

## Management of Partnership for Tourism in the Regions of the Czech Republic

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### Abstract

The paper describes results of a research project called Partnership for Tourism at a regional level. The project was carried out for the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic and was aimed at clarifying ways of coordinating tourism activities in particular regions of the Czech Republic. The results do not imply universal guidelines for managing regional tourism, but outline possible ways of partnership building and a few management systems that lead to a successful coordination of regional development.

Next part of the paper shows suggested process of partnership building and its pros and cons are explained. At the end there are shown some examples from regions where there is cooperation in managing tourism development at a very high level.

**Key words:** tourism, partnership, regional management, regional development, cooperation, public-private partnership

### 1 Introduction

In 2005 Ministry for Regional Development assigned public competition “Research and development on demand of state administration”. Among many others also new project team made up of young researches from private company První regionální rozvojová a. s. and experts from University Pardubice and University of Hradec Králové was successful with the proposal of the project “Regional Level of Partnership for Tourism” and in 2006 started working on research tasks.

Across many branches, kinds of companies and also many countries is partnership in general considered as one of the best practices. Especially in tourism where there are many small companies from different sectors of economy (and also from public and private sector) is partnership and cooperation necessary for successful management of regional development and development of the particular companies itself. Even if this topic is very interesting not only for the state administration there wasn't any analysis or complex description of actual state or any recommendation for partnership building beginners.

This kind of management is usually initiated and led by a strong personality (leader) and could be institutionalized in so called Tourism organization or Destination management companies. In full regional Tourism organizations are significant actor of regional development and became the main subject of presented research.

## 2 Research Description

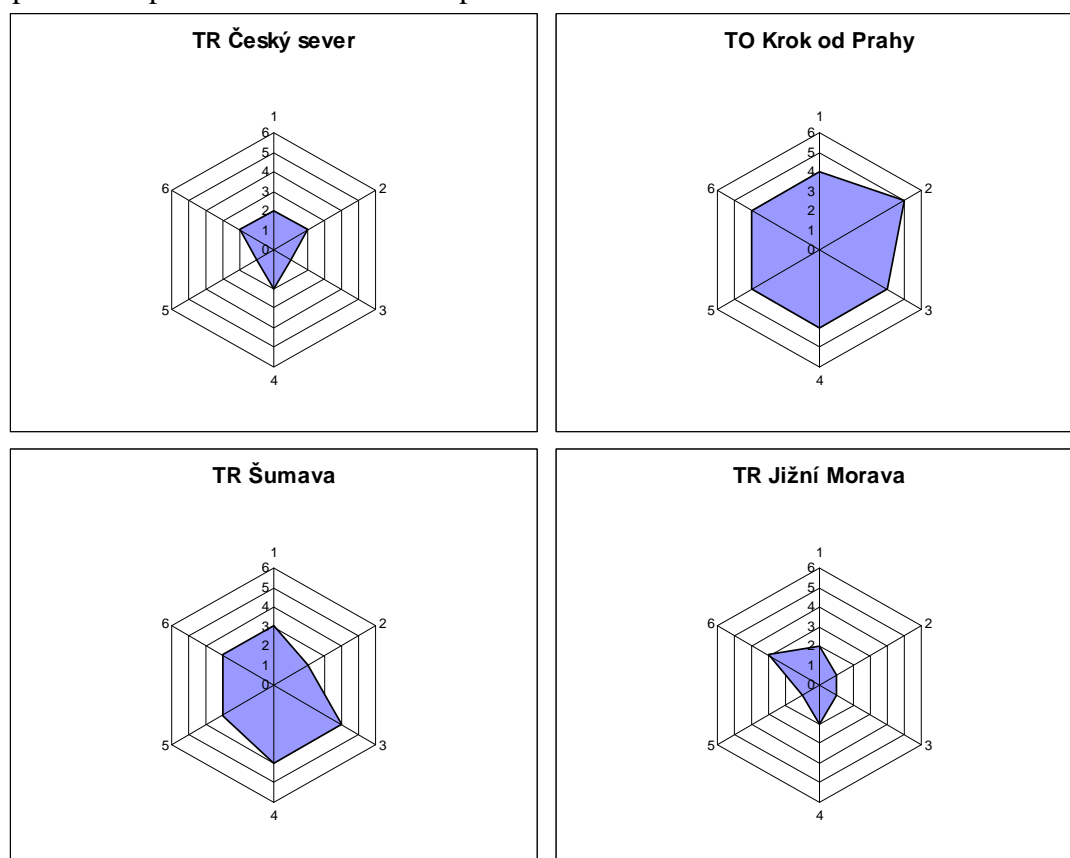
Research was divided into two main parts – analytical part aimed on analysis of the current situation and creative part which is closely connected with analytical part, describes management systems of tourism partnership and suggests ways of partnership building and strengthening.

