

**LOCAL GUIDELINES FOR TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY IN TORUN, POLAND
(KUJAWSKO-POMORSKIE VOIVODESHIP)**

Introduction

The importance of sustainable tourism is usually connected with long-term goals, preservation and environmental protection, but it is also clearly visible for all inhabitants and guests in the city. There are a lot of negative effects in everyday life that are a result of overtourism.

To the most important count results connected with the concentration of touristic traffic in certain areas and periods, such as disturbed experiences of tourists and worse perception of the destination (for example long waiting times to attractions or even impossibility to visit some places in desired time).

At the same time the disruptions occur for local inhabitants, their well-being and even safety (misbehavior of tourists, results of nightlife, etc.). There can be higher prices of real estate in some areas where there is a high demand for apartments and other infrastructure for tourists. It can create some tensions in the local community.

Understanding sustainable tourism in your region

According to nomenclature used in *The Program of Tourism Development for The City of Torun until 2030*, adopted by City Council in 2022; the term **overtourism** is understood as the phenomenon of exceeding the threshold of the city's tourist capacity and high tourist traffic recorded in Toru

The authors of the Program prove that since 2015 urban tourism hypertrophy [Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2019, p. 13] is recorded in Torun. This is defined as excessive concentration the of tourists in one place, “currently as an experience similar to those experienced by other large and very attractive cities in Poland and around the world, with all its consequences”.

Sustainable urban tourism takes into account both the needs of tourists and everyday users of urban space, provides income to residents and revenues to the city budget without degrading the natural environment and local cultural heritage. The essence of the development of sustainable urban tourism is the participation of the local society in the implementation of tourism activities and building relationships between visitors and residents [Kachniewska, 2012, pp. 48-50].

In the case of Toruń, this occurrence is recorded in the area of the Old Town Complex and historic buildings concentrated there, and the period from May to September. This is not yet a level degrading the tourist function of the city, but it has features that burden the inhabitants of Toruń and it is felt by tourists. Excessive crowding of the city, especially of the Old Town Complex of Toruń and other tourist attractions, is confirmed by the results of surveys published in the Monitoring of tourist traffic covering the period 2015-2019 [Program, pp. 9-15].

Sources:

Kachniewska M., (2012) *Zastosowanie analizy sieci społecznych w zarządzaniu zrównoważonym rozwojem turystyki miejskiej*, [w:] *Turystyka na obszarach miejskich. Uwarunkowania rozwoju. Narzędzia promocji*, Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziałowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach, nr 119, Katowice, s. 47-51.

Kowalczyk-Anioł J. (2019), *Hipertrofia turystyki miejskiej – geneza i istota zjawiska*, *Konwersatorium Wiedzy o Mieście* nr 4/2019 [<https://czasopisma.uni.lodz.pl/konwersatorium/article/view/8037/7937>].

Program rozwoju turystyki dla miasta Torunia do 2030 roku (Program of Tourism Development for The City of Torun until 2030), adopted by City Council on 12.05.2022, [https://www.torun.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/859_22_zal_01.pdf]

Local guidelines for stakeholders in your region

To encourage sustainable tourism practices among stakeholders the actions taken by the local authorities are necessary, but it must be underlined that:

- all actions of local authorities should be conducted according to strategic plans that are prepared in collaboration with local stakeholders and consulted with local community;
- public investments should always be planned and conducted taking into account sustainability (changes in public transport system, parking facilities creation, heating system transformations/green energy, etc.);
- promotion of the sustainable lifestyle, including tourism, Torun as a sustainable brand, etc.;
- facilitation of collaboration of the stakeholders together with DMOs;
- support for actions taken by local stakeholders (grants, tax relieves, etc.).

To limit the negative impact of tourism on the local community and environment there is a need for:

- re-directing tourist traffic outside the Old Town Complex of Toruń as most of the negative occurrences concern this area of the city. So, there could be more events organized in such locations as Bydgoskie Przedmieście, city parks, Dybowski Castle, etc.;
- extensive public services in the area where overtourism negative impact is especially severe for the city inhabitants;
- the actions should be also coordinated to assure that events are not concentrated in the high season only.

