

Clusters as a form of cooperation and innovation on the example of the Bieszczady Cross-Border Tourism Cluster

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Abstract: Clusters are today one of the forms of association of small groups in a large community. They create favourable conditions for the activities of small entities whose growth potential is limited. The aim of the article is to show the importance of clusters as a means of stimulating cooperation of companies in the tourism industry. The publication is based on available literature, statistical data, as well as on websites. The article presents briefly the nature and origins of clusters. The concept of cluster has been characterized and the benefits of membership in clusters have been identified, their life cycle and division have been characterized, and the most important examples discussed. The article contains the characteristics of tourism clusters, as a special kind of interaction entities. The article shows the role of such forms of cooperation on the example of the Bieszczady Cross-Border Tourism Cluster. The research method used in the article was a critique of stationery and analysis of existing data. On the basis of the available literature books, websites and statistics, it is clear that clusters contribute to increasing market opportunities for businesses, also for those who work in the tourism industry. Publication shall also attempt to forecast the situation of clusters in the future in the face of changing economic realities.

Key words: cluster, cross-border area, tourism, cooperation

1. Introduction

Clusters are a form of association of small groups in a large community. They create favourable conditions for the activities of small entities whose growth potential is limited. In the framework of cooperation between the entities they receive a number of economic benefits that can contribute to a significant improvement in the market situation.

The aim of this article is to characterize the essence of clusters on the example of the Bieszczady Cross-Border Tourism Cluster. The paper exposes benefits for members of the cluster, resulting from a combination of joint efforts to develop tourism.

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The article is based on statistical data, literature books and websites. Thesis to be put in the publication is the assumption that clusters can significantly boost economic development entities affiliated to it and contribute to the growth of innovation.

The methodology and research method used in the article is the analysis of existing data and writing criticism, aimed at showing the current state of knowledge and directions of scientific discussion.

2. Comprehending the cluster

A cluster is a wide notion which is existing in many fields and a huge interest in it provide scientists, politicians and entrepreneurs. The English word 'cluster' is bearing the notion of what the word 'circle' is determining, a 'bunch'. The concept of industrial cluster for the first time was described by Alfred Marshall, who identified it with outside economies of scale resulting from the presence of production companies in industrial districts (Gorynia and Jankowska, 2008). In literature with reference to clusters industrial bundles, local production systems, producer's groups and innovative network are other met notions.

Contemporarily cluster was defined by an American economist Michael E. Porter (Rapacz, 2008). Porter described cluster as the group of companies and institutions connected with them, being in a geographical proximity, dividing the same abilities, the technology and the infrastructure which stay with each other both in cooperative, as well as competitive relations (Porter, 2001).

Clusters are an innovative form of cooperation of a so-called coepetition, which means that competition between business partners of partial convergence purposes is treated as a game that benefits all participants, without eliminating any of them from the market (Vanhaverbeke, 2001).

Formally or unofficially business entities cooperating with each other and institutions and organizations which they are carrying out constitute joint undertakings and are reaching profits in the local, regional, and domestic scale, as well as on the international level (Sölvell, Lindqvist, and Ketels, 2008). The most important features of clusters can include:

- system connection, network of formal and unofficial connections of cluster,
- concentration, concentrating in certain area and in the given time stores (material, financial and human) what the increase in the productivity of the non-current asset causes,
- the cooperation, the mutual aid and the cooperation of many autonomous business entities,
- ability to generate and to keep the competitive edge,
- reduction in the risk what allows to reduce management costs,
- achieving the synergy effect.

Companies in cluster can achieve tangible benefits. The most important of them include (Palmen and Baron, 2008):

- reduction in transaction costs,
- diffusion know-how and rotation of the staff,
- openness to innovations,
- easy access to key resources,

- the highest level of the productivity and profitability.
- simpler access to markets.

The formation of clusters can be done from the bottom up or the top down. In the first case group there are the regional initiative, while in the second the government or local authorities (Scott, 1988).

Functioning of cluster is connected with distinguishing the life cycle. The life cycle of cluster consists of the following stages: embryonic stage, of the height, the maturity and the fall (of close). In the first phase the cooperation among existing companies is beginning only to create, as these are most often clusters operating on relatively young markets, e.g. in the area of high technologies. The stage of the height is being marked bigger, much better with dynamics of creating connections. A stage of the maturity is educated stable forms for which the more distant height is heavy for the achievement (Gancarczyk, 2010).