### 2.1 Analytical Part of the Research

At the beginning project team had to make proper analysis of the current situation in managing tourism in the regions of the Czech Republic. For the analytical part of the research there were chosen representative organizations in the most of the tourism regions in the Czech Republic. Each of these organizations was somehow connected with coordination of tourism in its surrounding and obviously each of them has different style, different successes, different partners, aims and experiences. These disparities helped to show the variety of possible options of coordinating tourism and later helped to clarify the best methods of partnership management.

Structured interview was determined as the best way of gathering information from individuals working in these organizations in the regions. Working on interviews was also great possibility to meet unique personalities and helped to gain more knowledge then from questionnaires or from the organization's web pages.

“Analysis of the Management System of the Tourism and Partnership Building in the Regions of the Czech Republic” was written as a result of analytical part. Analysis shows variety of partnership management systems, possibilities of institutionalizing partnership, summarizes the results of interview and also tries to compare and evaluate observed organizations. The example of comparison is shown on the picture no. 1.



Picture no. 1: Comparison of the level of partnership in chosen tourism regions

Source [1]

Each axis shows different activity of Tourism organization:

1. Communication with partners
2. Meeting and dealing with partners
3. Partners involvement into decision making process and planning (partners influence on the strategic decision of the organization)
4. Partnership projects
5. Stability and long-term cooperation
6. Partnership wideness

Each category is divided into five levels (the best level is 5), then the blue area shows the level of partnership cooperation (larger area = higher level of partnership). It's important to point out that all of the evaluated data are very "soft" so the comparison cannot be taken as unambiguously objective. High level of partnership cooperation for example means: regular and systematic communication, regular and formalized meetings with partners and potential partners, partners involvement in the organizational structure, long-term partnership projects, longer history of partnership cooperation based on agreement, wide scope of cooperating partners.

In the same time there were collected further information from internet, literature and from cooperating experts. Because there is very little appropriate literature in Czech language project team made literature search for foreign publications. Proper parts of the books were translated and used as a part of handbooks (more information about books are in the chapter 2.3).

