

“CARPATHIA” BRAND

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EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY OF THE “CARPATHIA” BRAND



Between Fjords and the Carpathians – Platform for the exchange of experiences in the field of tourism education, benefits from funding with a value of EUR 174,080.00 received from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under EEA funds. The aim of the project is to improve the quality of vocational education at the medium and higher level in the field of tourism in the border area of the Polish part of the Carpathian Euroregion, using Norwegian models.

BETWEEN FJORDS AND THE CARPATHIANS

PLATFORM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM EDUCATION

BENEFICIARY



PROJECT PARTNER



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JAROSŁAW 2024

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Introduction

The Carpathia brand's tourism education strategy is an element of the Carpathian Horizon 2030 Strategy and was created as one of the effects of the project "Between the Fjords and the Carpathians - Platform for the exchange of experiences in the field of tourism education" implemented by the State University of Applied Sciences in Jarosław (formerly PWSTE) in cooperation with the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association and Nord Universitet.

The main idea of the project is to improve the quality of vocational education at secondary level and higher in the field of tourism in the border area of the Polish part of the Carpathian Euroregion, using Norwegian models. The effect of the project will be the activation of employment of graduates of vocational schools and PANS by entities operating in the border tourism industry.

This document is based on the Carpathia Brand Strategy developed in 2013 and serves to optimize the brand implementation process in the Carpathian area. The ambition of the document's authors was to create a useful document based on the identification of the main problems faced by the tourism sector of the Podkarpacie region. The strategy proposes effective solutions that improve the competences of tourist staff and provide scope for developing various cooperation under the Carpathia brand.

The main institutional's of the strategy are the member local governments of the Carpathian Euroregion and their subordinate institutions (e.g. cultural centers, museums), schools, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations and entities supporting tourist traffic in the discussed area.

The strategy of the Carpathian Brand under the name "Carpathia" is modeled on the Alpine brand, which concerns socio-economic and infrastructure development in the area of tourism. The brand is being developed as part of the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association by initiating activities aimed at, among others, to commercialize the potential of the Carpathians¹.

In 2021, work began on the EtnoCarpathia project, the aim of which is to increase the attractiveness and recognition of the Polish-Slovak border by using the potential of cultural resources. One year later (2022) National Academy of Applied Sciences in Jarosław [formerly PWSTE] started the project "Between the Fjords and the Carpathians - a platform for exchanging experiences in the field of tourism education" aimed at transferring Norwegian patterns to "Marka Karpacka", thus creating tourist competition and thus introducing a pilot teaching program for future employees of the tourism sector in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship.

Celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie potencjału kształcenia przyszłych pracowników sektora turystycznego w oparciu o ofertę kształcenia Państwowej Akademii Nauk Stosowanych w Jarosławiu, specjalistyczną literaturę oraz w oparciu o informacje gromadzone przez Centrum Analiz Transgranicznych.

The study focuses on areas such as the tourist brand, tourist product and cross-border cooperation, which is the glue aimed at combining and implementing solutions that increase the attractiveness of the "Carpathia" brand offer while maintaining Norwegian patterns. According to Dariusz

¹ Nowak, A., Kruczek, Z. (2022). *Budowanie transgranicznych marek turystycznych na przykładzie marki EtnoCarpathia*. *Studia Periegetica*, 2(38), 99-118. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0015.9980>

Fijałkowski (2003), a product is everything that is the subject of market exchange. A product is also defined as a seller's offer or proposal. The products include objects, things, services, places and the most important one in terms of our study, i.e. the idea of developing the Carpathian Brand².

In his studies, T. Bartkowski noted that the landscape has great research possibilities, not only in terms of stimuli responsible for the visible perception of space, but also in terms of sound, smell and taste. All these elements are related to shaping the offer of the Carpathian region and the promotion of the Carpathian Brand itself, which focuses on promoting regional elements both in the cultural and industrial spheres.



Source: www.karpacki.pl/carpathia/czym-jest-marka-carpathia/

1. What is the Carpathia brand?

Carpathia Brands³ was established in 2013 on the initiative of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association. The idea of the brand was developed together with the Institute of Tourism in Sierre on the basis of the Swiss brand Valais Excellence and the Lublin company Synergia. The uniqueness of the Carpathia brand results from the combination of the diverse and multi-religious culture of the Carpathian lands and the extraordinary space of the mountains with the rich natural world.

The Carpathians are a unique place - the last such wild and undiscovered space in Europe. The Carpathians cross the borders of countries, civilizations and cultures, and at the same time combine a variety of cultural phenomena, heritage and religions.

The idea of the Carpathia - Mystical Space brand is based on:

- Authenticity,
- The experience of space,
- Understanding multiculturalism,
- Humility towards nature.

The Carpathia brand creates and wants an "outer" space for inner discoveries:

- Provide visitors with a space for reflection and individual discovery,
- Affect all senses and open new territories for human experience,
- Be an area where people discover their vocation and destiny,

² Fijałkowski, D. (2003). *Produkt turystyczny w ujęciu marketingowym a turystyka*. Słupskie Prace Geograficzne, 1, 81.

³ www.visitcarpathia.com

- Identify with a place that gives meaning and direction to life.

