



## Original article

## Tourism management by public administration institutions

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## INFORMATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

The work addresses the issue of implementing the function of the state in the tourism economy by government and self-government administration institutions. Attention is paid to the scope of the functions of the state carried out in the tourism economy and the multiplicity of entities involved in achieving the objectives in this field. A multi-level and extensive tourism management system as well as the dysfunctionality of the existing structure is presented. The public tourism management system has limited effectiveness and it also carries a risk resulting from the duplication of competencies. On the other hand, despite the high share of the tourism economy in creating economic values, tourism is not sufficiently acknowledged by state authorities that implement tasks in the field of tourism policy. Sources of budget subsidies for tasks in the tourism sphere are very limited. The aim of the study is to identify the current system of managing the tourism economy by public entities in Poland and to indicate the areas that should be subject to improvement.

## KEYWORDS

tourism economy, tourism management, tourism policy



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### Introduction

Tourism is one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the global economy and national economies, considerably affecting the macroeconomic effects, measured by the share in the gross domestic product or the level of employment in entities involved in the creation of the tourist product. It is therefore an important area of socio-economic policy. Specialized entities operate at individual policy levels, possessing competencies and instruments that enable shaping market relations in the tourism economy. Relations between policy actors and policy addressees (tourism enterprises and organizations operating in tourist areas) serve as a model and are shaped by the scope and manner of using the instruments (e.g. increasing interference or deregulation). The state's interference in the tourism economy is directed towards: demand, supply and forming the place of the tourism sector in the national economy. The state

activities in the tourism economy should be reduced, among others, to primary purposes: meeting the tourist needs of society and shaping the optimal size and structure of tourist traffic in given conditions. The actions of the state in the tourism economy do not only include the objectives in the field of supervision and shaping of effects consistent with the expectations of the policy-making bodies, but also engagement in the goals regarding the direct impact on the tourism economy structure. Thus, it should be acknowledged that public institutions manage the tourism economy, both through regulatory and real processes. The aim of the study is to identify the current system of managing the tourism economy by public entities in Poland and to indicate the areas that should be subject to improvement. The conducted research is of theoretical and overview character. The method of critical analysis of the subject literature and the methods of logical operations were used.

### **1. The basis for the functioning of the tourism market**

The tourism market should be interpreted as the sum of processes in which buyers (mainly tourists) and bidders representing entities of the tourist economy define objects of a tourist offer exchange (tourist product) and a price together with terms of purchase and sale, resulting in a transaction. From the supply side, the tourism market is formed not only by traditionally understood tourism service providers (entrepreneurs operating on a commercial basis), but also by institutions creating conditions for constructing a tourist offer and making it available, i.e. primarily self-government administration units and tourist organizations (based on *non-profit*). The objects of exchange on the tourism market are therefore not only products in the narrow sense, which are goods and services offered by tourism enterprises, but also (e.g. making tourist values or attractions available) and general conditions for using the tourist function of an area (infrastructure and information). In spatial terms, market processes in the tourism economy are related to the concept of territorial tourism product, which is a set of tourist services offered to tourists both by commercial entities and non-commercial territorial units.

In subjective terms, the tourism market consists of: tourism demand, tourism supply and the price of services offered to tourists. In a more specific approach, tourism supply includes:

- basic tourist goods (tourist values and attractions) that are a direct interest of tourists in a given tourist area, and which are not subject to a usual market turnover, but are made available by a market offer through so-called means and conditions for practicing tourism,
- tourist services (e.g. accommodation, catering, transport and tourism organization),
- other goods and services purchased by tourists at a place of tourist emission and reception,
- material and immaterial elements deciding about an offer at a tourism destination (e.g. access to local infrastructure, tourist information and rental of tourist equipment) [1].

The complex offer on the tourism market is connected with meeting the needs of people during their travel and stay outside everyday surroundings, and it is a derivative of the tourism practice.

The structure of the tourism market is composed of:

- entrepreneurs providing tourist services,
- tourism destinations,
- customers of tourist services and at the same time tourists at tourism destinations,
- tourism policy entities – regulating the functioning of the tourism market.

The concept of a tourism destination requires explanation [2]. From the perspective of demand, it should be understood as a destination of travel (town, region or country), related to its characteristic functions and properties [3]. For the purpose of this study, it should be interpreted subjectively. It is an entity of the tourism market, functioning in a tourist area, responsible for creating conditions for practicing tourism, as well as shaping, sharing and promoting the tourist offer of this area [4]. Therefore, a tourism destination is not only a place, but a system of institutions managing the tourist offer of an area (territorial tourism product) [5]. Competent entities representing a destination are responsible for them, usually self-government units and supporting tourist organizations.

