

Impact of Declared Clusters of Tourism on Slovak Destinations

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Abstract

This paper aims to present the results of secondary and primary research focused on declared clusters of tourism in Slovakia and to draw conclusions of their influence on Slovak destinations. Subsequent progress could indicate whether declared clusters of tourism lead to competitiveness, innovation, research and growth or rather pursue those activities which are typical of destination management organisations.

Key words

Clusters of tourism, destination management organisations, competitiveness, marketing activities, regional tourism

JEL Classification: M31, R58

Introduction

Over the last few years regional tourism has been marked by a coordinated effort to create destinations of target locations and bring forward destination management. A relatively eventless period, in which necessary legislative changes were not introduced to support the systematic formation and operation of organizations capable of guiding and completing various activities and tourism projects, was accompanied by a variety of reactions from regions and centers of tourism businesses as well as organizations operating in the tourism industry. One of them was the formation of regional associations under the umbrella of "clusters", which attempted to connect territorially close entities for the purpose of cooperation, innovation and competitiveness, and also provided potential resources of support, addressed a number of active regional organizations to resolve problems in regional tourism.

Reference materials provide a myriad of definitions of the notion cluster. Most of them refer to M. E. Porter (Porter, 1998) (or Alfred Marshall pertaining to the notion as industrial district), who defines the notion cluster as a geographic concentration of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, services providers, firms in related industries and connected institutions (e.g. universities, various regulation offices and business alliances), which not only compete in specific territories, but also cooperate with each other. This definition of clusters is applied in this paper, whereby there is reference to other documents and scientific studies executed in this field. One of the fundamental sources is the White Paper Cluster Policy (Anderson, Serger, Sörvik & Hanson, 2004), based on which the fundamental characters to identify clusters include

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geographic concentration, specialization, diversity of actors (except for businesses of tourism with public sector participation, educational and research institutions, financial institutions, or other institutions formed by supporting businesses, a soft and hard supporting infrastructure), cooperation and competition, a critical amount to achieve the internal dynamics of cluster development, long-term nature of partnership, different types of innovation – technological, commercial and organizational and their transfer. Clusters promote competitiveness of stakeholders and the region in which they operate by increasing productivity through better access to specialized suppliers, skills and information; they emphasize innovation and attract new businesses to the region. The competitive advantage of clusters is the presence of customers inside the cluster.

Two basic approaches are used for the purpose of identifying clusters; the "top-down" identification of clusters (this approach focuses on the support of those sectors which have been recognized as crucial to the territory and which have an actual or potential competitive advantage), and the "bottom-up" identification of clusters (these clusters are generated by endogenous development even without available public resources). Multiple methods are applied in the identification process; these include quantitative (e.g. cross-sector input-output analysis, coefficient location, the Gini coefficient, etc.) as well as qualitative methods (expert assessment method, interview, observation, etc.). Cluster identification is a challenging research problem.

Primary and secondary research, focusing on all of the declared clusters of tourism in Slovakia, was conducted in the period of January-February 2012. Secondary research resulted in the collection of available public information regarding the operation of clusters; its results were then completed through primary research using questionnaires, which were answered by all clusters. The collected data would confirm or disprove the hypothesis that clusters of tourism in Slovakia operate as organisations of destination management. Close attention was paid to the role of destination management, or regional organisations of tourism defined in the Promotion of Tourism Act and the above-mentioned basic characteristics of clusters.

The aim of this paper is to present the results of a survey focusing on operations of declared clusters of tourism in Slovakia and draw conclusions of their activities in Slovak destinations primarily in relation to destination management organizations. The focus is on those clusters, which at the time of the survey demonstrated active involvement and were not in the initial project phase (Slovak Paradise Cluster and Novohradský Cluster did not present any activities during the survey period.)

1 Basic characteristics of clusters of tourism in Slovakia

Declared clusters of tourism in Slovakia began to emerge in 2008. The first clusters involved Liptov Cluster, Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia and Balnea Cluster. They were followed by five more clusters and then three other clusters emerged. Liptov Cluster, Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia, Orava Cluster, Turiec Cluster, Balnea Cluster Dudince were recorded as clusters in SEIA (Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency) in January 2012.

Table 1 Overview of tourism clusters in Slovakia with regard to the year of their formation

| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Projects |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Cluster | Liptov Cluster Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia Balnea Cluster | Orava Cluster Turiec Cluster | Smolenice Cluster Košice – Tourism | Horehronie Cluster | Huculská artery ⁴ Slovak Paradise ⁵ Cluster Novohradský Cluster ⁶ |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Cluster membership base in Slovakia includes municipalities and businesses, and some of them are represented by non-profit organizations. Support organizations such as colleges, universities, secondary schools and research institutions are mostly partners or do not cooperate with the clusters.