The Carpathia brand area is a place where you can find answers to the most important questions in life:

- Why and for whom do I live?
- What can I offer to the world?
- How can I change the world for the better?

Carpathia's brand strategy document recommended that the brand:

- **strengthen the existing competencies** related to the use of the unique cultural and natural values of the region
- **developed forms of tourism related to learning about authentic traditions and culture of the region**, Carpathian mysticism and experiencing space
- **developed the potential of international cultural, sports, entertainment events, etc.**
- **identified regional products and culinary products**, supported their sale **and took actions related** to their dissemination both in the Carpathian Euroregion countries and in Europe.

This education strategy addresses, in part, each of these postulates and aims to:

- **Strengthen the educational competences** of brand stakeholders
- **Shape and support** forms of educational tourism
- Initiate **work on education** through events
- Start the process of disseminating knowledge **about the Carpathia brand** also through regional products..

The future of the Carpathian region

In accordance with the adopted strategy developed by the Carpathian Euroregion Association, activities undertaken as part of the Carpathian Brand are intended to meet the expectations of modern travelers. Both in the border region on the Polish side, but also in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, the solutions introduced as part of the Carpathian Brand are intended to strengthen the sense of belonging of residents and local entrepreneurs to the Carpathian region⁴.

We can therefore conclude that habits of large agglomerations or concrete trails are not enough for a modern tourist who is looking for getting to know authentic people, spaces untainted by civilization and the wildness of nature.

Brand personality and its foundation

The main assumption of the "Karpacka Brand" offer is to provide a way to spend free time as a search for a new way of life. The opportunity to explore wild nature and mystical space is intended to help you understand yourself and have a positive impact on your spirituality.

⁴ <https://karpacki.pl/carpathia/czym-jest-marka-carpathia/>

Why Carpathia?

The possibility of combining many cultures, religions and the diversity of mountain nature is to make the brand unique. The tourist offer is based on the pillars of Carpathian nature, including: local music, art and authentic highlander hospitality on the Polish-Slovak border⁵.

2. Identification and characterization of stakeholders of the Carpathia brand tourism education strategy

The implementation of the assumptions of the Carpathia brand requires close cooperation of the five sectors that have the greatest impact on pro-development activities in the Carpathian region:

- Local governments at all levels,
- Entrepreneurs,
- Non-governmental organizations,
- Scientific and research units,
- Media.

The same applies to the implementation of the education strategy of the Carpathia brand, whose stakeholders are:

- Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association – as the entity managing the Carpathia brand
- Partners of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland association (local governments)
- Entrepreneurs operating in the area covered by the Carpathia brand (representatives of the tourism, catering, hotel industry, etc.)
- Educators – institutions and people conducting formal and informal educational activities in the area covered by the Carpathia brand (schools, cultural institutions, teachers, guides, etc.).

2.1. The Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association as the entity managing the implementation of the Carpathia brand education strategy

The Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association is an association operating on the basis of the "Law on Associations" of April 7, 1989 (Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 79, item 855, as amended). The association consists of members supporting local government units from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and the Lesser Poland Voivodeship.

The association is also the national structure of the Interregional Association of the Carpathian Euroregion (established on February 14, 1993) operating in the border areas of Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. The Association itself is not an organization within the meaning of international law, so it is not a legal entity but a form of political cooperation. It pursues its goals through national structures. In addition to Poland, Euroregional Associations operate in Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary and Romania.

The area of the Carpathian Euroregion covers approximately 154,000 km² and is inhabited by over 15 million people. Part of the Carpathian Euroregion is located on the eastern border of Poland, which is the external border of the European Union. The Carpathian Euroregion is formed by:

⁵ http://visitcarpathia.com/Marka_Carpathia

- Poland: the area of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and the area of local governments, members of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association
- Ukraine: area of the following oblasts (voivodeships): Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi
- Slovakia: area of the countries (voivodeships): Prešov and Košice
- Hungary: area of the counties: Borsad-Abauj-Zemplen, Hajdu-Bihar, Heves, Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok, Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg and the cities: Nyiregyhaza, Miskolc, Debrecen, Eger
- Romania: area of the departments: Satu Mare, Maramures, Bihor, Sălaj, Botosani.

The Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association was established in 2000 on the initiative of representatives of the social, local government and scientific communities of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. In 2001, the association began implementing the Small Projects Fund implemented under the Phare Cross-Border Cooperation Programs and the Phare National Program for Poland. This is currently continued under the European Union's structural funds.

Since 2013, the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association has been implementing its own territorial brand called Carpathia, the idea of which was developed together with the Institute of Tourism in Sierre based on the Swiss brand Valais Excellence⁶.

The activities of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland, as the entity managing the implementation of the Carpathia brand education strategy, should be aimed at developing the educational potential of the Carpathian region, improving the quality of education and promoting the region as an attractive tourist destination supporting the development of various competences.

The association should initiate and coordinate the implementation process of this education strategy. Activities in this area should focus on the aspects listed below..

1. Promoting education and cultural exchange

Organization of programs, projects and initiatives aimed at promoting education and cultural exchange in the Carpathian region (international student exchange programs, cooperation of schools and universities with other countries, organization of seminars and educational conferences).

2. Substantive support for the development of educational infrastructure

Striving to ensure access to high-quality education for all inhabitants of the region and working to disseminate knowledge about the Carpathian region (providing materials, expert support, etc.).