## **2.2. Seminar for Representatives of Regional Tourism**

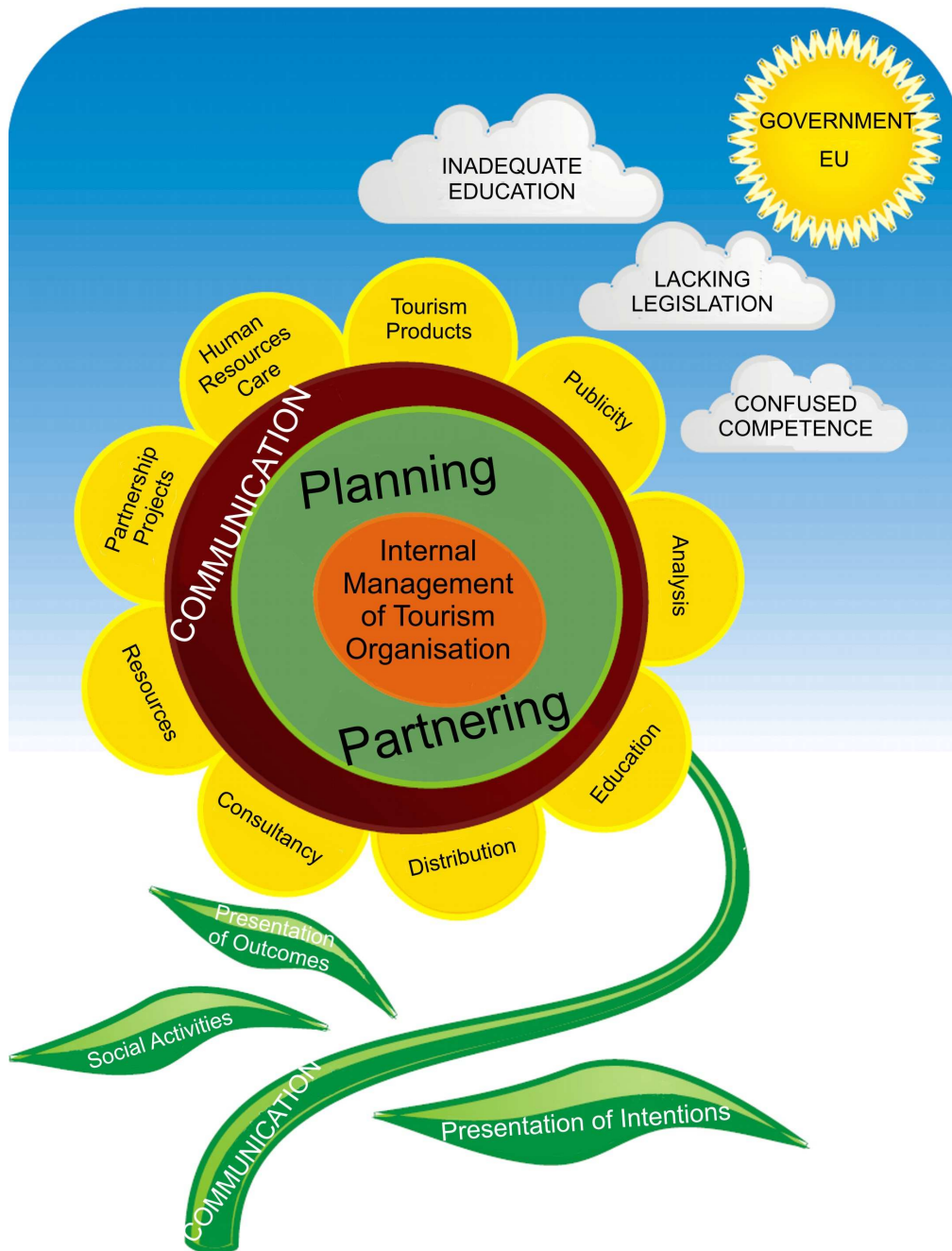
There was held seminar for representatives of regional tourism after finishing interviews and preparing draft of handbooks. Participants arrived from all over the Czech Republic and were discussing about results of the analysis and about content of drafted handbooks. Thanks to this meeting researches have significant feed back and could modify next research activities (in this period mostly connected with writing handbooks) to meet reader's expectations.

## **2.3 Second Part of the Research - Main Outcomes**

Second part of research was aimed on suggesting the ways of partnership building and strengthening and professionalizing cooperation within organizations working in tourism.

There were 3 handbooks drafted out. Books contain practical information and each has its particular target group.

"Model of tourism partnership based on Tourism organization" (pict. no. 2) is same in all of the books. This model was suggested upon experiences of interviewed representatives of existing Tourism organizations. So called "Flower structure" is shown on picture no. 2.



**Picture no. 3: Model of tourism partnership based on Tourism organization**

Source [2]