Clusters in the final phase are able to reorganize their structure, the change of the production and repeat beginning the life cycle.

In the literature you can meet several divisions of clusters. Basically, most often we divide them to:

- technological—tied together with chain of the value added, strongly oriented to high technologies, keeping close connections with research centres, often straight out growing out of them,
- traditional (historical)—based on the know-how and the knowledge developed for many years but even of generations.

The world's best-known technology clusters can include Silicon Valley (semiconductors and computer technologies), Lombardia (ICT and chemical industry), Cambridge (biotechnology, computer and IT industry), Austin, Montpellier (telecommunications, software). Amongst traditional clusters, vineyards of the area Bordeaux or also a Swiss clockmaker's industry can be mentioned.

Professor Ann Markusen, expert from the regional and industrial policy from the Minnesota University, suggested the division of clusters to (Markusen, 1996):

- network clusters,
- concentric clusters,
- satellite clusters,
- institutional clusters.

Network clusters are being identified with industrial districts which smaller companies form in similar areas of production. A lack of one focal point around which enterprises are concentrating is a feature of the circle of the network type. A diversified store of enterprises is replacing them.

Concentric clusters are characterized by an existence of large enterprises (of axis), which the network of suppliers of goods and services is located around (spokes). In the interrelation large enterprises are dominating.

Satellite clusters, as in the above case are dominated by large companies, acting like spokes. In this case, there is a minimum exchange and cooperation, and most of the links comprising outer link manufacturing and other compounds with the axis.

In case of institutional clusters main and public institutions or non-profit organizations are acting the decisive part, so as: research-developmental laboratories, universities, defensive systems or the civil service. Institutions have an ability to attract suppliers, meeting their needs.

3. Clusters in tourism

Within a cluster it is possible to use benefits and profits resulting from the cooperation also in the tourism activity (Włodarczyk, Kaczmarek, and Stasiak, 2005). One should state that more and more initiatives of this type are arising worldwide, but also and in Poland. In the world the concept of tourist clusters has been known for ages. In the approach it constitutes the example of the innovation tourisms (Enright, 2000). In Poland, it is a new and still little popularized form of cooperation in tourism, including farm tourism. Its dissemination contributes, among others, to European Union programmes in support of regional development, in which the operators making network connections obtain specific financial support (Hansen, 1992), (Storper and Walker, 1986).

One of the proposed definitions of a tourism cluster defines it as an active network of tourism enterprises interacting with each other within a specific tourist product and at the same time competing the quality of tourist services offered. These clusters use unique resources of the area (Kubiak, 2009). They can decide about it among the number of natural attractions, fast and convenient communication, a sense of security, advertizing, high-quality services in accommodation, meals, etc. A tourist cluster is an active network of:

- authors of tourist products,
- entrepreneurs supporting from other industries,
- tourist organizations,
- local authorities and self-government,
- business environment institution,
- educational background (colleges).

Particular elements are cooperating with each other in the frames of one brand (of tourist product) and simultaneously competing with one another with quality, uniqueness and innovation. The basic attributes of this cluster include:

- space (defined area, in frames of which entities are functional),
- economic-social relations occurring between participants,
- network (entities are aspiring for achieving individual and shared purposes),
- services (the consumption of tourist products is taking place in the place of producing them).

The cluster will be effective, provided it is not leading the competition for the elimination from the market, but contributes to derive profits by the entities involved in this structure, and in addition it leads to improvements of quality of life of the residents on the area of the cluster (Kaczmarek, Stasiak, and Włodarczyk, 2010).

In the case of tourism clusters, factors contributing to concentration of a specific group of companies and institutions connected with their activities are undoubtedly endogenous factors, which include:

- beneficial location on account of the wealth of natural stores and natural advantages,
- communications' best combinations,
- the highest level of technical infrastructure,
- the highest level of knowledge.

There should also be mentioned soft development factors, such as tradition, knowledge and skills, norms and values, work culture, and social activity (Zorska, 2002).

