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## THE ACTIVITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FOSTERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST BRAND PRODUCTS OF NATURAL VALUABLE AREAS OF THE LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP<sup>1</sup>

*The aim of this study was to identify the importance of branded tourism products as a factor in the development of communes located in natural valuable areas of the Lublin voivodeship, and to evaluate the activity of municipal authorities in preparing conditions for the creation of branded tourist products. Branding is expensive, so shaping brand products should involve many stakeholders, including the government. Environment in which communes operate makes it hard to imagine managing them without branding. Lack of recognition of various areas of the region is a factor slowing down the development of tourism, but it creates an opportunity of creating brands in line with the expectations of the authorities and residents.*

*In the study diagnostic survey with a questionnaire interview was used. Research material comprised 30 questionnaires, interviews with the mayor. It has been shown that, within the surveyed communes, great natural and cultural values are little used by the local community as lucrative tourist branded products. Nonetheless, there were positive changes, taking up comprehensive coherent marketing activities.*

**Key words:** branded tourist product, municipal government, valuable natural areas, Lublin voivodeship

### Introduction

Currently, the multifunctional and sustainable model of rural development is considered to be one of the main categories of policy towards agriculture and rural areas in Poland. The tourist function has an important place designated in this model. Multiple benefits achieved by rural service providers and all communities support tourist function development<sup>2</sup>. Tourism is one of non-agricultural activities in rural areas with great possibilities of development. However, in most rural communities and regions in the process of development, it is not sufficient and does not visibly affect their functional structure<sup>3</sup>. Tourist potential is defined as such elements as the natural environment and cultural (anthropogenic) amenities, which form the basis for tourism development.

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<sup>2</sup> I. Sikorska-Wolak: Turystyka w aktywizacji społeczno-gospodarczej obszarów wiejskich (na przykładzie województwa lubelskiego), Acta. Sci. Pol., Oeconomia 2010/ 9 (4), pp. 477–488.

<sup>3</sup> A. Brelik: Sustainable tourism development-case of Wolin region, Acta. Sci. Pol., Oeconomia 2012/11 (2), pp. 19–27.

Properly managed and exposed, they become prominent, often unique tourist values that are already real tourist attractions encouraging visitors to arrive at that area. Tourist potential is perceived as a major aspect in the formation of a region's tourist function<sup>4</sup>.

Today, local authorities play an important role in shaping the development of tourism. Tourism development and promotion of communes are included in the directory of their tasks. Initiatives taken by local governments do not have to mean having increased financial activity. The authorities' actions require an open, creative, and sometimes unconventional approach to the implementation of the various initiatives that generate low cost or the costs of which can be transferred onto or shared with other units. This approach provides an opportunity for various entities to increase their interest of the tourist value of the unit<sup>5</sup>.

The development of tourism is largely about the wealth of natural and cultural resources. Because the perception of the area as an attractive tourist destination affects the level of tourism, increasing income of the local government, balancing the local labour market. Professionally organized tourism can be a factor stimulating socio-cultural development of the area, and spontaneous and uncontrolled development may pose a threat to the natural and anthropogenic environment. The issue of the relationship between the development of contemporary forms of tourism and recreation and the protection and shaping of the natural environment is extremely complex and forces continuous discussions. It has become necessary to create tourist-friendly products for a broadly understood environment, particularly in the areas covered by various forms of protection<sup>6</sup>.

Proper management of valuable natural areas can allow for the comprehensive development of tourism. It is favoured by the practice of appropriate forms of tourism, such as qualified and specialist tourism associated with exploring and observing nature. Preferred forms also include eco-tourism, rural tourism and health tourism<sup>7</sup>. Tourism activities should always be associated with the development of such methods of management in an environment that do not cross the natural boundaries of the environment.

The aim of this study was to identify the importance of branded tourist products as a factor in the development of communes located within natural valuable areas of the Lublin voivodeship, and to evaluate the activity of municipal authorities in preparing conditions for the creation of branded tourist products.

It was hypothesized that the formation of tourist brand products is still an insufficiently-used factor in the development of communes located within natural valuable areas, but increased activity of authorities in this area can be observed, along with increasing undertaking comprehensive coherent marketing activities.