Table 2 Membership base of clusters of tourism

| Cluster | Number of municipalities and towns | Number of businesses | Other |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Liptov Cluster | 20 | 5 | 2 |
| Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia | 4 | - | 1(region) |
| Balnea Cluster | 1 | 7 | 1(region) |
| Orava Cluster | 2 | 15 | - |
| Turiec Cluster | 2 | 4 | - |
| Smolenice Cluster | 1 | 24 | - |
| Košice – Tourism | 1 | 30 | 5 |
| Horehronie Cluster | 3 | 4 | 1 |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

The term cluster is not defined by the legislation of the Slovak Republic, therefore the legal form of clusters includes associations of legal entities in compliance with § 20 of the Civil Code. Two clusters, Smolenice Cluster and Balnea Cluster Dudince, are civil associations under the Act 83/1990 Coll. Association of Citizens.

⁴ Huculská artery – cluster of tourism in Muránska Plain – Čierny Hron – Čierny Balog municipality project approved in the ROP (implementation 2011–2014). Prepared by: Čierny Balog, 2010, Retrieved October 10, 2011 from <http://www.ciernybalog.sk>, <http://www.muranskaplanina.com>

⁵ Slovak Paradise – Cluster of Tourism NP Slovak Paradise and TIC Dobšinská Ice Cave – Stratená municipality project in partnership with Micro-region Slovak Paradise North in the Call for Cooperation by the Swiss financial mechanism.

⁶ Novohradský Cluster as rural tourism cluster in the territory of Euro-region Neogradiensis – a completed project Euro-region Neogradiensis within the Call for System Promotion of Euro-regional Activities – SPE-RA 2009 (MVRR SR). Prepared by: RRA Lučenec, 2009, Retrieved October 11, 2011 from <http://www.rra-lc.sk>

Table 3 Objectives of clusters of tourism in Slovakia

| Cluster | Objective |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Liptov Cluster | Double the 2007 visit rate in Liptov region by 2013 |
| Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia | The aim of the cluster is, on the principle of partnership, to activate and support the development of tourism in the region, to link various branches of inter-industry and preserve and make access to cultural, historical and natural heritage. These retained values would create the conditions for connecting recreation and cognitive tourism and create a complex range of services. |
| Balnea Cluster | The aim of the association is to make people aware of the excellent effects of Dudince healing water and to attract more clients to Dudince through the provision of the best services. |
| Orava Cluster | The aim of the association is to create a positive image of the region for visitors, investors, and citizens of the region, to organize joint marketing of tourism and the Orava territory, as well as to provide a common supply of quality tourism products in the Orava region. |
| Turiec Cluster | Cooperate in the promotion of tourism in the region. |
| Smolenice Cluster | A wider mutual promotion of Smolenice municipality, its operations and the upcoming events for visitors and citizens. |
| Košice - Tourism | It offers a range of products that covers and guarantees quality. An organization for tourism development and the marketing headquarters of Kosice destination. |
| Horehronie Cluster | Build a recognizable Horehronie European tourist destination, with a strategic aim to increase the visit rate in the region. |

Source: quoted from available internet sources of organisations, December 2011.

The above-mentioned objectives, based on secondary sources, indicate the main aims of clusters. Other partial objectives and their conceptual documents were not publicly presented by clusters. Conceptual documents, based on information from questionnaires in primary research, were elaborated only in the case of two clusters; one cluster was governed by the conceptual documents of a self-governing region. Other clusters had their conceptual documents in the state of preparation.

With regard to the management of clusters, all directors, based on a survey, obtained university education; except for three clusters, all of them have business-related education. Four directors of clusters have more than five years of experience.

2 Activities of clusters of tourism

Clusters of tourism in Slovakia demonstrate a relatively wide range of activities. These include coordination (within the cluster), informational, marketing activities – from product, distribution to promotional, and educational activities. Table 4 presents the most essential and significant activities of clusters of tourism in Slovakia and summarizes information on these activities.