The first tourist cluster in Poland came into existence in 2005 under the name 'Beskid 5', into composition which accessed in 2005 five communes of the Cieszyn district with Ustroń at the head. In 2009, in Poland in the tourism industry there have already worked several clusters, examples of which are among others: 'Via Sudetica', 'Sun Region', 'Crystal of Europe', and others are in the organizational phase or project (Staszewska, 2009). Examples of tourism clusters in Poland are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of tourist clusters in Poland

Cluster	Region
Cluster Ceramics and Tourism	Wrocław
Cluster of Culture Lublin	Lublin
Wine and Honey Trail	Gorzów Wielkopolski
Łódź Cluster 'Tourism Horse'	Łódź
Tourism Cluster Valley of Wisłoka River	Krakow
Tourist Cluster Mazovia	Warsaw
Opole Tourism Cluster 'Land of Milk and Honey'	Opole
Sopot Tourist Cluster	Gdańsk
Tourist Cluster 'Valley of Noteć River'	Poznań
Cross-Border Cluster Tourism Water Trail Berlin–Szczecin–Baltic	Szczecin

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Tourist clusters are undergoing the constant development thanks to uniting entities. In Europe it is possible to meet with numerous initiatives, encouraging the development of clusters which on the Old Continent were identified over two thousand. A synergy effect of action, impossible to get individually and innovating, is an important reason of their functioning and development (Nordin, 2003). Cooperation within tourist cluster may include:

- creating and managing tourist products of the area,
- joint promotional measures (fair, Internet advertisement, cooperation with media),
- organization of common trainings and raising qualifications,
- joint efforts against the EU centres,
- conducting researches including making results available and implementing the innovation (Jackson and Murphy, 2006).

Tourist clusters can constitute the model of the innovation, also in Poland. They came into existence in 2008 and Cross-Border Tourist Cluster watercourse Berlin–Szczecin–Baltic can constitute the good example. The cluster repeatedly was awarded the title among others in

2008 'Innovative organization' in frames of the competition 'Domestic Leader of the Innovation' in Szczecin, and Eden 2010 and Przyjazny Brzeg 2011 were also awarded to the cluster. In an effective way it was able to use the abolition border in frames of Schengen in 2007. The innovation consists in promoting the tourist staple product that tourism constitutes along the trail, in frames of the tourist offer of Pomerania Euroregion, the completion of recreational-sports events, as well as activity in the cooperation between neighbours (<http://www.um-zachodniopomorskie.pl/index.php?wiad=1517>).

In area provided with activity of cluster both water and land tourism are developing. The organization is being promoted, bicycle, walking watercourses being found on its area and valuable areas among others: the Wolin National Park and numerous Landscape Couples. In the area of the group on the Polish and German border, there are approximately 105 marinas and ports. It enables the activation of navigation in the area of cluster. This area has the biggest number and surface of water basins in this part of Europe, through which towards the Baltic Sea and inland, sailing and motor yachts are flowing. For a number of surface ships sailing from the region of the capital Berlin and the State of Brandenburg it is a unique and at the same time the shortest connection with the sea water (http://www.pi.gov.pl/PARP/chapter_86197.asp?soid=B5F607FB9E1E41BBA80E24F34813EC44).

These are the obvious benefits of the activities of the tourism clusters, helping to increase their popularity in Europe and in Poland.

4. The Cross-Border Tourist Cluster of the Bieszczady mountains as the example of a tourist cluster

The Cross-Border Tourist Cluster of the Bieszczady mountains came into existence in Ustrzyki Dolne and is spreading through the areas of Poland and Ukraine. It is the only such organization covering areas of Poland and Ukraine. Its broker is the Association of Bieszczady Cross-Border Tourist Cluster. The Cross-Border Tourist Cluster of the Bieszczady mountains was created as part of the project implementation 'Polish-Ukrainian strategy of the development of tourism as the essential element of joint undertakings' which received funding from the European Regional Development Fund, partially from centres (ERDF) Programme of the INTERREG IIIA/ Tacis CBC Neighbourhood Poland–Belarus–Ukraine.

A Cross-Border Tourist Cluster of the Bieszczady mountains is a network of subjects which are next-door neighbours and are cooperating, using supporting the local government, the institution and the organization. Gathering all individuals which are interested in the development is planning tourism for them and preparing proposals interesting for tourists of the rest (<https://rzeszow.uw.gov.pl/wojewodztwo-podkarpackie/gospodarka/klastry/bieszczadzki-transgraniczny-klaster-turystyczny-2/>).