3. Cooperation with educational institutions

Establishing partnerships and cooperation with educational institutions to jointly develop curricula, specialized courses and training in order to adapt the educational offer to the needs of the labor market and ensure high quality of education.

4. Promotional and information campaigns

Implementation of promotional, information and educational campaigns, based on the ideas of the Carpathia brand, regarding educational opportunities in the Carpathian region. Organizing

⁶ <https://www.karpacki.pl/stowarzyszenie/o-nas/>

educational fairs, promotional events, publishing information materials, etc. in order to reach potential students and their families.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementing the Carpathia brand education strategy. Analysis of the results of activities, collecting opinions and feedback from participants of educational programs and the local community in order to improve future activities and possibly adapt them to the current needs of stakeholders.

2.2. Local governments are partners of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland Association

Partners of the Association⁷ are member governments of the Carpathian Euroregion. This education strategy assumes, first of all, partnership with Polish local governments, but does not exclude the possibility of establishing international cooperation throughout the entire Carpathian area (which will be mentioned many times later in the document).

The national partner local governments are:

- Podkarpackie Voivodeship
- Baligród Commune, Besko Commune, Bukowsko Commune, Chmielnik Commune, Cisna Commune, Czarna Commune (Bieszczady powiat), Czarna Commune (Łańcucki powiat), Dubecko Commune, Dydynia Commune, Fredropol Commune, Hyżne Commune, Jasło Commune, Jaślicka Commune, Commune of Jawornik Polski, Commune of Kamień, Commune of Komańcza, Commune of Korczyn, Commune of Krzywcz, Commune of Medyka, Commune of Głos Piastowe, Commune of Nozdrzec, Commune of Olszanica, Commune of Orły, Commune of Osiek Jasielski, Commune of Przeworsk, Commune of Ropa, Commune of Sękowa, Commune of Skołyszyn, Commune of Solina, Stubno Commune, Tarnowiec Commune, Tryńcza Commune, Trzebownisko Commune, Tyrawa Wołoska Commune, Zarszyn Commune, Żurawica Commune
- City and Commune of Białowa, City and Commune of Boguchwała, City and Commune of Jędrzejów, City and Commune of Kańczuga, City and Commune of Lesko, City and Commune of Rymanów, City and Commune of Sokołów Małopolski, City and Commune of Ustrzyki Dolne, City and Commune of Zagórz
- Przemyśl Municipality
- City of Dynów, City of Gorlice, City of Jarosław, City of Jasło, City of Lubaczów, City of Przeworsk, City of Sanok, City of Stalowa Wola
- Bieszczady County, Jarosław County, Jasło County, Kolbuszów County, Krosno County, Lesko County, Lubaczów County, Łańcut County, Przemyśl County, Rzeszów County.

The diversity of member local governments (rural communes, urban-rural communes, urban communes, cities, poviats, voivodeships) of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland may bring benefits in the form of enriching the tourist offer, but requires effective management and coordination and adapting educational activities to different target groups. The entity managing the implementation of the strategy faces coordination challenges due to the fact that local governments may have different goals, priorities and educational development plans. Implementing the strategy will

⁷ <https://www.karpacki.pl/partnerzy/lista?s=0>

therefore require effective management, coordination and cooperation to ensure coherence and effectiveness of educational activities.

The benefits of this differentiation include:

- Enriching the tourist offer (cultural, historical and natural diversity
- In the region, thanks to which each local government can conduct unique projects)
- Greater opportunities for cooperation and exchange of best practices in the field of tourism education
- Use of specializations (local governments may have specializations in specific tourism fields, such as cultural tourism, ecotourism, sports tourism, etc.
- And develop specialized educational programs)
- Possibilities of better adapting the tourist education offer to different target groups (local governments can develop educational programs that take into account various needs and tourists' preferences - for example, a local government boasting a rich cultural heritage may focus on tourism education for people interested in history and art, etc.).

2.3. People and organizations supporting tourism

Tourism industry employees who have direct contact with tourists are an important group of stakeholders in this strategy. They are directly involved in serving tourists, creating attractive tourist offers and ensuring a high-quality experience for visitors. They influence the image of the region and have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. Therefore, it is important that their qualifications and skills are adapted to the needs of tourists and that they are aware of the attractiveness of the region in which they work and the specificity of the region's brand (Carpathia).

People and organizations representing the tourism industry are ambassadors of the region and often the first people who have direct contact with tourists. Their knowledge, enthusiasm and communication skills can largely influence visitors' perception of the region. They are able to provide information about the attractions, history, culture and heritage of the region, which can stimulate tourists' interest and encourage them to stay longer. Therefore, education of tourism industry employees regarding the Carpathian region is important for the effective promotion of the Carpathia brand.

This educational strategy of the Carpathia brand includes training and development programs for tourism industry employees, providing them with appropriate tools, knowledge and skills that will improve the quality of tourist services and better tourist experiences and increasing their level of travel satisfaction.

Polish entities cooperating with the Carpathian Euroregion Association include organizations and places from the list below.