Table 4 Liptov Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Coordination</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with owners of accommodation facilities • Appraisal of best sellers Liptov Region Card |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities • In the context of coordination activities, especially aimed at the members of the cluster |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liptov Region Card |
| <i>Distribution</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of www.visitliptov.sk website – Total number of views in the period of 1/1 to 31/12/2010: 302 946 (2009: 98 430 views), a record achieved in summer – 3700 views/day, the number of visits reached in summer: 15/6 – 31/08/2010: 154,000 views |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairs, exhibitions, workshops – the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia (19 events in 2010) • Advertising: Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland – in 18 different newspapers with a circulation of more than 2.2 million – plus 0.8 million circulation within an insert JASNÁ Low Tatras – double-page (2010) • Radio and television media: TV Liptov, Markíza, Fun Radio, STV 1 and 2 • Seasonal promotional materials • Issue Guides: Summer 2011, Winter 2011/2012 |
| <i>Educational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar for SMEs "How to be Successful" |
| <i>Other</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission of 13 new members in 2010 • Negotiations with other potential members of the cluster • Regular quarterly meetings with representatives of self-governments, SACR, ministry, participation in conferences on tourism (in 2010, 13 events) • Within the programme of cross-border cooperation Slovakia–Poland mutually collaborate on a project Tatras • Project "Polish-Slovak Initiative of Promoting and Developing Brands of Mountainous Countries." |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia, based upon secondary sources, focused mainly on marketing and promotional activities, seminars and workshops, the provision of information on European Structural Funds and the possibility of obtaining them, the support of infrastructure development and the like. However, specific activities, with dates, participants and presentations of some partial results, based upon secondary sources, were not listed. Participation in tourism fair ITF SlovakiaTour 2011 was the only specific activity mentioned. The cluster attempted to look for the possibility of building a bicycle route on the embankment dam over an adjacent hydro-electric plant Kráľová. Due to the presence of the cluster there would be funds available from the European Union. There was no information found on the commencement of the cycle route construction or the further plans of the project.

Table 5 Balnea Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events: Opening of spa season Hontianske cultural summer Dudinské fairs |
| <i>Distribution</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIK Dudince • Website – www.tikdudince.sk |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website – www.tikdudince.sk • ITF SlovakiaTour 2011 |
| <i>Educational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner in Conference “Chance for Unknown Countries” |
| <i>Other</i> | - |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Table 6 Orava Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oravapass |
| <i>Distributional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: www.oravapass.sk, still in use: www.orava.sk |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional leaflets, brochures, maps • Fairs, exhibitions, conferences |
| <i>Educational</i> | - |
| <i>Other</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with representatives of municipalities |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Table 7 Turiec Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activity |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skipass Turiec • Regional card for summer season |
| <i>Distributional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Network Facebook |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo and slogan creation • Folders and wrappers with a logo |
| <i>Educational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference participation: “A Small Country on the Way to a Large Destination” |
| <i>Other</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservation system launching |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Table 8 Smolenice Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Clusters" |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events: Experience 5 elements on the way to love Night of Churches Route to a fairy forest Slovak Cup in mountain-cycling Fair Hogmanay fireworks 2012 |
| <i>Distributional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website www.klaster.smolenice.sk |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3D virtual tour of Smolenice • Promotional materials, leaflets, maps • Exhibitions, presentations – ITF SlovakiaTour 2011, trade fair in Prague 2011 |
| <i>Educational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference participation |
| <i>Other</i> | - |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Table 9 Košice Cluster – Tourism in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanderings and guiding in town • Coordination of the event Summer in Košice |
| <i>Distributional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information centre in Košice • Website www.visitkosice.eu |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand Creation "Visit Košice" • Promotion of "2013" • Member of social network Facebook |
| <i>Educational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conference on destination management "Košice on the Map of Tourism" – introduction of Košice Cluster – Tourism • Panel discussion organisation at ITF SlovakiaTour 2012 |
| <i>Other</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town card project launching • Introduction of reservation system of accommodation • European capital city of culture 2013 project |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Table 10 Horehronie Cluster in specific activities

| Activity | Specific activities |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Coordination</i> | - |
| <i>Informational</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to promotional activities |
| <i>Product</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horehronie Region Card |
| <i>Distributional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website www.horehronie.net |
| <i>Promotional</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo and slogan elaboration for the region • Participation in trade fairs and exhibitions |
| <i>Educational</i> | - |
| <i>Other</i> | - |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

3 Organisational functioning of clusters of tourism

The next part of primary research was focused on a number of indicators related to the organizational functioning of clusters.

The number of members (starting and present phase) had increased in almost every cluster since their formation. In the case of three clusters, the number of members decreased. The greatest number of members was reported, during the research period, in Košice Cluster – Tourism (36) and Liptov Cluster (28). The lowest number of members was 5. The average number of members for all clusters was 16.