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<sup>4</sup> A. Górecka: The tourism function determinants of the rural municipalities in podkarpackie province, Poland, *Acta. Sci. Pol., Oeconomia* 2010/10 (4), pp. 19–32.

<sup>5</sup> M. Zalech, A. Kamińska: Determinants and directions of the development of tourism in communes from the eastern part of warmińsko-mazurskie province, *Acta. Sci. Pol., Oeconomia* 2014/13 (2), pp. 137–149.

<sup>6</sup> T. Soliński, J. Krupa: Rola samorządu lokalnego w tworzeniu produktu turystycznego regionu, Referat wygłoszony na III Międzynarodowej Konferencji Naukowo-Technicznej „Błękitny San” pt. „Ochrona środowiska, walory przyrodnicze i rozwój turystyki w dolinie Sanu”, Związek Gmin Turystycznych Pogorza Dynowskiego, Dubiecko 2006, pp. 309-333.

<sup>7</sup> A. E. Szczepanowski: *Markowe produkty turystyczne*, PWE, Warszawa 2012, p. 83.

## Material and methods

The work is a review and empirical in nature. Basing on literature review, the importance of branded tourist products is presented as a factor in the development of communes located in natural valuable areas of the Lublin voivodeship. Evaluation of the activity of municipal authorities in preparing conditions for the creation of tourist branded products within natural valuable areas has been carried out with field studies. The study area consisted of 30 communes with the greatest natural values in the Lublin voivodeship, selected for the study basing on the value of the indicator developed by D. Guzal-Dec in her study of the ecological value of rural and urban-rural communes of the Lublin voivodeship<sup>8</sup>. D. Guzal-Dec, following T. Bajerowski, based the natural value assessment of rural communes on the three following parameters: the "power of the organic" forms of land use, pollution of the environment and the degree of degradation of individual elements of the environment and the degree of conservation of natural elements of the environment<sup>9</sup>. Diagnostic survey with a questionnaire interview was used. Interviews were carried out in 2013. Research material comprised 30 questionnaires, interviews with the mayor. An important source of information were also surveyed communes websites.

## Results and discussion

### Creating branded tourist products as a factor in the development of communes within natural valuable areas

As noted by M. Florek, contemporary development of communes should be related to marketing management. Such a management is characterised<sup>10</sup> by an aware focus on potential customers, identifying their needs, diagnosis of their preferences, choosing priority groups, observation and understanding functioning of commune environment - trends, competitive behaviour of communes, systematic study and predicting behaviours of buyers, setting marketing-oriented objectives and strategies, creating commune brands, influencing partners with instruments including marketing and promotion tools, marketing approach in the organizational system of communes. In practice, communes initially introduced quite inconsistent, the basic tools of marketing as the first, using ad hoc promotional activities, to gradually more and more often treat marketing as a comprehensive and strategic approach to management. The growing need for social support for ongoing activities of local governments as well as the expectations of residents and opinion formers are important to the use of opportunities offered by marketing - new forms of management and promotion of their homes. Increasingly, questions are raised, therefore, regarding the issue of promoting branding. In today's environment, where communes operate, it is hard to imagine managing them and their development with no marketing approach and brand creation<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The procedure is described in detail in D. Guzal-Dec: Operacjonalizacja modelu Presja-Stan-Reakcja w badaniu cennosci ekologicznej gmin wiejskich na przykladzie wojewodztwa lubelskiego, Rocznik Ochrony Środowiska/Annual Set the Environment Protection, 2013, T. 15, nr 3, Koszalin, pp. 2925-2941.

<sup>9</sup> J. Suchta (ed.): Wycena i gospodarowanie nieruchomościami na obszarach cennych ekologicznie (cennosc ekologiczna- wartosc ekonomiczna, Zachodnie Centrum Organizacji, Olsztyn - Zielona Góra 1997, pp. 75-90.

<sup>10</sup> M. Florek: Strategia promocji jednostek samorządu terytorialnego- zasady i procedury, Fundacja Best- Place Europejski Instytut Marketingu Miejsce, Warszawa 2011, pp. 11-18.