## **2. The concept and structure of tourism policy**

The tourism market is an important area of interest for the state and its organs. It is reflected in the following areas of activity:

- a) economic – connected to the functioning of entities on the supply side of the market,
- b) social – including the impact on social needs in the field of practicing tourism through the creation of demand, as well as in terms of landscape planning.

Tourism policy is a part of general socio-economic policy of the state, combining social and economic objectives and premises for interference of state authorities in economic matters [6]. Tourism policy should be treated as one of the specialized sectoral policies, making the direct impact of the state on the tourism market possible and shaping relations with other specialized policies, especially international and regional, industrial, employment, environmental protection, cultural, trade and communication.

Regulations at the level of the tourism market result from a pursued tourism policy. Tourism policy should be understood as the activity of the state and its organs based on defining economic and social goals related to tourism as well as selection of appropriate instruments necessary for their implementation, as a result leading to shaping the tourism market structure, both on the side of tourism supply and tourism demand, and in supply-demand relations. The main task of tourism policy is to shape the optimal size and structure of tourist traffic and to coordinate the development of tourism with other areas of the national economy [7].

The structure of tourism policy is formed by [8]:

- policy entities – specialized public bodies and institutions supporting them that have competencies determined by the law and use tools of direct influence on other entities of the tourism market,
- policy addressees – tourism entrepreneurs and tourism destinations together with their offers and tourism customers (clients of tourism enterprises and tourists),
- policy methods, also called policy models, i.e. the manner and scope of involvement of state authorities in the processes of the tourism market,
- policy instruments – state authorities' actions subordinated to an applied policy model which are means of implementing goals and tasks.

In the scope of this study, it is important to refer to the tourism policy system by determining the areas of operation of the tourism market in which a state interference is necessary and what tools should be used as part of this interference.

Tourism policy entities can be organized according to the impact range criterion, which at the same time is connected to the hierarchical criterion (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Tourism policy entities

Operation range	Entities
<b>Global</b>	international tourist organizations (including the World Tourism Organization)
	international tourist branch organizations
	other international institutions impacting tourism as an important element of the global economy (OECD)
<b>European Union</b>	European Union bodies
	Committee on Tourism of the European Union
	European Travel Commission (ETC)
<b>Central</b>	legislative bodies (Parliament, Senate and President)
	government and individual ministers
	National Tourism Administration – NTA (minister in charge of tourism)
	National Tourism Organization – NTO (Polish Tourism Organization)
	other government institutions (e.g. UOKiK, NIK)
<b>Government administration in the region</b>	Voivode
	Voivodeship marshal
<b>Self-government</b>	regional (voivodeship)
	supra-local (district)
	local (municipality)
<b>Tourist organizations</b>	regional tourist organizations
	local tourist organizations
	other organizations with competencies for tourism policy or supporting activities of tourism policy entities, including economic self-government entities

Source: Own study.

Global entities of tourism policy do not have a direct impact on the shape of activities undertaken in individual countries, although they set the general framework for conducting tourism policy, mainly in the international dimension. Despite the great importance of the tourism economy for the European economy, the tourism market is not a major interest of entities of the EU socio-economic policy. Measures taken to recognize the tourism market as a Community regulatory area do not clearly lead to the creation of a comprehensive European tourism policy. The European Commission assumes that the governments of the Member States rather than the European Union as a whole should deal with the tourism market [9]. The tourism policy of the European Union is therefore not treated as a sectoral task, but as a set of tasks from different fields of the EU policy, such as environmental policy, policy towards small and medium enterprises and regional policy [10]. This reflects the diverse structure of the tourism market and its connection with other areas of the European Union's functioning.

The essence of the tourism policy pursued is the activity of national central entities of tourism policy that have a direct and indirect impact on the functioning of the domestic tourism market. Two main authorities are responsible for overall tourism policy at the national level: National Tourism Administration (NTA) and National Tourism Organization (NTO). In Poland, the NTA tasks are carried out by the minister in charge of tourism, i.e. the Minister of Sport and Tourism. The Office of the Minister is primarily responsible for creating the legal basis for the functioning of the tourism market and for defining and formulating national tourism policy objectives in line with assumptions of the economic strategy of the public administration.

The NTO, or the Polish Tourism Organization, apart from marketing activities undertaken on foreign markets and the domestic market, also takes care of initiating, assessing and supporting plans for development and modernization of tourist infrastructure as well as the cooperation with regional and local tourist organizations.