During the research process attention was paid to the organization of work and coordination meetings as reported in Table 11.

Table 11 Number of meetings, workshops, projects of individual clusters

| Cluster | Number of work meetings | | Number of workshops | | Number of realised projects | Number of projects in progress |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|---------------------|------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 2010 | 2011 | 2010 | 2011 | | |
| Liptov Cluster | 50 | 50 | 10 | 12 | 2 | 6 |
| Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| Balnea Cluster | 6 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Orava Cluster | 12 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Turieč Cluster | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Smolenice Cluster | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Košice - Tourism | 13 | 32 | 3 | 8 | 15 | 57 |
| Horehronie Cluster | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 |

Source: own processing on secondary data.

Workshops were organized or co-organised by each cluster, except for Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia. The greatest number of these workshops were organised by the major clusters, such as Liptov Cluster and Košice – Tourism. The thematic focus of these workshops was co-operation in tourism, promotion and marketing, winter and summer seasons, the organizational functioning of clusters, and workshops for the staff of the cluster.

Košice Cluster – Tourism listed the greatest number of projects, either realised or in progress. There were 57 internal projects in progress. Orava Cluster did not list any projects and Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia had no relevant response to the issue of projects. There was some confusion in the perception of the notion project; some respondents regarded it as documentation for EU funds drawings, others as projects which required cooperation with external partners, or as an entire set of activities with elaborated documentation.

Clusters in varying degrees cooperate with a supporting infrastructure. Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia did not offer any information on cooperation. Other clusters cooperated with universities or colleges in various fields; Horehronie Cluster and Liptov Cluster declared cooperation with hotel academies. The closest definition of such cooperation was defined by Košice Cluster – Tourism which regarded universities as experts and involved them in the training of guides and the enhancement of customer services.

After the endorsement of the Law on Tourism, which permits the creation of provincial (OOCR) and regional organizations of tourism, the main aim of the research was to understand how clusters imagine cooperation with these entities. Two clusters, namely Balnea Cluster and Košice – Tourism planned transformation into a provincial (OOCR) organisation of tourism. According to a report on the portal www.sme.sk (Oravasme.sk, 2012) Orava Cluster also planned transformation into OOCR. Two other clusters, namely Turiec Cluster and Smolenice Cluster envisaged cooperation as members of OOCR. Liptov Cluster also planned to cooperate, but it did not mention any specific form of future cooperation.

The main source of income for all clusters is represented by membership fees. According to a survey, the largest total amount of financial means was declared by the largest clusters in 2011. An interesting and important observation is that all the clusters spend more than 50% of their budget on marketing and promotional activities.

A substantial component of any cluster is the promotion of innovation and competitiveness of the participating entities and the region. Balnea Cluster and Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia provided no response to the issue of innovation-adoption in the regions. Respondents had the opportunity to mention innovations in organizational, informational, promotional and product-based categories. They were also enabled to include innovations which did not belong to those categories. Only two clusters took advantage of the criteria. Smolenice Cluster mentioned brand and logo creation and Horehronie Cluster indicated the effective utilisation of financial resources for regional promotion.

Inquiries about product innovations included responses mainly with regard to the creation of regional cards and discount packages. Clusters regarded the creation of websites, regional or cluster-related, as organisational and informational innovations; whereas exhibitions and fairs, the internet, and social networks were mentioned as promotional innovations. Horehronie Cluster mentioned the introduction of a "statistical system" based on regional cards. Košice Cluster – Tourism regarded the organisation of conferences and panel discussions as innovations.

The next question examines how a cluster influences the competitiveness of a region. All clusters reported on the creation of conditions for collaboration and the increase in the quality of services, and the formation of a better business environment; two clusters reported on the creation of new job opportunities and the promotion of staff training. There were no other specific answers introduced by the clusters.

Table 12 Number of newly-created companies in the region, number of new investors, consumer satisfaction tracking

| Cluster | Newly-created companies | New investors | Consumer satisfaction tracking |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Liptov Cluster | yes – but number unmonitored | Our task is not to attract new investors. | No tracking |
| Tourism Cluster – West Slovakia | Unmonitored | None | No tracking |
| Balnea Cluster | Unmonitored, but rather none | None | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. |
| Orava Cluster | Unmonitored | Yes | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. |
| Turieč Cluster | Unmonitored | None, with regard to tourism | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. |
| Smolenice Cluster | Yes – one restaurant | None | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. |
| Košice - Tourism | None | None | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. Yes, in support of the cluster. |
| Horehronie Cluster | No information about any | None, but their negotiate with potential investors | Tracking is carried out by members in their own companies. |

Source: own processing on primary data.