<sup>11</sup> Tamże.

In spatial terms, brand is defined as the idea of forming an image of a country or a region<sup>12</sup>. On the tourist market, there are a lot of products similar to each other with the result that the quality of service, price and distribution are no longer sufficient to achieve a competitive advantage and hence there is a need to create a brand. Brand in tourism has no long tradition, but it is time to pay more attention to it, even in the case of agro-tourism and rural tourism<sup>13</sup>. Space tourism brand is to be considered a sub-brand, similar to a combined brand, which includes all brands of tourism products located in an area with social factors, such as atmosphere and safety. The most important feature of a brand is to identify products, places, as compared to other<sup>14</sup>. Currently, increase in the awareness of brand importance to the development of areas is associated with the benefits that it offers to local government units. They result from the functions that fully brand to the site. The most important are: identification, recognition, information, warranty, promotion, facilitation of decision-making<sup>15</sup>. In the case of commune branding, it is important that many stakeholders get involved in shaping territorial products, from the government, through travel agencies, to local businesses that create their "small territorial products"<sup>16</sup>.

Products are the basic element of any area brand, since they are the foundation of its structure. Areas need to stand out from others. Then, by way of the flow of information on the site, its products and their promotion, the area becomes recognizable and arouses emotions, which contributes to the growth of interest of potential tourists. In the absence of attractive products in the area, it can be equipped with them by, e.g. creating a legend, setting routes, organizing cultural events. The process of creating a brand requires a number of coordinated action over a longer period of time<sup>17</sup>.

Looking at the development of rural tourism in many European countries, it seems that development of branded products in our country has accelerated in agro-tourism and rural tourism, which is clearly connected to the appropriate education of local leaders, as well as the activity of local government administration. Under the conditions of rural tourism and agri-tourism, we should not bet on branded products - services, because it is too expensive an investment for one provider of accommodation services. Branding will be most appropriate with reference to tourist area product (region, district, city, park) or a tourist product - a trail, because in such cases, there is a greater chance of finding a guarantor of the brand who will assign the brand and fund it as well as manage marketing<sup>18</sup>. It should also be recommended to connect tourist entities to various organizations and create a common brand. As in other countries, one can point to ecology, around which we should consolidate activities with respect to product

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<sup>12</sup> S. Anholt: Brand America – tajemnica mega marki, Instytut Marki Polskiej, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>13</sup> B. Sawicki: Kreowanie marki w agroturystyce i turystyce wiejskiej, [In:] Marka wiejskiego produktu turystycznego, P. Palich (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Morskiej w Gdyni, Gdynia 2009, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> A. Panasiuk: Założenia koncepcji marki turystycznej, Marketing i Rynek, 2004, nr 8, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> H. Górską-Warsewicz: Rola marki na rynku usług turystycznych a rozwój regionów, [In:] Gospodarka turystyczna w XXI wieku. Problemy i perspektywy rozwoju w skali regionalnej i lokalnej, S. Bosiacki (ed.), AWF Poznań, Poznań 2008, pp. 23-124.

<sup>16</sup> G. Kozma: Place marketing, Debrecen 2006, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> P. Kotler, N. Lee: Marketing w sektorze publicznym, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne w Warszawie – Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Zarządzania im. Leona Koźmińskiego w Warszawie, Warszawa 2008, pp. 116-133.

<sup>18</sup> B. Sawicki: Kreowanie marki..., op. cit., s. 15.

branding in agri-tourism<sup>19</sup>. Tourist product brand building in rural areas should be combined with the existing or planned clusters<sup>20</sup>.

A. Kasztelan emphasizes that regions with a relatively clean environment should aim to focus on the development strategy of economic activities, which more or less make use of environmental resources and values. Achieving competitive advantage over other regions, basing on the existing environmental potential, the ability of its use in the process of socio-economic development and low levels of human impact, can be described by the same author as the environmental competitiveness of the region<sup>21</sup>. And Sztando defines competitive environment as the ability to offer residents, visitors and guests attractive, natural values intact by human activities<sup>22</sup>.