On the Polish side, it includes the villages of the district Bieszczady. They are Jałowe-Bandrów, Dzwiniacz, Czarne, and Lutowska. On the Ukrainian side they are towns of regions—Stary Sambor and Turka. These are in addition to the headquarters town areas such as the Stara Sól, Chyrów, Rozłucz.

Towns of the district of the Bieszczady mountains are representing a high tourist indexation and a quite unique tourist offer. With advantages of the Ustrzyki Dolne commune are

national parks and landscape and tourist routes and ski lifts put near the farm tourism objects, led by persons involved in activity of the cluster.

Jałowe-Bandrów as well as Dzwiniacz are the places put in the vicinity of the forests full of forest fleece and the wild game. As a tourist offer, there is a possibility of horse riding or carriage through the picturesque grounds. In the local households it is possible to take part in wicker and paper-tissue workshops. A questing tourism is also developing (Fedas and Florys, 2010).

In Czarne, the Gallery of the Bieszczady mountains 'Barak' is located, where it is possible to read and to buy artistic works of authors of the Bieszczady mountains. A little mine of petroleum is put up at the southern part of the village. Mineral springs are also appearing in the town, having a status of the spa. In the future a chance of the spa development of infrastructure exists.

Lutowiska village has 12 teaching, historical and natural paths and 116 kilometres of bicycle routes in their offer. For tourists there are also 2 ski lifts and 3 points are awaiting using the horse riding. With the advantage of communes Lutowiska and Czarne there are also abundant brines and bathing beaches.

Sambor is a town connected with folk culture and with rich collections of sacred art. Unique Orthodox churches are attracting tourists along with wonderful iconostases and roadside shrines. The area of Stary Sambor is abounding also in mineral waters, used for healing purposes.

In Chyrów, ponds for recreation and fishing were created. Also a camping site came into existence with lodging houses and a camping place. Town of Rozłucz, however, is putting for active rest associated with the skiing and bicycle routes. A unique appeal presents the town Turka.

It is a base for exploring the highest part of the Bieszczady mountains on the top of the Pikui and numerous forest complexes. The town is famous for its festivals and folk museum. As a part of the discussed cluster it is accessing 50 subjects, hotels, boarding houses. On account of country character, entrepreneurs acting in the farm tourism industry constitute the most numerous group of participants. They grouped together farm tourism households from a few Polish villages and put on the other side border of Ukrainian towns.

Low level of industrialization and urbanization of this area and the wealth of cultural-natural legacy kept thanks to that are supporting the development of farm tourism. Farm tourism households have more attractive prices compared to big hotel objects, being out of order in frames of cluster. Their localization guarantees easy access to tourist routes and is supporting the rest in a quiet surrounding (http://www.pi.gov.pl/PARP/chapter_86197.asp?soid=B5F607FB9E1E41BBA80E24F34813EC44).

It is possible to acknowledge the idea as a very valuable one in relation to the way of economic stimulation of regions and microregions of the so-called eastern wall.

The discussed form of cooperation is based on essential premises. The usefulness of creating relations of cooperation in the area of the borderland of Poland and Ukraine is being motivated relatively with its low position in the economy of both countries. Districts and provinces of this border zone belong to the most poorly developed regions with high unemployment rates.

Raising the tourist potential by exploiting existing advantages is a purpose of activity of the cluster. In the area of functioning of the circle it is worthwhile exploiting rich both natural and anthropogenic advantages (Kurek, 2007). A possibility of preparing and unwinding unique tourist brand-name products exists from the scope of educational-cognitive, trapper's tourism, or also a tourist full service.

Participants in cluster have one common goal, that is to enable everyone of the tourists, depending on their expectations, the most interesting spending their leave in the best possible conditions and using the substantial amount of available attractions in Bieszczady mountains, both on the Polish as well as on the Ukrainian side. The tourist product is being shaped by features of uniqueness being characteristic of a core of the product.

The cooperation initiative in frames of the cluster is realized in the name of 'Hotels dispersed in frames of the Cluster'. In practice towns, in which a few households are cooperating with one another, are such hotels.

A tourist who will like to take advantage of services in one of them will receive information and proposals to use offered attractions. Consisted entities in the cluster are acting in frames of 'dispersed hotel' in towns:

- on the Polish side: Jałowe-Bandrów, Dzwiniacz, Czarne, and Lutowiska,
- on the Ukrainian side: Stary Sambor and Turka.