The government tasks in individual regions (voivodeships) in the field of tourism market are implemented by two entities: voivode and voivodeship marshal. The voivode is responsible for the implementation of government policy in his subordinate area. In 2006, the economic competencies of the regional government administration (voivodes) in the tourism sphere were taken over by marshal offices. The voivodeship marshal's activities are mainly related to: the register of regulated activity of tourism organizers and travel agents<sup>1</sup> as well as classification of hotel facilities to a specific type and category [11].

Important functions in the system of tourism policy entities are performed by local self-government units: municipality, district and voivodeship. Their primary task is to influence socio-economic development, including tourism development, and on improvement of the competitiveness of tourism products. Regional and local tourist organizations and other organizations in this field have a special place in the subjective

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<sup>1</sup> The registry of regulated activities is carried out at the level of individual voivodeships, while the Ministry of Sport and Tourism is responsible for keeping the Central Register of Tourism Organizers and Travel Agents, which is the result of the total number of entries into individual voivodeship registers.

system of tourism policy. The role of these entities covers issues related mainly to supporting real processes on the tourism market and shaping cooperation between entities of the regional and local tourism economy.

The activity of competent tourism policy entities in practice constitutes public tourism management at individual levels of public administration: government and self-government and in macro- and mesoeconomic approaches.

### **3. Instruments for public tourism management**

Implementation of tourism policy by competent state authorities requires an identification of instruments that enforce the behavior of individual market participants, especially enterprises and entities at tourism destinations, but also customers (tourists). Tourism policy instruments can be classified into two basic groups:

- general state policy (e.g. stimulating the functioning of the service sector, activities in the field of regional development, shaping cross-border cooperation and flexible tax systems),
- specialized ones, i.e. concerning legal regulations of the tourism market (e.g. legislation, administrative provisions regarding accommodation and access regulations for entities of the travel agency market).

By type, the following groups of public tourism management instruments should be listed:

- economic,
- legal,
- administrative,
- organizational,
- informational,
- moral.

The scope and strength of instruments used decide on the model of tourism policy pursued by the state as well as the relationship between the state and tourism.

Economic instruments have a particularly parametric character. This group includes: prices (official, regulated – local fees), taxes (VAT on tourism services, real estate tax and income tax), tax exemptions and reductions, tariffs and access to European Union funds. The influence of state authorities on prices in tourism is limited to a part of wellness tourism services co-financed by public institutions within a universal health care system. A special type of price impact is the determination of a maximum amount of local tax charged by tourist and wellness municipalities. In terms of taxes, solutions generally applied in the economy are used, although the main part of tourism services (accommodation services and passenger transport) are subject to a reduced VAT rate, and in the case of services provided by tourist organizations and sales agencies, despite the fact that the basic rate is used, the tax is charged only on a portion of a service price, i.e. organizer's margin. Hence, it should be said that the state facilitates access to travel benefits for customers. A form of support for development of tourism

enterprises at destinations is the introduction of favorable reductions or exemptions from real estate tax in order to encourage business activity on the tourism market in a given area, including primarily investment activities. Since the accession of Poland to the European Union, an important means of development of tourism potential have been the EU funds, which in the first two financial perspectives for the years 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 were directed at pro-tourist activities conducted by self-government units and tourist organizations. To a much lesser extent, these funds could be acquired by tourism entrepreneurs [12]. Thus, the effects of the use of EU funds cover tourist destinations and mainly apply to transport accessibility, tourist attractions, training of tourism staff and tourism promotion.

Legal instruments are primarily legal norms that define the rules of functioning of tourism market entities. Legal norms regulate issues related to: the flow of people in international tourism, protection of natural and cultural values, management principles (including tourist use in specific areas, e.g. health resorts or national parks), protection of customers and ensuring a proper quality of tourism services as well as functioning of selected groups of tourism enterprises (e.g. hotels, travel agencies and tourist guides) [13]. According to European law, including Polish law, the two most important areas of regulation on the tourism market include:

- protection of the competitive market and support of competition mechanisms on the tourism market,
- consumer protection on the tourism market, in accordance with the regulations of the Council Directive 90/314/EEC of June 13, 1990 on package travel, package holidays and package tours [14], as well as a new directive whose provisions will be implemented into tourism law of the EU Member States as of July 1, 2018, i.e. the Directive 2015/2302 of the European Parliament and the Council of November 25, 2015 on package travel and linked travel arrangements [15].

Administrative instruments are related to, inter alia, classification of a hotel facility to a specific type and category of hotel facilities. In addition, an entry into the central register of tour operators and tourist agents is made in the form of an administrative decision. At the municipal self-government level, the use of administrative instruments mainly concerns the accommodation base, especially the record of some accommodation facilities and the control of the entire base in terms of adhering to the rules of the Act on tourism services.