Lublin voivodeship's rural areas, such as Polesie and Roztocze belong to unusual and unknown areas. According to the survey, eastern Polish tourist potential is to very small extent associated with known and attractive journey locations<sup>23</sup>. The strengths of these areas include: landscape, pristine nature, interesting tourist area where you can relax from the hustle and bustle of the city, while not being bored, proximity to interesting historical buildings (especially those in urban areas). While disadvantages include: lack of an image, associating these areas with a homogeneous landscape and poor tourist infrastructure, locations far away and difficult to reach due to inadequate communication network and road infrastructure. Lack of recognition of individual regions is, on the one hand, a factor slowing down the development of tourism, on the other, which a factor that creates a chance to build a brand in line with the expectations of the authorities and residents. Within the Lublin voivodeship, the creation of brands of rural areas requires designating areas identifiable by tourists, relatively homogeneous and coherent and related to the products that are present there, so that they can create a distinctive image associated with various parts of the voivodeship or cities and their surroundings. The foundation of a rural brand should be activity and, depending on the location, the area, it should be supplemented with another distinctive element of the space. Giving a brand to separate spaces requires the authorities to take up actions preceded by activity aimed at improving tourist attractiveness of rural areas through the protection and use of cultural and natural values and landscape, development of rural tourism, supporting the development of

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<sup>19</sup> B. Hołderna-Mielcarek: Marka ekologiczna – elementem strategii produktu turystycznego, [In:] Gospodarka turystyczna XXI wieku, S. Bosiacki (ed.), Wyd. AWF w Poznaniu, Poznań 2008.

<sup>20</sup> J. Starzewska: Klaster szansą rozwoju przedsiębiorstw na rynku turystycznym, [In:] Gospodarka turystyczna XXI wieku, S. Bosiacki (ed.), Wyd. AWF w Poznaniu, Poznań 2008; J. Starzewska: Klaster perspektywą dla przedsiębiorców na polskim rynku turystycznym, Wyd. Difin, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>21</sup> A. Kasztelan: Środowiskowa konkurencyjność regionów – próba konceptualizacji, *Problemy Ekorozwoju-Problems of Sustainable Development*, 2010, vol. 5, no 2, Lublin, pp. 77-86.

<sup>22</sup> A. Sztando: Konkurencyjność gospodarcza a kreowanie dochodów w gminnej polityce budżetowej, [In:] *Konkurencyjność miast i regionów: materiały z konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Katedrę Gospodarki Regionalnej oraz Katedrę Polityki Ekonomicznej i Prognozowania Rozwoju AE w Krakowie*, Z. Szymła (ed.), Kraków 1999, pp. 149-150.

<sup>23</sup> Potencjał turystyczny Polski Wschodniej – badanie poprzedzające tworzenie kampanii reklamowej. Raport z badania jakościowego. Raport przygotowany przez dom badawczy MAISON dla Polskiej Organizacji Turystycznej. Warszawa, kwiecień 2009.

accommodation and restaurant services, tourism and educational trails, bicycle paths and ski trails and managing natural bodies of water<sup>24</sup>.

#### **Commune self-government in fostering the development of tourist brand products of natural valuable areas of the Lublin voivodeship**

Although representatives of all of the communes surveyed indicated that tourism is an important current issue and a preferred future function in the development of the commune, 20 (67 % of the total) of them declared that they realise a policy of environmental competitiveness. Respondent representatives of local government were asked for a relative, as compared to other rural communes, assessment of the region, the environmental assessment of the level of competitiveness of their respective local government units. What seems surprising, despite the fact that the communes surveyed have particularly attractive natural values, the possibility to offer them to residents, tourists and guests (environmental competitiveness) has not been rated very highly by their authorities. The largest group of respondents (about 43%) indicated a relatively higher level of competitiveness, but a large group of approximately 36% of the respondents did not see the specific environmental potential - assessing the level of environmental competitiveness as close to the level of the competitiveness achieved by other rural communes in the voivodeship. Only 11% of respondents indicated a much higher level of competition and, as it seems, this group of communes has favourable conditions for the development of competitive advantage based on natural attractive values.