A tourist who will visit the villages mentioned above or other objects is learning about the possibility of using the offer of the neighbour, where other attractions are waiting. Creating the base as a part of the computer system was a founding of the efficient flow of information of data, which every participant in the cluster is having access to. The tourist is able to enquire about accommodation in the high standard, about interesting gastronomy or functioning of the stud of horses. Joint advertizing in frames of the cluster is publishing folders and booklets in both languages, reaching urban centres of Warsaw, Krakow or the Silesian agglomeration.

In frames of the discussed cluster construction, plans of the next Polish-Ukrainian border-crossing points are being made, which additionally can strengthen the cooperation (<http://forum.bieszczady.info.pl/showthread.php/6328-Nowe-przej%C5%9Bcia-graniczne-z-Ukrain%C4%85-w-budowie/page6>). At present, the only possibility of crossing border exists in the entire district of the Bieszczady mountains through the border crossing point Krościenko-Smolnica. There are plans to create three another road border-crossing points in the subregion of the Bieszczady mountains what can considerably influence the exchange of tourist movements and facilitation in contacts between towns cooperating on both sides of the border.

5. Conclusions

The conclusions arising from the research results indicate that the Cross-Border Tourist Cluster of the Bieszczady mountains can constitute interesting and at the same time all innovative form of cooperation between Poland and Ukraine. It may be the beginning of an important collaboration between countries outside the Schengen zone. First, attention to overcoming mutual prejudices and barriers in contacts should be paid.

The cooperation can concern the social-economic activation of the residents, marketing, flow of knowledge, development of infrastructure, shared protection and exploiting natural and anthropogenic advantages. Everything is used for the needs of development of the widely comprehended tourism in distinguished regions on the Polish and Ukrainian side. The tourist offer in frames of the cluster should try to meet the quickly changing and not very predictable demands of tourists, as well as often provide them.

Tourist clusters enable to achieve the synergetic effect of the functioning of individual companies. They are carrying it out by conducting action on different plains, which for the single entrepreneur, or also a self-government unit, are unfeasible. All action can contribute to the economic recovery on both sides of the border and to serving for the improvement in conditions of the development of tourism, raising the level of the competitiveness of the tourist trade and integration for the tourism and for its surrounding in the spatial, economic, and especially social dimension. Achieving this objective is possible in the structures of Euroregions and centres from the cross-border cooperation programmes in which Poland is participating. These benefits can help to increase the popularity of tourism clusters in Europe and Poland alike.

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Klustry jako forma współdziałania i innowacyjności na przykładzie bieszczadzkiego transgranicznego klastra turystycznego

Abstrakt: Klustry stanowią współcześnie jedną z form zrzeszania małych grup społecznych w dużą zbiorowość. Stwarzają korzystne warunki do działalności dla małych podmiotów, których potencjał rozwojowy jest ograniczony. Celem artykułu było przedstawienie znaczenia klastrów jako instrumentu pobudzającego współdziałanie przedsiębiorstw w branży turystycznej. Publikacja powstała na podstawie dostępnej literatury książkowej, danych statystycznych, jak również wiadomości netograficznych.

W artykule przedstawiono pokrótce istotę i genezę klastrów. Dokonano charakterystyki pojęcia klastra, wskazano na korzyści wynikające z członkostwa w klastrach, scharakteryzowano ich cykl życia i po-

dział oraz podano najważniejsze przykłady. Artykuł zawiera również charakterystykę klastrów turystycznych, jako szczególnego rodzaju współdziałania podmiotów. Tekst ukazuje rolę tego rodzaju form kooperacji na przykładzie bieszczadzkiego transgranicznego klastra turystycznego. Zastosowaną metodą badawczą była krytyka piśmiennicza i analiza danych zastanych. Z dostępnej literatury książkowej, netografii i danych statystycznych wynika jasno, że klustry przyczyniają się do zwiększania szans rynkowych dla podmiotów gospodarczych, również dla tych, które działają w branży turystycznej. Publikacja podejmuje ponadto próbę prognozy sytuacji klastrów w przyszłości w obliczu zmiennej sytuacji gospodarczej.

Słowa kluczowe: klaster, rejon transgraniczny, turystyka, współpraca