

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF TOURISM IN MALOPOLSKA THROUGH REGIONAL PRODUCTS

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Abstract. The SOR analysis is a tool which allowing the regional actors and decision makers to establish effective tourism policy [McDonald 1992; Haberberg and Rieple 2001]. The policy which is the main field of interest in the COTOUR project is concentrated on the Regional Product treated as a tool of the region development. First step of the SOR analysis is SWOT analysis. The next step for SOR analysis purpose is the choice of elements described in SWOT analysis features these which are crucial for the research purposes. In case of COTOUR project we needed to choose these ones which had influence on tourism development from the regional product point of view. The paper reports part of research related to the EU INTERREG IIIC COTOUR project (www.cotour.org).

Key words: Strategic Orientation Round, Malopolska, regional, tourism

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Regions of origin play an important role in determining consumer attitudes toward and willingness to pay for speciality foods. Regional imagery (use of regional images) is increasingly being recognized as having commercial value by providing a subjective source of quality differentiation [Henchion and McIntyre 1999]. Regional images are sources of competitive advantage utilized in the strategic management while developing a strong destination brand.

The objective of the study is to identify and delineate the strategic options for tourism development in Malopolska, through the focus on regional products promotion and utilization of Strategic Orientation Round (SOR) approach.

METHODOLOGY

The Strategic Orientation Round (SOR) approach is applied in order to develop strategic action plans or options [Frambach and Nijssen 1995]. In the SOR confrontation matrix, the cells are indicating the combinations of O and T with S and W.

The matrix can be directly used for listing the arguments and risks for the different strategic options and sketching main fields of action. The coordinates of Os Ts, Ws, and Ss may indicate the specific combination a proposal refers to (e.g. OS1 for a proposal in the maxi-maxi field).

To every cell of this matrix a score is given by experts to come to priority options. The individual scores are aggregated. The cells with a significant high total score are the main strategic options. Defining the strategic options by pair-wise combining of OT and SW is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Using SWOT results as framework for strategy options

Tabela 1. Zastosowanie wyników analizy SWOT jako podstawy do rozwiązań strategicznych

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
STRENGTHS	Maxi-maxi strategy ATTACK	Maxi-mini strategy DEFENCE
WEAKNESSES	Mini-maxi strategy CLEAN SHIP	Mini-mini strategy CRISIS

Source: Own elaboration.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne.

RESULTS: SWOT ANALYSIS

Analyzing step by step all internal and external features we came from the following long list of S-W-O-Ts:

Main strengths of Malopolska are:

- close neighborhood of Western and Eastern European markets,
- location on the West East – North-South communication corridors,
- rich history of the region,
- multicultural background especially in big cities,
- big differentiation of cultural attractions,
- a lot of unpolluted sites in the region,
- big number of national and landscapes parks,
- well developed transport network,
- dynamic development of Cracow airport,
- a lot of identified regional and local products,
- strong movement for regional product registration,
- well developed accommodation base in Cracow,
- good conditions for various types of tourism,
- various tourists routes (e.g. wooden architecture route, fruit route),
- developed spa – long tradition tourism (e.g. Krynica, Muszyna, Szczawnica – famous mineral water).

Main weaknesses:

- bad quality of roads in cities,
- poor transport services in small villages,
- low quality of tourist routes,
- low awareness of local product role in the region promotion,
- lack of registered regional products in the EU,
- lack of inexpensive but good quality accommodation offers,
- relatively low level of foreign language skills particularly in small cities and countryside,
- lack of sufficient tourist information,
- insufficient number of cultural events in the low season,
- lack of integrated tourism sets i.e. weekend offers links of different kinds of tourism.

Main opportunities:

- opening of the EU market to Malopolska businesses,
- development of economic and social cooperation in tourism between the EU countries,
- accession to the EU funds,
- decentralization of the public finances and strengthening of the role of regional and local authorities,
- new national law regulation dedicated to regional product (17.12.04),
- development of agro-tourism,
- development of a new form of tourism – eco-tourism based on unpolluted and varied environment.

Main threats:

- successful competition of neighboring regions,
- seasonal character of tourism,
- low level of investment in tourism,
- unstable legal regulations concerning investment,
- unfavorable ratio between budget incomes and assigned tasks of local authorities,
- high rate of unemployment, especially on agriculture areas,
- decrease in population incomes,
- low birth rate and increase in number of old people.