Representatives of 20 governments - 67% of the total of respondents - declared a policy that favourable to achieving environmental competitiveness. As positive, it should be noted that the respondent local governments adopt the imperative of the currently preferred nature of modern competition policy, basing on cooperation, or both cooperation and competition. It is evidenced by the fact that none of the respondents specified the policy carried out as a policy of competitive rivalry with other communes, 13 of the respondents described it as a policy of cooperation, and 7 as a policy of both competition and cooperation.

**Table 1.** Analysis of competition among the surveyed communes in the field of environmental competitiveness

Responses	communes with a similar level of competitiveness		communes with significantly lower level of competitiveness		communes with a much higher level of competitiveness	
	number of responses	% of the total	number of responses	% of the total	number of responses	% of the total
Indicating 1 main competitor	2	14,3	0	0	2	14,3
Indicating 2 main competitors	1	7,0	2	14,3	2	14,3
Indicating 3 main competitors	11	78,6	8	57,1	9	64,2

Source: Own development on the basis of research

<sup>24</sup> M. Zalech, G. Godlewski: Rodzaje i znaczenie produktów wiejskich w tworzeniu marki przestrzeni turystycznej, [In:] Marka wiejskiego produktu turystycznego, P. Palich (ed.). Wydawnictwo Akademii Morskiej w Gdyni, Gdynia 2009, pp. 96-105.

In the group of 20 local governments, declaring positive effects of environmental competitiveness policy, there occurred quite a high (30%) percentage of the absence of any indication of competitors, which shows gaps in information about competition and no competitive position analysis (benchmarking). Respondents generally compared their positions to the position of communes from the immediate environment (8 respondents (57% of the total) indicated competitors from the powiat). Least difficulties were encountered by the representatives of the local authorities in indicating units with a similar or a higher level of competitiveness, and it was harder for them to point out communes with a much lower level of competitiveness. Such a distribution of responses regarding the problem points to the fact that the representatives of local government, not having any position of communes characterized on the basis of research in this area, most often assessed it as worse than in the case of competitors.

General declarations of local authorities indicate that rural tourism is a major preferred direction of development in the surveyed communes. Preferences for the development of nature tourism occurred in the case of 68.4% of respondents, and for agri-tourism - 75% of the total. Therefore activity of government in promoting tourism was analysed. Strategic planning of tourism development is the basis for the development focused on the function of tourism. This is a prerequisite and core of any further activity in the support of tourism. Thirteen of the communes surveyed had strategies for the development of tourism, including five individual strategies for the area of the commune. Preferably, The activity of local governments in obtaining external funds from the ROP Lublin 2007-2013 and OP DEP for 2007-2013 should be assessed positively. Under the DEP for 2007-2013, municipal governments undertook many projects of cooperation, among others: creating bicycle lanes in the region. You should also positively evaluate the activity of local governments in starting inter-commune cooperation in order to develop tourism. A manifestation of this collaboration was, among others, cocreation of Local Action Groups (LAGs), Local Tourist Organizations (LOTs) and tourist clusters - "Picturesque Polish Spas - Eastern Europe Spas" and the "Land of Loess Gorges".

Difficulties in the implementation of activities related to the development of tourism were undoubtedly organizational and staffing constraints in commune offices. This limited the scope of the use of organizational and legal instruments. Only in the case of two communes, an independent position related to tourism development was created. Frequently, promotion of tourism was the task of workers involved in other tasks/competencies. Organizational and staffing difficulties certainly also affected the level of promotional activities undertaken by authorities. Only two commune offices (Włodawa, Sosnowica), in addition to their official website, had their own tourist web portal.