Best practices for sustainable tourism in your region

One of the good practices in promoting sustainable approaches is to inform and educate society how important this issue is and how progress in sustainability can be achieved. Children in kindergartens and schools are educated, as there is assumption that they not only behave according to desired sustainable patterns but spread it to other members of families as well.

The need to implement more sustainable behavior is reflected in the policy connected with public services and their costs (for example segregation of garbage, etc.).

Public authorities should invest in sustainable technology and support private investments and repairs as well. In Poland there are different sources of funds supporting investments in green technologies, renewable energy resources (the EU funds, governmental agencies' support, local authorities).

Public tasks should be improved and transformed according to local demand with the emphasis on sustainability. Good examples of encouraging the use of public transportation in Torun is the new tram line connecting the Old Town with the new "Jar" housing estate. The major goal is to encourage people to use public transport, but it will be extremely efficient and comfortable. For example, 11.5 thousand meters of single track, new stops with the Passenger Information System, green tracks and flower meadows, 10 "green stops", urban greenery development:

- planting 102 trees and approx. 21,000 shrubs and ornamental plants;
- replanting 112 trees and approx. 2,000 m² of shrubs;
- establishment of approx. 7,600 m² of flower meadows and approx. 4,000 m² of the remaining green area (including ornamental shrubs and grasses).

Preserving and promoting city's natural and cultural heritage in case of Torun that is included on UNESCO Heritage List is especially important as all investments in the City Centre must be conducted with the conservation supervision.

Sources:

Miejski Zarząd Dróg w Toruniu, *Rusza budowa linii tramwajowej na Jar*, 05.10.2021, <https://mzd.torun.pl/rusza-budowa-linii-tramwajowej-na-jar>

Recommendations for sustainable tourism in your region

In order to develop sustainable tourism in Toruń, it is recommended to take the following actions in four main areas:

1. Infrastructure and space
 - 1.1. Creating infrastructure and friendly space residents and tourists
 - 1.2. Preventing the negative effects of excessive tourist traffic in the center of Toruń
2. Resources and products
 - 2.1. Creative use of Toruń's tourist resources and products in building the tourist offer
 - 2.2. Strengthening the prestige of Toruń through the development of the meetings and events industry
3. Economy and society
 - 3.1. Strengthening the condition and supporting the development of Toruń's tourist economy
 - 3.2. Cooperation of various stakeholder groups to further build the correct tourist function of the city
4. Promotion and marketing
 - 4.1. Promoting the Toruń brand based on creative distribution tools
 - 4.2. The use of new technologies in the marketing of the city's tourist function.

Ad.1. The use of green areas in Toruń city and its vicinity in order to relieve tourist traffic and use the recreational potential. Creating new patterns of spending free time in areas outside the city

center related to tourism. Creating new bicycle paths, sheds, shelters, bicycle stations, benches and places for grilling and practicing sports.

Ad.2. It is recommended to create packages cumulating the cultural, event and recreational and sports offer in order to keep tourists in the city for longer and to influence the return of tourists, depending on the schedule of events (synchronization of the calendar of events) with the use of tourist symbols identifiable for the city, e.g. Gothic, gingerbread, the figure of Nicolaus Copernicus, speedway competitions, athletics competitions.

Intensive cooperation is recommended between the Local Tourist Organization in Toruń, the Business Support Center and other tourist organizations in terms of initiating broad industry cooperation, as well as cooperation with the business, political, cultural and scientific environment in order to prepare an offer regarding the possibility of organizing meetings and events and obtaining them. Activities should also be aimed at promoting Toruń as a place to spend post-conference time in an attractive way in cooperation with the broadly understood tourism industry.

Ad.3. Undertaking organizational activities by municipal institutions in order to systematically support the tourist economy of the city. It is recommended to continue monitoring the condition of the city in the tourism economy sector and reacting to possible crisis situations, including the continuation of research in the field of monitoring tourist traffic carried out by the Tourist Information Center in Toruń.

Undertaking actions to encourage the registration of accommodation services in the field of short-term tourist rental as a business activity. Supporting the development of tourist services and their professionalization. It is recommended to conduct promotional activities for service providers registered on the websites of the city and organizational units related to tourism, using the records of other facilities where hotel services are provided, kept by the Mayor of Toruń.