Attractions, museums, cultural institutions

- Kombornia Manor in Krosno
- Arboretum in Przemyśl
- Carpathian Troy
- Castle in Baranów Sandomierski

- Castle in Krasiczyn
- Castle Museum in Łańcut
- "Polish Museum in Rapperswil POLENMUSEUM Schloss Rapperswil"

Hotels and the hotel industry

- Hotel "BRISTOL" Rzeszów
- Hotel "Ambadorski" Rzeszów
- Hilton Garden Inn Rzeszów

Tourist offices

- Travel Agency "BIESZCZADER"
- "KOMPAS" Tourist Office in Jasło
- Tourism Office "ALBATROS" Zygmunt Ziober
- POGÓRZANIN Tourist Services Office
- GROMADA Tourist Office
- PRIMO TOUR Tourism Office
- Przemyśl Travel Agency "BUKOWINA"
- P.P. Quand
- "ACTIVE HOLIDAY" Ltd.

Tourist Organizations

- lack⁸.

Entrepreneurs from Podkarpacie have a positive opinion about the methods of managing tourism in the region. The Podkarpackie Voivodeship is perceived as attractive for tourists and appreciated for its business opportunities. Most entrepreneurs see potential in cross-sector cooperation and the implementation of joint ventures based on the region's tourist capital. Research carried out by Marcin Warchoła showed a positive attitude of entrepreneurs towards the idea of joining a voluntary network of tourist services. Entrepreneurs see opportunities for development in cross-border cooperation, which gives the opportunity to attract a new segment of tourists⁹.

Due to the above, the need to further develop the Carpathia brand becomes very important, as it will allow for the consolidation of the activities of entities from various industries and will contribute to the development of the entire tourism sector in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship¹⁰.

Podkarpacie entrepreneurs representing the tourism sector employ employees with various levels of education in their companies (vocational, secondary, higher - bachelor's and master's degrees).

⁸ Dane za: <http://www.visitcarpathia.com/Home/BaseExchangePartnerships>

⁹ Marcin Warchoła, *Zapotrzebowanie na wykwalifikowane kadry sektora turystycznego na Podkarpaciu – wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród przedsiębiorców*, Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fjordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

¹⁰ Marcin Warchoła, *Zapotrzebowanie na wykwalifikowane kadry sektora turystycznego na Podkarpaciu – wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród przedsiębiorców*, Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fjordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

They are employed in tourism sector companies:

- Graduates of tourism-related studies (bachelor's, master's),
- Secondary school graduates with the profile of hotel management technician or tourist service technician.

In most cases, the level of education of employees affects the type of position they hold:

- people with the lowest education – line positions (e.g. maid, kitchen help, cleaning person, technical worker)
- people with higher education (often with a tourist profile) - management staff, hoteliers, travel agency owners, pilots and guides¹¹.

2.4. Schools and institutions related to broadly understood education

Another important group of stakeholders of the Carpathia brand's education strategy are entities and people dealing with broadly understood education: schools, institutions operating in various ways in the field of formal and non-formal education. They play a key role in the learning process, creating regional awareness, influence the future educational and professional choices of students and can be partners in the implementation of education strategies.

Schools and educational institutions are the main places where formal education of students takes place. The implementation of the Carpathia brand education strategy in these institutions allows for the integration of topics related to the Carpathian region in the curricula. It gives it to students and students a chance to gain knowledge about the region, its heritage, nature, culture and tourism.

Educational entities and people play a key role in building pupils' and students' bonds with the region. Through the education strategy of the Carpathia brand, you can support the development of regional awareness among pupils and students. Education in the Carpathian region allows you to deepen your knowledge about the unique features and resources of this area, as well as understand its importance for the local community, economy and sustainable development.

The education strategy of the Carpathia brand may influence the future educational and professional choices of students. Introducing elements of tourism education regarding the Carpathian region can inspire young people to become interested in tourism, discover their cultural and natural heritage and develop skills needed in the tourism industry. Education providers and practitioners have the opportunity to influence these choices by providing appropriate information, curricula and apprenticeships.

Schools, educational institutions and organizations operating in the field of non-formal education can act as partners in implementing the Carpathia brand education strategy. Cooperation with these entities allows for joint creation of educational programs and implementation of projects aimed at developing regional awareness and promoting the heritage and tourism of the Carpathian region.

¹¹ Marcin Warchoła, *Zapotrzebowania na wykwalifikowane kadry sektora turystycznego na Podkarpaciu – wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród przedsiębiorców*, Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fjordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

A detailed list of institutions that should be involved in the process of implementing this education strategy is included in subsection 3.1.

3. Diagnosis summary

During the implementation of the project Between Fjords and the Carpathians - Platform for the exchange of experiences in the field of tourism education, a number of analyzes were carried out giving a picture of the current state of tourism education in the region covered by the Carpathia brand (a detailed list of all documents is included in the bibliography). Chapter three of this document is entirely based on the above-mentioned studies.

3.1. The state of education in the Podkarpackie region in the context of the tourism industry

There are three universities in Podkarpackie Voivodeship educating staff for tourism and hotel industry:

- Carpathian State University in Krosno; Department of Tourism and Recreation, field: Tourism and recreation
- University of Rzeszów; College of Medical Sciences, field of study: Tourism and recreation
- State Higher School of Technology and Economics in Jarosław; Institute of International Relations, field of study: Hotel management and leisure time animation¹².