*Model description:*

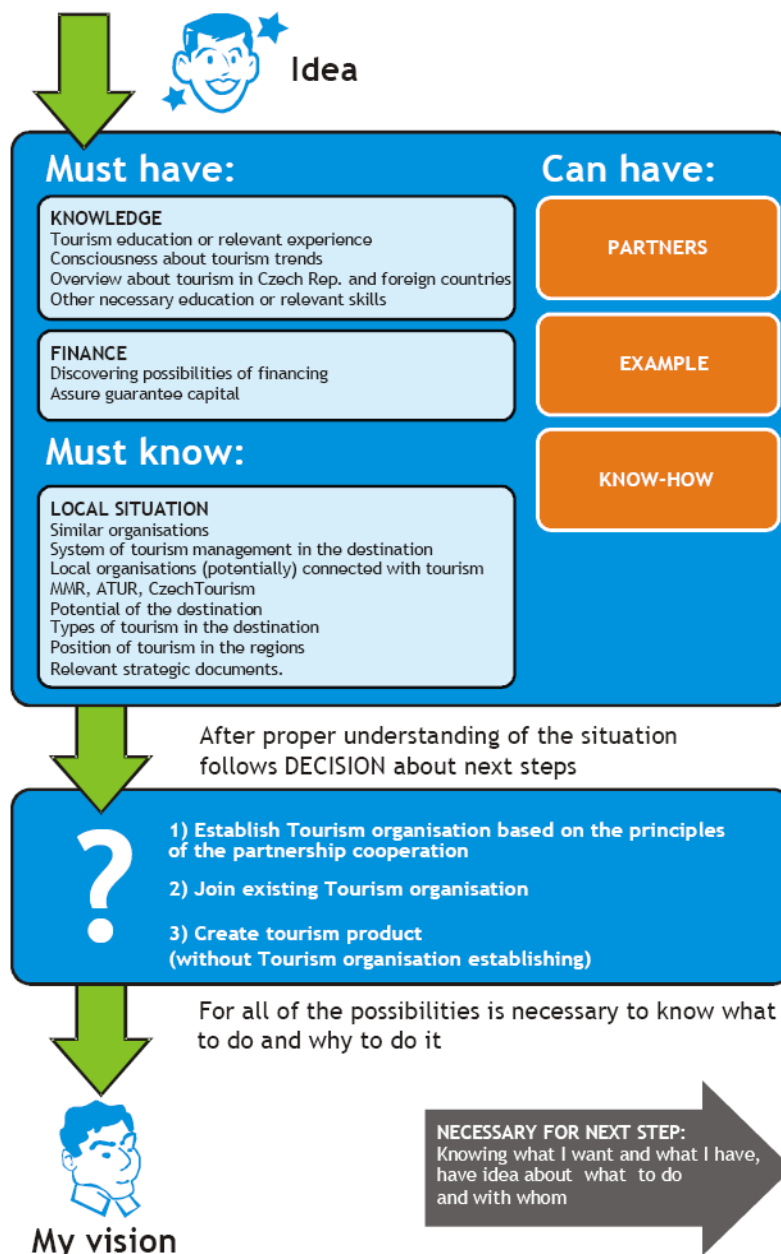
Sun represents support from government and European Union. This support cannot get to the partnership (flower) because of long-term problems represented by three clouds. Flower represents partnership itself. It's based on communication (stem) and in the same time communication is connecting link for all the other activities shown on the perianth. In the middle of the flower are shown the main (strategic) activities. Green leaves shows how should partnership communicate with its environment.

First of the books "Partnership for Tourism" is an introduction not only to partnership but as well to the great topic "tourism". This wide scope was chosen because this handbook is

written for “tourism beginners” and in the same time for everyone who wants to refresh or broaden its previous education.

The second one “Partnership for Tourism Establishing” suggests the possible way of partnership building in few easy steps that are followed by schematic pictures (example is shown on picture no. 3). There is also suggested how could be the Tourism organization managed. This is shown on original scheme called “Flower structure” (see on the picture no. 2) where the flower shows activities that should be done by Tourism organization.

The last book “Partnership for Tourism Building-up” contains recommendations for already existing Tourism organization.



Picture no. 3: First step in partnership building

Source [3]

### 3 Conclusion

One of the benefits of the project is its newness. No team before made such complex research aimed especially on partnership of the subjects working in tourism sector. Other benefits come from the approach in suggesting steps for partnership building and from the scope of recommended management methods. Everyone who wants to start with partnership project can find some similar and already working organization in the analysis [1] or can simply follow recommended process of partnership building described in the books – mostly in “Partnership for tourism establishing” [2].

Trust, faith and the right and perfectly motivated people are the best system for successful partnership. There is no best “structure for partnership”, not even “best structure of partners” or the best scope of activities that should Tourism organization manage. All of this is unique in particular regions and the chosen way mostly depends on the partnership leaders.

Problems that can appear during partnership building or in the Tourism organization imply from inadequate legislation, wrong belief about partnership discreditable and from disbelief.

Fortunately there are many people and organizations showing how are partnership for tourism effective, benefits bringing and amusing.

### 4 References

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