Distribution of information on the production of local tourist products was not at an adequate level in the communes surveyed, it seems to be just a consequence of the absence of grounds for strategic planning of activities for the development of tourism. As already mentioned, a very important but often underrated way of support and promotion of tourism is to have brand tourist products<sup>25</sup>. In the case of the communes surveyed, great natural and cultural values are still little used by the local community as

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<sup>25</sup> A. Bołtromiuk: Realizacja funkcji turystycznej na obszarach sieci Natura 2000, [In:] Uwarunkowania zrównoważonego rozwoju gmin objętych siecią Natura 2000, A. Bołtromiuk (ed.), IRWiR PAN, Warszawa 2011, p. 289.

lucrative tourist branded products. Nonetheless, there were some positive changes and taking up activity in this area (activity undertaken by seven commune governments). The basis of the creation of tourist brand products is planning this process – having a brand strategy. In the study group, only four communes had strategies to promote their brand: "Kazimierz Dolny - opens the senses", "Urszulin - after work, Polesie", "Janów Lubelski - zoom of the Nature", "Zwierzyniec - pro-health holiday pleasure". The cooperation and promotion project, entitled "Zwierzyniec and Narol, leaders of the development of the Roztocze culture and tourism" is important in terms of creating tourist products. Its goal is the development of tourism, new cultural initiatives and the promotion of the Roztocze region. The project includes, among others: development of strategies for long-term cooperation of Narol and Zwierzyniec for the development of cultural tourism in the Roztocze region, development of a tourism development strategy for the commune of Zwierzyniec and updating tourism development strategy for the Narol commune, development of a common brand strategy: "Zwierzyniec and Narol – the Gates of the Roztocze region".

**Table 2.** The involvement of local government respondents in the development of tourism (including the creation of tourist brand products)

Selected types of activities	Indicated in the communes
having a strategy for tourism development	Kazimierz Dolny, Janów Lubelski, Włodawa, Urszulin, Sosnowica, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Zwierzyniec, Krasnobród, Konstantynów, Rossosz, Janów Podlaski, Sławatycze
obtaining external funds for the development of tourism) implementation of projects to promote tourism within the ROP Lublin for 2007-2013 (number of projects)	Zwierzyniec (3), Kazimierz Dolny (3), Janowiec (2), Dzwola (1), Lubycza Królewska (1), Modliborzyce (1), Janów Lubelski (4), Sosnowica (1), Włodawa (3), Urszulin (4), Krasnobród (3), Józefów (3), Susiec (1), Adamów (1)
(obtaining external funds for the development of tourism) implementation of projects aimed at the development of tourism in the context of the OP DEP for 2007-2013 (number of projects)	Józefów (1), Janów Podlaski (2), Konstantynów (2), Sławatycze (1), Kraśniczyn (1), Susiec (1), Zwierzyniec (2), Tomaszów Lubelski (1), Skierbieszów (1), Łabunie (1)
taking up inter-municipal cooperation in order to develop tourism	Józefów, Janów Podlaski, Konstantynów, Sławatycze, Kraśniczyn, Susiec, Zwierzyniec, Tomaszów Lubelski, Skierbieszów, Łabunie, Krasnobród, Rossosz, Dzwola, Włodawa, Sosnowica, Urszulin, Modliborzyce
	wszystkie badane gminy
taking up cross-sectoral cooperation in the framework of the LAGs belonging to a local tourist organisation	Lubycza Królewska, Susiec, Tomaszów Lubelski, Kraśniczyn, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny
tourist clustering	Krasnobród, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny
office organization (rank of tourist economy / tourist office in the organizational structure of the commune – an independent position or a department)	Janów Lubelski, Kazimierz Dolny
having a tourism portal	Włodawa, Sosnowica



co-creation of local tourist products (traditional) <sup>26</sup>	Józefów, Wilków, Janów Lubelski, Janowiec, Wąwolnica, Kazimierz Dolny, Włodawa, Tomaszów Lubelski, Rossosz, Sławatycze
co-creation of branded tourist products	Zwierzyniec, Kazimierz Dolny, Lubycza Królewska, Janów Lubelski, Urszulin, Józefów, Włodawa
having a brand strategy	Kazimierz Dolny, Zwierzyniec, Urszulin, Janów Lubelski

Source: Own development on the basis of research

Local authorities (mayors) of all of the surveyed communes declared taking up actions focused on the use of resources and values of the community in the development process. The table details information on the actions taken up in this field.