Ad.4. Effective promotion of the city's tourist brand requires the use of modern information carriers and means of social communication. This means that it is necessary to take into account the consistency of information in the promotional activities of various entities (including entities aimed directly at economic benefits). Information coherence in the Internet space regarding the city's tourist offer is recommended, synchronization of events taking into account the possibility of bundling the offer of various entities.

It is recommended, e.g. continuation of the organization of visits, delegations of tour operators, journalists, bloggers, including those from Toruń's partner cities and as part of the city's affiliation and cooperation with international associations, e.g. the Association of Hansa Cities, participation in important and prestigious tourist fairs and rankings, undertaking cooperation with other cities in Poland in the field of mutual promotion of tourist values.

Sources:

Program rozwoju turystyki dla miasta Torunia do 2030 roku (Program of Tourism Development for The City of Torun until 2030), adopted by City Council on 12.05.2022, [https://www.torun.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/859_22_zal_01.pdf]

Monitoring and evaluation in your region

Monitoring and evaluation of changes of any occurrence is a complex task. In the case of monitoring and evaluation of the sustainable impact of tourism on the local level, the main concerns are linked rather with the weaknesses of the methodology (how to do it in practice? what instruments may be used?, who is responsible for it?), not with the understanding that there is a need for targeted policy that should help to improve community - based tourism, i.e. the tourism that contributes to the community's sustainability goals.

In many strategic plans, the part connected with monitoring and evaluation is just a formal and not too specific part. This is also the case with *The Program of Tourism Development for The City of Torun until 2030*, where there are no KPI specified. At the time of its creation, the goals of this task included: evaluation of the degree of implementation of the former tourism development strategies (especially for the years 2013-2020), the study of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of the city and its tourist offer, as well as a comprehensive strategic and program analysis of the development of tourism in Toruń [<https://www.collect.pl/blog/2021/czas-na-nowy-programu-rozwoju-turystyki-dla-miasta-torunia-do-2030/>].

The authors of this Program underlined that the document is a prerequisite for undertaking constructive actions within the framework of the city's development policy, and that its preparation and later implementation requires extensive cooperation of the local government and various entities and partners in order to achieve the assumed goals. In 2019, a special Program Council was established as a consultative and advisory team for the Mayor of Toruń in the field of tourism development and dissemination. The objectives of the Program have been developed in a way that takes into account the activities of local organizations and entrepreneurs from the tourism industry and related industries. As part of the process of implementation, it was also recommended to appoint a special Team of representatives of departments of the City of Toruń and organizational units of the Municipality of Toruń as well as an expert group consisting of representatives of the scientific community and the broadly understood tourism industry.

The above proves that also in case of the guidelines (that take into account the presented strategy) elaborated in the project, there will be a need of appropriate information, monitoring, evaluation and consultation on each step. There is a need for more detailed information on indicators of the effectiveness of the local guidelines for the area/region, stating the timeline in order to allow the adjustments to the guidelines if necessary.

Sources:

Collect Consulting website [<https://www.collect.pl/blog/2021/czas-na-nowy-programu-rozwoju-turystyki-dla-miasta-torunia-do-2030/>].

Program rozwoju turystyki dla miasta Torunia do 2030 roku (Program of Tourism Development for The City of Torun until 2030), adopted by City Council on 12.05.2022, [https://www.torun.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/859_22_zal_01.pdf]

Conclusions

Solving the problems of overtourism and implementing activities towards the sustainable development of tourism in the region requires the cooperation of all stakeholders (including tourist institutions, hotels, catering establishments, tourist organizations, event industry companies, tourists and the local community) coordinated by local authorities.

This requires a strategic approach, including the development of a strategic plan preceded by an in-depth strategic analysis, consultations with various stakeholder groups. It should also be remembered that the implementation of the plan should be subject to ongoing control and monitoring of the achieved results based on deliberately selected measures of the designed activities. It is equally important to continuously improve and adapt the adopted solutions to the changing economic, social and environmental situation.