In the Podkarpackie Voivodeship there are a total of 38 secondary vocational schools educating staff for tourism and hotel industry.:

- 37 technicians
- one second-cycle vocational school¹³.

Technicians:

- Bieszczady Vocational School Complex in Ustrzyki Dolne
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex named after Gen. Józef Kustroń in Lubaczów
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex named after Aleksander Fredro
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex of the Agricultural Education Center in Oleszyce
 - **tourism techniques in rural areas**
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Agro-Technical School Complex named after W. Witos in Ropczyce
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex of the Agricultural Education Center in Nowosielce
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex of the Agricultural Education Center. prof. On Szafer in Rzemień

¹² B. Czuba, *Inwentaryzacja szkół wyższych na terenie Podkarpacia kształcących kadry dla turystyki i hotelarstwa*,

¹³ M. Leżucha, *Badanie dotyczące inwentaryzacji szkół średnich zawodowych na terenie Podkarpacia kształcących kadry dla turystyki i hotelarstwa*, 2022.

- nutrition and catering services techniques
- Complex of Economic Schools named after National Education Commission in Brzozów
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - hotel management technician
- Economic School Complex in Dębica
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Catering and Hotel School Complex in Iwonicz-Zdrój
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - waiter service technician
 - food technology technician with qualifications in confectionery production
 - **hotel technician with innovation secretarial management**
- Business School Complex in Rzeszów
 - hotel management technician
 - tourism organization technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - waiter service technician
- School Complex No. 1 named after Karol Adamiecki in Sanok
 - hotel management technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex No. 1 in Tarnobrzeg
 - **passenger service technician in air, sea and land transport**
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - tourism organization technician
- School Complex No. 3 named after King Jan III Sobieski in Stalowa Wola
 - **hotel technician, specialization: wellness & spa manager**
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex No. 3 named after Stanisław Pawłowski in Jasło
 - waiter service technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex No. 3 named after Tadeusz Ryński in Rzeszów
 - hotel management technician
 - **port and terminal operation technician**
- School Complex No. 5 in Sanok named after Ignacy Łukasiewicz
 - tourism organization technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Secondary School Complex No. 1 named after Jan Szczepanik in Krosno
 - hotel management technician
 - tourism organization technician
- Secondary School Complex No. 2 in Krosno
 - food technology technician - confectioner, creator and decorator of mini desserts
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Food and Business School Complex. Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Jarosław
 - hotel management technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - food technology technician

- waiter service technician
- School Complex of the Association of Agricultural School Graduates in Trzcinica
 - hotel management technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Technical and Veterinary School Complex named after Heroes of Westerplatte in Trzciana
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Complex of Technical Schools named after T. Kościuszko in Leżajsk
 - hotel management technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Complex of Technical and Artistic Schools in Lesko
 - hotel management technician
 - technical and Artistic School Complex in Lesko
- Technical School Complex in Kolbuszowa, named after Heroes of September 1939
 - hotel management technician
- Technical School Complex in Mielec
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Service, Hotel and Catering School Complex in Przemyśl
 - tourism organization techniques
 - **nutrition techniques and catering services with elements of carving and the basics of barista art**
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex of the Agricultural Education Center. John Paul II in Brzostek
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex in Czudec
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex in Kańczuga
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex named after priest Dr. Jan Zwierz in Ropczyce
 - hotel management technician
- School Complex in Sokołów Małopolski
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- School Complex named after Tadeusz Kościuszko in Wysoka
 - hotel management technician
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - waiter service technician
- Zespół Szkół im. Wincentego Witosa w Zarzeczu
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - **hotel technician with agritourism innovation**
- Complex of Vocational and Agricultural Schools in Radymno
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Vocational School Complex in Przeworsk
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
- Complex of Vocational Schools named after Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Pustków-Osiedle

- hotel management technician
- nutrition and catering services techniques

Secondary vocational school:

- Center for Continuing Education and Center for Further Education and Professional Development in Stalowa Wola
 - nutrition and catering services techniques
 - technik technologii żywności.

There is a need to update educational programs and specializations to adapt them to changing trends, technology development and the needs of the tourism industry. Among the programs implemented, only a few bear the hallmarks of a broader approach to contemporary tourism needs and trends

- tourism technician in rural areas,
- hotel technician with innovation, secretarial management,
- passenger service technician in air, sea and land transport,
- tourism organization technician,
- hotel technician, specialization: wellness & spa manager,
- port and terminal operation technician,
- nutrition and catering services techniques with elements of carving and the basics of barista art, ☐ hotel technician with agritourism innovation.

The teaching programs do not take into account regional issues related to the heritage of the Carpathia brand area, which results in ignorance of the cultural potential of the region by future employees providing tourist services under the Carpathia brand.

3.2. Educational needs analysis

The starting point for the satisfactory development of the tourism sector in Podkarpacie is the education of tourist staff and work on the quality of education, as shown by research conducted by Marcin Warchoła.¹⁴

New, qualified staff is needed primarily in the hotel industry. The willingness to employ new employees was declared by the majority of representatives of accommodation facilities, who have problems with filling key positions in the context of the functioning of organizations providing tourist services:

- kitchen (cook, kitchen help)
- restaurant (waiter, bartender)
- housekeeping
- reception
- SPA zone
- event coordination department.