**Table 3.** Municipal Office activities focus on leveraging resources and values of the community in the development of tourism

Actions:	% of indications
attention to the aesthetics of the commune	100,0
organizing cultural, recreational or sports events	96,7
promotion of local cultural heritage	93,1
preservation of local natural heritage	93,1
promotion of local natural heritage	86,2
database creation or modernization of tourist information and websites	73,3
supporting the development of products and services based on local resources, traditional sectors of the economy or the local heritage	72,4
construction, reconstruction or marking small tourist infrastructure	70,0
initiating and supporting the formation of local associations for the promotion of resources and values of the commune	70,0
preparing and issuing publications, folders and other information about the commune and its attractions	69,0
preservation of local cultural heritage, e.g. traditional rural buildings	65,5
preservation, reproduction, securing or marking local landscape heritage	60,0
economic promotion of the commune during tourist trade fairs and events	60,0
implementation of projects promoting foreign-funded resources and values of the commune	55,2
cultivating traditional professions and crafts	51,7
co-creation of a local tourist organization (LOT)	50,0

Own development on the basis of research

<sup>26</sup> Minrol.gov.pl [accessed: on Jan. 9, 2014], list of traditional products in the Lublin voivodeship

The most commonly undertaken (in the case of more than 85% of responses) activities focusing on the use of resources and values of the community in the development of tourism are traditional and typical activities in the promotional activities of rural communes: attention to the aesthetics of the commune, organizing cultural, recreational or sports events, promotion of local cultural and natural heritage. Much less frequently, more complex or costly activities were undertaken, such as supporting the development of products and services based on local resources, traditional economy and local heritage activities initiating and supporting the formation of local associations for the promotion of resources and values of communes, construction, reconstruction or marking small infrastructure, implementation of projects promoting foreign-funded resources and values of communes.

## Conclusions

Branding is expensive, so many stakeholders should be involved in it, including local governments. The environment in which communes operate makes it hard to imagine management and development without building a brand. Lack of recognition of the different areas of the region is a factor slowing down the development of tourism, but it creates an opportunity of creating brands in line with the expectations of the authorities and residents. It has been shown that, in the communes surveyed, great natural and cultural values are little used by the local community as profitable, branded tourist products. Nonetheless, there were positive changes, increased undertaking comprehensive coherent marketing activities.

Assigning a brand to individual spaces requires the authorities to take up action especially in supporting initiatives which enhance the development of tourist products for the brand perception of the area, to agree with local tourist, and other, organizations in the implementation of initiatives creating or reinforcing the strength of the brand, to prepare development plans and apply for external funds, to cooperate with respect to the development of the brand with organizations and residents, to expand their offer lengthening the season and the low-season one.

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## Streszczenie

Celem pracy było wskazanie znaczenia markowych produktów turystycznych jako czynnika rozwoju gmin położonych na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych województwa lubelskiego oraz ocena aktywności władz gminnych w przygotowywaniu warunków do tworzenia markowych produktów turystycznych. Branding jest kosztowny, dlatego

w kształtowanie markowego produktu terytorialnego zaangażowanych powinno być wiele podmiotów, w tym władze samorządowe. W otoczeniu, w jakim funkcjonują gminy trudno wyobrazić sobie zarządzanie nimi bez budowania marki. Brak rozpoznawalności poszczególnych regionów województwa jest czynnikiem spowalniającym rozwój turystyki, ale stwarza szansę wykreowania marki zgodnej z oczekiwaniami władz i mieszkańców. W przeprowadzonym badaniu zastosowano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego z wykorzystaniem kwestionariusza wywiadu. Materiał empiryczny pochodził z 30 kwestionariuszy wywiadu skierowanych do wójtów gmin. Wykazano, że w badanych gminach wysokie walory przyrodniczo-kulturowe są w niewielkim stopniu wykorzystywane przez lokalne społeczności jako dochodowy, markowy produkt turystyczny. Widoczne są jednak pozytywne zmiany, podejmowanie kompleksowych spójnych działań marketingowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *markowy produkt turystyczny, samorząd gminny, obszary przyrodniczo cenne, województwo lubelskie*

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