RESULTS: SOR ANALYSIS

Based on the list, the SOR matrix is prepared in order to combine the importance of many internal and external features. The importance of any chosen SWOT element was established with the experts and the members of the supporting board. Summing up the figures we get the following scores in the succeeding part of the matrix: SO = 31 points; ST = 24 points; WO = 17 points and WT = 23 points.

Attack by the highest score is pointed as the most important strategy. The difference between Defense and Crisis is insignificant (one point) therefore same attention should be placed into both strategies. The lowest score is coming with the Clean Ship strategic option.

The project started two years ago therefore it was decided to look through the SWOT as observe the big changes in the internal and external surroundings. The main strengths of Malopolska in 2007 are almost the same as those mentioned in the beginning of the analysis in 2005. The only differences are:

- strong movement of local initiatives dedicated to self awareness of local communities;
- rising number of cultural events basing on local food and not food products;
- creation of tourism products based on traditional and local food products.

The weaknesses seem to be the same as in the beginning but nowadays we may remove from the „old” list the point dedicated to the lack of inexpensive but good quality accommodation offers. In this moment the list of possible good quality accommodation in Cracow is getting significantly longer and it is possible to get good quality offer not only in the five stars hotels.

Important changes in opportunities must be mentioned:

- Cracow’s placement in the very beginning place on the list of the most popular cities in the world;
- huge EU funds from the 2007–2013 financing period are dedicated to the wide variety activities associated with tourism development.

As the changes in SWOT seem to be not very big but still important, some changes in the SOR analysis are expected. The recent review of the SWOT Matrix with the priority points is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. SOR analysis for Malopolska – strategic options adapted in 2007

Tabela 2. Analiza SOR dla Małopolski – rozwiązania strategiczne zaadaptowane w 2007 roku

Table after SWOT updating		O1	O2	O3	O4	T1	T2	T3	T4
		Increase tourist no	New forms of tourism	Access to EU Funds	Strength role of local auth.	Decreasing world travel	Successful neighbour competition	Unstable law	Delay in access to external money
S1	Reach cultural attractions	3	2	3		3	3		3
S2	Reg. products registration movement		1		3				
S3	Local self awareness	3			3	2		3	2
S4	Different tourism condition		3	2			3	2	2
S5	Airport development	3	3	3	3	1	3		
W1	Low role reg. products in strategy	2		1	3	3	3		
W2	Lack of registered regional product							2	3
W3	Lack of tourism products	1	3	3		2		2	2
W4	Lack of tourism sets					1		3	
Total		12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Mean		2.4	2.4	2.4	3	2	3	2.4	2.4
SD		0.89	0.89	0.89	0.00	0.89	0.00	0.55	0.55

1 – important; 2 – very important; 3 – extremely important

Source: Own elaboration.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne.

The updated results (SO = 35 points, ST = 27 points; WO = 13 points and WT = 21 points) confirm the main role of the attack strategy in the light of the direction of the changes.

CONCLUSIONS

The presented analysis shows that in spite of many positive changes in Malopolska, the region faces many threats. There is continuing decrease in population incomes (compared to overall increase in Polish economy) and a very slow decrease in the unemployment rate. Significant threat is also connected with utilization of external funds, i.e. there are significant delays with receiving of money available within a new programming period.

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STRATEGICZNA ORIENTACJA W TURYSTYCE MAŁOPOLSKI POPRAWIEZ PRODUKTY REGIONALNE

Streszczenie. Analiza SOR jest narzędziem umożliwiającym prowadzenie efektywnej polityki turystycznej w wymiarze regionalnym [McDonald 1992; Haberberg and Rieple 2001]. Polityka ta, będąc głównym obszarem zainteresowania projektu COTOUR, jest skoncentrowana na produkcie regionalnym rozumianym jako instrument rozwoju regionu. Pierwszym etapem analizy SOR jest analiza SWOT, a następnym wybór elementów opisanych w ramach SWOT, które są istotne dla celów badań. W przypadku projektu COTOUR zaistniała potrzeba wyboru takich czynników, które wpływają na rozwój turystyki z regionalnego punktu widzenia. W artykule zaprezentowano część badań związanych z unijnym projektem COTOUR w INTERREG IIIC (www.cotour.org).

Słowa kluczowe: strategiczna orientacja, Małopolska, regionalny, turystyka

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