¹⁴ Marcin Warchoła, *Zapotrzebowanie na wykwalifikowane kadry sektora turystycznego na Podkarpaciu – wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród przedsiębiorców*, Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fjordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

The owner of one travel agency reported the need to employ a person for the position of outbound tourism advisor.

There was no demand for new guides and tour leaders¹⁵.

There are competence and qualification gaps among staff employed in the tourism industry:

- lack of knowledge of foreign languages (nearly half of the respondents),
- lack of professional experience, - lack of independence at work,
- lack of knowledge of legal regulations applicable to the industry,
- lack of knowledge of sales and customer service techniques,
- lack of communication skills,
- lack of appropriate commitment,
- lack of knowledge of industry reservation systems,
- lack of knowledge of the region (which is particularly problematic in the context of effective work on the development of the Carpathia brand).

The above problems diagnosed among staff employed in Podkarpacie are consistent with this in nationwide problems related to the need to improve the qualifications of employees in the tourism sector, highlighted in the Occupation Barometer report¹⁶.

Therefore, it is recommended:

- support for education at the level of vocational and secondary schools in catering and hotel management, with particular emphasis on professions such as: cook, waiter, bartender, receptionist
- adapting or modifying education programs to the requirements of today's labor market ☒ educating pupils and students both in the field of the so-called hard skills (qualifications) and soft skills.

3.3. SWOT analysis: interest of potential recipients (challenge)

This SWOT analysis has been prepared to assess the current situation in the context of the Carpathia brand Tourism Education Strategy. The analysis focuses on identifying the strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats related to the further development of tourism education in the Podkarpacie region.

Podkarpacie, as a region with rich tourist resources, is trying to improve the quality of services offered by improving the qualifications of tourist staff. Educating new and improving existing specialists in the tourism industry is crucial to increasing the attractiveness of the region as a holiday destination.

¹⁵ Dane za: Marcin Warchoła, *Zapotrzebowanie na wykwalifikowane kadry sektora turystycznego na Podkarpaciu – wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród przedsiębiorców*, Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fjordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

¹⁶ <https://barometrzwodow.pl/>

SWOT analysis is an instrument that allows you to understand the strengths and weaknesses of tourism education in the region and to identify development opportunities and threats. Based on the collected data and the analysis performed, it is possible to formulate specific recommendations aimed at improving educational processes and contributing to the further development of the tourism sector of the Carpathia brand area in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship.

Strengths

1. Developed educational infrastructure in the region, including universities, vocational secondary schools and educational programs aimed at the tourism sector.
2. High tourist activity in the region, which is an important factor attracting new employees to the tourism industry.
3. Great demand for qualified staff in many areas of the tourism sector.
4. Possibility of adapting or modifying educational programs to the current needs of the labor market.

Weaknesses

1. Deficiencies in staff competences, such as: lack of knowledge of foreign languages, lack of professional experience, lack of independence at the workplace, lack of commitment, lack of communication skills, lack of knowledge of sales and customer service techniques.
2. Failure to adapt education programs to current labor market requirements.
3. Insufficient career development opportunities for guides and tour leaders.
4. Low level of knowledge of the region by the staff, which is problematic for the Carpathia brand, which tries to promote the region.

Opportunities

1. Increased interest in tourism, which may attract more people to work in the tourism industry.
2. Collaboration with other regions and countries, which can help exchange experiences and best practices.
3. Creation of a Carpathia brand tourism education center, which can educate future specialists in the field of tourism.

Threats

1. The lack of qualified staff may limit the development of tourism in the Carpathia brand area in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship.
2. Competency gaps in tourism sector employees may negatively impact the quality of services offered by the sector, leading to decreased customer satisfaction and reputational losses.
3. Intense global competition in the tourism industry may pose a challenge to attracting tourists to the region.
4. The impact of climate change on the attractiveness of the region for tourists, e.g. shortening ski season, catastrophic weather phenomena such as floods, storms, etc.

4. The vision, mission and goals of the Carpathia brand education strategy

Mission and vision are key elements of any strategy, defining the main directions of action and setting aspirations for the future. In the context of the Tourism Education Strategy for the Carpathia brand, they are closely related to promoting the natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathian region, developing the tourism potential and strengthening local communities. The mission

describes current tasks and long-term goals, while the vision presents an inspiring picture of the future we strive for.

Below we present the proposed mission and vision for the Carpathia brand Tourism Education Strategy.

4.1. Mission

The mission of the Carpathia brand and this strategy is to increase the attractiveness of tourism through education and support for local communities in recognizing and using the heritage of the Carpathians. **We strive to promote sustainable tourism, protect biodiversity and recognize cultural heritage as a key element of our regional identity.**

4.2. Vision

The vision of the Carpathia brand is to become a leader in the field of tourism education by creating awareness in the community of the rich heritage of the region. Carpathia will develop sustainable tourism that will support local communities and protect unique heritage.

The brand wants to set standards for success by enhancing the quality of life of residents and protecting biodiversity, and develop its core competence in combining tourism and heritage protection. Carpathia wants to become a brand recognized all over the world.

4.3. Strategic objectives

The Carpathia brand Tourism Education Strategy is an integral element of the long-term tourism development plan in the Carpathian region. It was developed to harmoniously combine the region's natural and cultural heritage with the growing needs and expectations of both tourists and the local community.