Among organizational instruments, it is crucial to indicate strategic and planning activities which serve to define a vision, objectives and directions of the tourism market development and thus the tourism policy of the state. These activities result in the creation of documents at various levels of government and self-government. They are plans, programs, tourism development strategies, but also studies of conditions and directions of landscape planning in an area, local spatial development plans, long-time financial and investment programs as well as decisions on building and land development conditions. An important field is also the establishment of organizations responsible for development of the tourist offer and shaping the cooperation between enti-

ties constituting the supply side of the tourism market. A special area of operation is public-private partnership that combines activities of economic (financial) and organizational nature between public and private sector entities. Activities are mainly carried out by self-government units in tourist areas in cooperation with tourism entrepreneurs, and they include development of tourist infrastructure, exploitation of objects, joint promotion of tourism and tourist information [16]. The most advanced form of cooperation in the tourism economy is the activity of regional and local tourist organizations. Branch organizations (economic self-government) and associations involved in promotion of forms and types of tourism.

Informational instruments serve to stimulate tourism demand and shaping tourist behaviors in line with the assumptions of state tourism policy (e.g. actions aimed at deglomeration of tourist traffic, impact on social tourism, including the following social groups: children and teenagers, families, seniors and people with disabilities). An important area of activity in this field is promotion of the offer of tourist regions and tourism enterprises functioning there along with their offers. These operations include co-financing of participation in international tourism fairs. An essential role in these activities is played by the National Tourism Organization that operates mainly on foreign markets as well as regional and local tourist organizations – affecting both the domestic and foreign markets.

Moral instruments play a complementary role among instruments of tourism policy. They have a secondary rank compared to the other ones. The most important activity in relation to tourist destinations is the organization by tourism policy entities, including branch organizations, of competitions for the best tourism product and the best entrepreneur in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the Polish Tourism Organization carries out certification of tourism products, which at the same time supports the implementation of activities in the field of informational instruments. Certificates granted to specific tourism products or entities that manage them are simultaneously important market information for tourists.

#### **4. Territorial self-government units as entities managing real processes on the tourism market**

Territorial self-government units that fulfill both regulatory and real functions on the tourism market play an important role in the structure of tourism policy entities. Actions of territorial self-government units in relation to the tourism economy often have only declarative forms. In practice, only a part of self-government takes actions aimed directly at cooperation and active impact on the tourism economy together with independent involvement in tourism projects. Table 2 presents a framework of instruments for management of the local and regional tourism economy, taking into account the way in which territorial self-government units impact it.



**Table 2.** Examples of passive and active instruments for management of the local and regional tourism economy

Passive instruments	Active instruments
<b>economic instruments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– local tax</li> <li>– local fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– tax exemptions (real estate tax)</li> <li>– tourism investments</li> <li>– tourism promotion</li> <li>– creating tourist offer</li> <li>– public-private partnership</li> <li>– establishing tourism brand</li> </ul>
<b>administrative instruments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– registry of accommodation base</li> <li>– registry of travel agencies</li> <li>– procedures for applying for EU funds</li> <li>– development of strategies, programs and plans of tourism growth</li> <li>– spatial planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– implementation of tourism strategy</li> </ul>
<b>organizational instruments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– creating LTOs and RTOs</li> <li>– tourism market monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– active cooperation between LTO and RTO entities</li> <li>– creating cluster structures</li> <li>– Euroregional cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>HR instruments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– issuing professional qualifications (in the field of mountain guidance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– training tourism staff from self-government and tourism industry</li> </ul>

*Source: [17].*

The activities of self-government units are decisive in the creation of local and regional tourism products, combining provisions from individual bidders of the direct tourism economy and paratourism services at a tourist destination. By defining the place of tourism in the structure of the local and regional economy, especially by creating tourism development strategies, cooperation and integration of entities from the tourism industry, there are opportunities to stimulate the economy at the local or regional level and create new jobs [18]. The main areas of activity of self-government units in tourism management include:

- creation, exploitation and management of tourist attractions, including events,
- investments in tourist and paratourist infrastructure,
- creation of network cooperation and product consortia,
- promotion of a territorial tourism product.

The support of real processes on the tourist market in cooperation with territorial self-government units is provided by regional and local tourist organizations as well as other tourist organizations and branch associations.

