilevel network of rest stop places for tourists and information stops.
  - To designate, mark, describe and introduce tour routes, to ensure directions for sightseeing are placed in brochures.

- To accelerate the utilization of castles and monuments for tourism purposes.
  - To arrange for landscaping to be carried out in the region.
  - To renovate villages, and continue the reconstruction of city centres by encouraging the proprietors of buildings to engage in reconstruction.
- 2.9. To improve accessibility we need:
- To build the M30 motorway and repair the linking roads
  - To extend cycle paths
  - To improve the network of border crossing routes and the services available at these places
  - To arrange coach/bus and railway schedules
- 2.10. To improve marketing activities we need:
- To make the public aware of publications (leaflets, travel brochures, postcards, catalogues and video films)
  - To create road signs indicating tourism facilities. These signs should be placed along the routes which lead tourists towards target locations.
  - To create a positive image of the region in the media.
  - To represent the region at accredited national and international fairs and exhibitions.
  - To promote our region on the Internet.
  - To improve and produce products and souvenirs that emphasise the region's special characteristics.
  - To strengthen local and regional foreign contacts and make use of them for tourism purposes.
  - To maintain contact with professional and social organisations.
- 2.11. To develop human resources we need:
- To ensure tourism managers receive higher education.
  - To involve adults in foreign language learning, especially those who are employed in the hospitality sector.
  - To compile a list of tour guides and interpreters, and to make this list available to the public.
  - To train and retrain hosts and hostesses.
  - To train local tour guides.
- 2.12. To establish the necessary conditions of financing we need:
- To establish the Regional Tourism Development Fund as a separate entity, which could be financed from a part of the central contribution. This could supplement the central, decentralized and tourism tax incomes which support tourism activities.
  - To ensure indirect support for development activities from the B.A.Z. County Development Fund.
  - To take advantage of the opportunity to make applications to the Tourism Objective Prospect.

*B) Possible directions for regional tourism development:*

Significant sectors for regional tourism development among the previously mentioned tourism-related products include:

- wine tourism
- thermal tourism
- village tourism
- water tourism (canoe tours)
- sport tourism (mountain sports, horse-riding)
- hunting tourism

**3. BASED ON THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN, THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE TO CERTAIN RELEVANT AUTHORITIES:**

*A) To the Ministry of Local Governments and the Regional Development Tourism Unit of the Hungarian National Tourist Office:*

- We suggest that from the product development contribution applications submitted in connection with tourism in the Zemplén Region, those initiatives which comply with the directives of the Regional Development Tourism Plan should be given priority.
- We recommend involving the public of the region (local entrepreneurs, the general public, and institutions). The public should be informed about detailed “attraction” list created by the Zemplén Tourism Destination Management Association.
- We advise compiling brochures in thematic order which focus on the same or similar products (e.g. wine routes, thermal pools, the national cycle path-system) on either the national level or on the eastern-Hungarian regional level.
- We propose that you consider contributing to the training of local entrepreneurs and citizens dealing with (village) tourism by involving the Tourism Department of the Kossuth Lajos Gimnázium és Egészségügyi Szakközépiskola (grammar and secondary schools), as well as by starting to train tourism managers at the Comenius Tanítóképző Főiskola (a teacher training college) in Sárospatak.
- We suggest that you consider contributing to the regional marketing and PR activities of the region, as well as to entrepreneurs’ advertising activities.

*B) To the Regional Development Council:*

1. We recommend setting up a tourism committee to encourage cooperation and coordination regarding concepts, plans and development programmes that extend over the region and the country e.g.:
  - to suggest wine tours
  - to suggest facilities for sport tourism and horse-riding tours in the mountains
  - to develop castle tours and sightseeing tours
  - to improve the cycle path network
  - to develop water tourism on the River Tisza on a cooperative basis
  - to propose hunting tourism on a large-scale regional level.

2. We suggest that you should consider contributing significantly to tourism development in the Zemplén region through the Regional Operative Development Programme 2007-2013. Special products of regional tourism development are wine, (mountain) sports, hunting, and village and water tourism.
3. While utilizing regional decentralized funds in the application system, we suggest that you consider the development directives of the Regional Tourism Development Programme and its suggestions.
4. We recommend that you support promotional activity: firstly, by involving the Zemplén TDM Association; and, secondly, on the basis of a common regional system of publications and PR.

*C. To the Tourism Department of the B.A.Z. County Assembly*

1. It is necessary to be aware of the County Tourism Development Strategy and its compliance with the Tourism Development Plan of the Zemplén Region in order to define the Zemplén Region more clearly in the county's PR and promotional activities.
2. We recommend that you provide the Zempléni TDM Szövetség (Zemplén Tourism Destination Management Association) with both professional assistance and all the necessary information.
3. We suggest that you promote the Tourinform offices in Abaújszántó, Tokaj and Sárospatak (Tokaj-Hegyalja) and in Sátoraljaújhely (Mountains of Zemplén).
4. We suggest that you participate in the training of regional entrepreneurs and citizens interested in village tourism.
5. We recommend that you hand over the regional database, including the regional "attractions", to the entrepreneurial library of the Zemplén TDM Association in order to provide entrepreneurs and institutions with information.
6. When accrediting community marketing programmes and regional entrepreneurial applications in both the national and regional application system, it is important to consider how they comply with the tasks outlined in the Regional Tourism Development Plan.

*D. To the local governments and institutions situated in the Zemplén Region:*

1. It is necessary to make others aware of the facilities "hiding" in tourism based on studying the Tourism Development Plan and the list of "attractions".
2. We need to improve cooperation among settlements and their institutions for the purpose of harmonizing and suggesting common high-quality tourism products.
3. It is necessary to meet the needs of tourism in settlement infrastructure i.e. in the issues of environment protection, cleanliness, tidiness and rubbish disposal (e.g. providing litterbins at rest stop places).
4. We need to improve the accessibility of tourist resorts by providing outdoor tables, parking places, cycle paths, and tour routes.
5. It is necessary to organise programmes and events at settlement-level in order to create new tourist "attractions".

*E. To enterprises and institutions involved in regional tourism:*

1. It is necessary to, either in parallel with the activities of the Zempléni TDM Szövetség (Zemplén Tourism Destination Management Association) or within its framework, to establish a sufficient level of entrepreneurial co-operation.
2. Is it necessary that all the relevant organizations, through coordination and participation, establish a united representation so as to achieve results in common marketing activities and regional tourism development programmes.
3. Those working for the same or for similar sectors should agree on a business policy in order to provide good entrepreneurial possibilities in the future.
4. There should be more coordination of the people who run guesthouses. As these people and their establishments are often seen by tourists as the most authentic face of the region, they can contribute significantly to the development of tourism.
5. We should analyze the possibility of financing a common sales agent and TDM office, depending on the resources available.
6. There should be closer cooperation among organizations in order to ensure they are informed about currently available and potentially successful national and county application opportunities, and to provide the County Tourism Unit, as well as the Zemplén Tourism Destination Management Association, with any necessary information.

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