The assumption of the strategy is to concentrate activities on three key areas that have been identified as the most important for achieving the main goal - strengthening local communities by building awareness and capacity, by using the endogenous potentials of the natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathian areas, in order to sustainable development of the region, developing sustainable tourism solutions and improving the quality of life of residents.

Below we present the three main goals that have been defined as part of the Carpathia brand Tourism Education Strategy, along with the proposed actions to achieve them:

Cel 1. Increasing the quality and attractiveness of tourism in the Carpathia brand area

Recommended actions:

1. Development of training programs addressed to employees of the tourism sector, with an emphasis on developing interpersonal skills, customer service, sales techniques and knowledge of foreign languages.
2. Investments in educational infrastructure, such as training centers and hotel schools and gastronomic.
3. Cooperation with educational institutions to adapt educational programs to the needs of the labor market in the tourism sector.

Cel 2. Supporting the local community by building awareness, skills and competences

Recommended actions:

1. Organization of workshops and training for the inhabitants of the region in order to develop skills necessary to use the endogenous potentials of the region, such as ecotourism, organic farming, artistic crafts, heritage management, etc.
2. Creating educational programs for children and young people that promote understanding and respect for the natural and cultural heritage of the region.
3. Promoting equality and accessibility by creating programs and initiatives addressed to various social groups.

Cel 3. Promoting sustainable tourism and regional development

Recommended actions:

1. Organization of conferences and workshops for entrepreneurs, politicians and scientists on sustainable tourism.
2. Supporting innovation and research aimed at discovering new opportunities related to the natural and cultural heritage of the region.
3. Promoting the Carpathia brand at national and international level while emphasizing its commitment to the protection of natural heritage and cultural and promoting sustainable tourism.

5. Good Norwegian practices

One of the documents created in the first phase of the project "Between the Fjords and the Carpathians - Platform for the exchange of experiences in the field of tourism education" is the study Tourism and tourism education in Norway. State of the art 2022 created by the Norwegian project partners, which was the basis for this part of the strategy document¹⁷.

5.1. Weaknesses and strengths of Norwegian tourism

Recently, there has been an increase in the popularity of the so-called economical traveling that does not generate excessively high costs. The main problem of the Norwegian tourism industry is the relatively high costs compared to other countries. Generally speaking, all segments of Norwegian tourism depend on high-income tourists.

The main challenges facing Norwegian tourism are:

- inflation crisis, rising energy costs, etc. affecting both entrepreneurs and tourists
- economic reasons, i.e. reducing tourist budgets in the case of foreign tourists with average income and, consequently, choosing (cheaper) travel destinations other than Norway
- reducing the tourist budgets of tourists in Norway, who may choose cheaper foreign alternatives

¹⁷ Olof Stjernström, Knut Ingar Westernen, *Tourism and tourism education in Norway. State of the art 2022*, NORD University, Levanger 2022.

Foreign tourists visiting Norway can be divided into the following groups:

- tourists visiting world-famous cities with attractions such as Vigelandsparken and the Munch Museum in Oslo, Bryggen in Bergen and Nidarosdomen in Trondheim
- tourists visiting unique natural attractions, experiencing the beauty of the Norwegian landscape, valuing safety and combining nature tourism with cultural tourism
- tourists traveling by car or camper, renting cottages in search of untouched nature, using nature for fishing and similar activities.

From a statistical point of view, tourism sectors are characterized by rather low levels of wages and education. In Norway, however, there is a strategic policy aimed at developing tourism through educational activities. An example is, for example, the exceptionally good knowledge of foreign languages (mainly English) by Norwegians, which gives tourists visiting the country a sense of security and being understood, and consequently has a positive impact on tourists' experiences and their willingness to visit this country again.

Norwegian actions to develop domestic tourism:

- constant development of the strengths of tourism (spectacular nature; safe environment, urban cultural attractions)
- emphasis on the aspect of sustainable development (limits on the number of cruise ships that can enter narrow fjords, limits on the number of wild fish that tourists can bring home)
- further development of tourist experiences based on natural values, but taking into account its well-being (ecotourism products: eagle watching, safari with whales)
- development of a cultural offer focused on authenticity (especially in rural areas) as a complement to the offer of nature tourism.

5.2. Institutional system for Norwegian tourism

The central business development institution in Norway is Innovation Norway, which is an instrument of the government and regional authorities to implement business development throughout the country. Most of the money to support industries (including tourism) is allocated through Innovation Norway, which provides, among others.:

- commercialization subsidies for newly registered companies
- subsidies for business development and investment projects
- grants to strengthen expertise, build reputation and create useful networks
- loans for starting businesses and innovations (commercialization of new solutions, strengthening working capital, restructuring, development and internationalization).

By the ministry, Innovation Norway is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the official travel guide to Norway: Visitnorway.com, which aims to make choosing Norway as a travel destination easier and more attractive and to promote a more sustainable form of travel. The website contains thousands of travel company offers from all over Norway from travel companies, local travel agencies, etc.

Other organizations offering a variety of support to the tourism sector include:

- Argentum – an investment company of the Norwegian government dealing with investments on the private capital market

- Enova – a government-owned enterprise promoting innovations in energy and climate technologies that contribute to Norway's 2030 climate commitments. Enova provides subsidies to the tourism sector for the development of new technologies in construction/housing projects.