## 5. Assessment of public tourism management (policy model)

Nowadays, tourism policy, including European one, adopt the mixed model formula. Instruments of tourism policy, used by competent policy entities and subordinated to goals of its conduct, make a specific policy model adopted by the state more detailed. Thus, in the practice of tourism policy a deregulation model is used, which is a form of limiting the role of the state in the economy and mainly consists of reducing the share of restrictive (administrative) policy tools for parametric tools (primarily economic and informational). A tangible manifestation of deregulation is the reduction of the number of regulations, and principally the number of legal acts restricting freedom of management.

The European Union generally leaves matters related to tourism policy to the governments of the Member States, however, it sets the rules for creating structures of the tourism management system. This is reflected by the distinction among tourism policy entities of the National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) and National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) with specific competencies. The structure of policy entities in individual countries is often excessively developed both vertically (structurally) and horizontally, thus it consists of many decision-making centers, which frequently results in duplication of competencies.

It should also be noted that the presented tourism policy entities and their competencies do not exhaust the information on their full structure and range of instruments used. Tourist transport and gastronomy, among others, should be considered the integral part of the tourism economy, i.e. entities forming the supply structure of the tourism market. Regulations regarding passenger transport include competencies of transport policy entities and those regarding gastronomy concern entitlements of several sectoral policies, primarily agriculture, trade and health. Referring to other tourist and tourism-related offers, the following must also be mentioned: labor market policy (employment in tourism economy entities), financial policy (travel insurance), antitrust policy and consumer protection, education policy (education for the needs of the tourism market), scientific-research, health policy (principles of functioning and financing of wellness tourism), public safety policy and others. The issues regarding the role of the state in the tourism market are not coordinated by any of the offices, and in each of the aforementioned sectoral policies, instruments aimed at tourism market entities are created and used.

## Conclusion

The system of tourism management by public entities in Poland is in particular aimed at obtaining budget subsidies resulting from fiscal policy (taxes imposed on tourism enterprises and derived from tourist expenses incurred by tourists), with a practical lack of consideration of the tourism economy in budget financing. The positive impact of public authorities on the tourism economy can be observed especially at the local level. Tourism management is dominated by a declarative approach to tourism as well as administrative and organizational activities.

The basic problems in tourism management by public institutions include:

- excessively developed system of tourism policy entities (too many entities),
- limited effectiveness,
- competitiveness of goals and tasks between tourism policy entities,
- lack of a coordination system,
- focusing mainly on short-term goals,
- no continuation of actions in subsequent strategic documents.

From the point of view of the above considerations, the positive premise of the tourism management system are activities conducted primarily at the local level, within which the regulatory functions of municipal governments are combined with the real ones, leading to an actual possibility of managing and then deciding on direct development of the tourism economy.

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### **Conflict of interests**

The author declared no conflict of interests.


### **Author contributions**

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

### **Ethical statement**

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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### Biographical note

**Aleksander Panasiuk** – Professor of Economics, specializing in economic and management aspects of tourism, a graduate of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Szczecin, head of the Department of Tourism Management at the Faculty of Management and Economics of Services at the University of Szczecin. Main areas of his scientific interest are service economics, service management, tourism economics, tourism management, service marketing, socio-economic policy, regional policy and quality management. Author of approximately 350 publications, including scientific papers and textbooks; President of the Board of the Polish Economic Society, the Branch in Szczecin; member of the Presidium of the National Board of the Polish Economic Society; member of the Association of Tourism Experts; founding member of the Euro-Asian Tourism Studies Association; editor-in-chief of European Journal of Service Management.

### Zarządzanie turystyką przez instytucje administracji publicznej

#### STRESZCZENIE

W pracy podjęty został problem realizacji funkcji państwa w gospodarce turystycznej przez instytucje administracji rządowej i samorządowej. Uwaga została zwrócona na zakres realizowanych funkcji państwa w gospodarce turystycznej, wielość podmiotów zaangażowanych w realizację celów z tego zakresu. Zaprezen-

towano wieloszczeblowy i rozbudowany system zarządzania turystyką oraz dysfunkcjonalność istniejącej struktury. Publiczny system zarządzania turystyką posiada ograniczoną skuteczność, niesie za sobą także ryzyko wynikające z powielania się kompetencji. Z drugiej strony mimo wysokiego udziału gospodarki turystycznej w tworzeniu wartości ekonomicznych, turystyka nie jest dostrzegana wystarczająco przez państwo. Źródła zasileń są bardzo ograniczone. Celem opracowania jest prezentacja obowiązującego systemu zarządzania gospodarką turystyczną przez podmioty publiczne w Polsce wraz ze wskazaniem obszarów, które powinny być poddane doskonaleniu.

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