Competitiveness of a region is also reflected in the creation of new businesses and the emergence of new investors. As Table 12 shows, clusters of tourism in Slovakia do not devote sufficient attention to these areas. Almost none of the clusters pursued whether there was a newly-created company. Smolenice Cluster, which reported on the opening of a new restaurant, and Liptov Cluster, which reported on the foundation of a new company, were the only exceptions. However, they did not have any information about the number of those investments. None of the clusters were successful in attracting new investors into the regions. Liptov Cluster did not consider this as its own task. Horehronie Cluster was the only cluster which conducted negotiations with potential future investors.

Conclusion

Declared clusters of tourism have emerged as a result of an intentional need to coordinate the development of tourism in the regions and supply for a missing func-

tional regional tourism management, or to become an alternative to the then functioning regional associations. They provide clear evidence for the activeness of many regional entities of tourism and their natural aspect to resolve the regional problems of tourism. It is understandable that the declared clusters of tourism have been created in the natural areas of tourism, for example, Liptov, Turiec, and Horehronie. Information gained through primary and secondary research verifies the fact that clusters of tourism in Slovakia operate in regional tourism as organisations of destination management. That is why, many clusters reacted to the challenge by the Law of Promotion of Tourism and utilised the officially established regional cooperation within the organization of clusters to create new associations as destination management organizations, i.e. regional organizations of tourism, for example, Orava Cluster registered as regional organisation of tourism, Tourism Cluster-Košice Tourism registered as regional tourism organization Tourism Košice, Liptov Cluster acted prior to the endorsement of the Law as an official destination management organization. Other clusters cooperate in various forms with destination management organizations, such as members, clusters are also partners of regional organizations.

The status of clusters in the region determines their business activities (especially the realisation of marketing tasks and the coordination of marketing activities), which cannot be associated with the activities of clusters as they are defined in the EU documents and other technical and scientific resources. The following table, confirming the previous claims and the hypotheses, compares the essence of cluster operations and destination management organisations with the functioning of clusters of tourism and destination management organizations in Slovakia.

Table 13 Comparison of organisations of destination management and clusters of tourism in terms of their operations

| Comparison of clusters of tourism and organisations of destination management (DMO) in terms of their operations | |
|--|--|
| DMO | Clusters of Tourism |
| | -Enables cooperation and partnership -Coordination of activities of several diverse entities |
| -Accountable for destination management and marketing, coordination of marketing activities -Based upon formal relations -Tourism-friendly education of citizens | -Attracts specialised companies to the region -Creates demand for companies with similar or complementing activities -Reduces constraints for smaller companies, contributes to achieving a critical amount -Develops common values, trust, reciprocity -Increases regional competitiveness -Support and innovation orientation -Support and implementation of research -Linking the theoretical and practical spheres -Education and knowledge transfer from abroad |

| DMO in Slovakia | Clusters of tourism in Slovakia |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support for cooperation of various entities -Everyone has the right to become a member -Focus on marketing and advertising, strong consumer-orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Product-creation participation -Organisation of events -Support for competitors and cooperation -Support for cultural, social and sports activities, preserving the cultural heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creation and realisation of tourism projects -Provision of advisory and consultation services for members -Implementation of innovations in the field of marketing | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Foundation in compliance with Law 91/2010 Coll. of Tourism Promotion -Financing through state subsidies, if conditions are fulfilled -Support and participation in policy-making with regard to the development of tourism -Enforces sustainable development in tourism -Elaborates an annual action plan and a monitoring report on the development of tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Foundation in compliance with Civil Code 40/1964 Coll. or Law 83/1990 on citizens associations |

Source: own processing on secondary and primary data.

The institutionalization of clusters, unlike destination management organisations, is formally inessential; economic development, in the case of clusters, stems from local and regional specialisation.

The development of declared clusters of tourism in Slovakia could be monitored for several years, whereas analysis will be, among other things, primarily related to the implementation of legislation on destination management, cluster policy and supporting resources aimed at its realisation. These facts will determine whether the declared clusters of tourism move towards competitiveness, innovation and research and development (as shown in table 13) or focus on activities typical of destination management organizations. The existence of clusters of tourism, however, has had an undeniable importance in building structures of regional tourism, and thist has been an example for other regions; and specifically in Slovakia they were one of the key players at the birth of destination management.

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