In the context of institutional support for Norwegian tourism, it is worth mentioning that:

- counties and municipalities in Norway can grant subsidies to the tourism sector (most often these are subsidies to local tourist offices)
- the tourism sector conducts research-oriented activities through SkatteFUNN, a support program under which companies can obtain tax relief when participating in development and research projects
- due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector received comprehensive support from the government¹⁸.

5.3. Regional development funds

In Norway, there is a system of regional support programs for the highest-level administrative units - districts (there are currently 11 districts in Norway, which are divided into municipalities). A district's regional development funds go to projects that meet the priority goals of the district's regional value creation program.

For example, Trøndelag County stands out for having complete value chains on land, in forestry, reindeer herding, fishing and aquaculture. In addition, there are national ones in the district and international research and competence environments as well as good related network clusters with several value chains. The overall goals of the program are:

- mobilizing the circular economy in new and existing businesses
- contributing to the development of new business models and innovations in value chains
- stimulating entrepreneurship in areas such as repair, reuse and recycling
- stimulating restructuring through digital transformation and public procurement.

Special programs have been developed for tourism, technology, the public sector and business sector partners. The tourist program includes, among others:

- development, provision and implementation of training, certification and educational programs
- supporting innovative initiatives in the tourism industry
- adoption of existing certification systems and development of tourist management methods
- supporting activities contributing to the extension of the tourist season.

5.4. Territorial brand systems

Norwegian regional brands are managed by organizations designed in the Destination Management Organizations (DMO) formula. The DMOs described below operating in two counties of Norway, Trøndelag and Nordland, are examples of organizations that differ from each other in terms of

¹⁸ Szczegółowa charakterystyka jest zawarta w dokumencie: Olof Stjernström, Knut Ingar Westeren, *Tourism and tourism education in Norway. State of the art 2022*, NORD University, Levanger 2022.

stakeholder involvement and the size of the geographical area, but are dynamically operating and can be an inspiration to create this type of organization working for the Carpathia brand.

DMO The Golden Road w Trøndelag

The Golden Road¹⁹ (Inderøy w Trøndelag) has 20 members representing the following industries:

- local production of food and other products sold in local shops and restaurants (10 companies)
- tour service providers - organization of sightseeing, etc. (2 companies)
- culture, art galleries, exhibitions (5 companies)
- accommodation (3 companies).

The work of organizations associated with The Golden Road is coordinated by a local tourist office subsidized by the commune. The coordinating office does not have shares in any of the companies, but together with the commune it plays an important role in promoting DMO.

DMO Visit Helgeland

Visit Helgeland co-creates 18 municipalities in Helgeland. The organization cooperates with approximately 150 large and small tourism companies in the region, has offices and provides tourist information in four cities in the Helgeland region: Brønnøysund, Mosjøen, Sandnessjøen and Mo i Rana.

Webiste Visit Helgeland²⁰ is a constantly updated regional tourist website, through which you can also book accommodation, tickets to attractions, etc. The website informs about:

- accommodation (23 companies providing accommodation: from city hotels to fishermen's houses outside cities)
- possible activities (23 activities and a wide range of offers: sports, culture and wildlife; trip scenarios, descriptions of attractions)
- gastronomy (5 companies combining their offers with traditional production).

5.5. Tourism education in Norway

The Norwegian education system is publicly funded (with very few exceptions) through the national and local tax system.

The education system includes:

- kindergarten
- primary school
- lower secondary school
- upper secondary school
- higher education
- folk schools (Nor. Folkehogskole)
- higher vocational education.

¹⁹ <https://dgo.no/?lang=en>

²⁰ visithelgeland.com/en/

Secondary education is divided into two main sections:

- general education preparing the student for higher education
- vocational training/programs.

About 120,000 students pursue general studies and 68,000 participate in vocational training programs.

General science includes five specializations:

- art, design and architecture
- media and communication
- music, dance and theater
- specialization in general studies
- sports and physical education.

Vocational programs include:

- electrical engineering and computer technology,
- craftsmanship, product design and development,
- health care, development of children and youth,
- construction,
- agriculture, fishing and forestry,
- restaurant and food processing,
- sales, services and tourism,
- technological and industrial production,
- hairdressing, floristry, interior design and retail trade,
- information technology and media production.

5.5.1. Tourism education in Norwegian primary schools

Norwegian primary schools provide young people with a general education that prepares them for further education in secondary and higher education. Although at this level of education there are no specialized programs focused on tourism-related issues. It is important to emphasize the key role of issues such as outdoor recreation, sport and health, which play an important role in the education of young people and have a positive impact on shaping pro-health and pro-ecological attitudes.

The Norwegian education system focuses on key values for Norway and Norwegians already at the basic level of education, which reflects important national values related to with nature, hiking and outdoor activities in general.

5.5.2. Tourism education in Norwegian vocational and upper secondary schools

In secondary schools, general programs prepare students for further education. No of the programs do not focus solely on tourism, however, tourism-related issues are addressed in subjects related to social sciences, business and economics (since tourism is an important part of the Norwegian economy) and sports.

The program consists of two stages:

- theoretical/practical part in the first two years
- two-year period in a company or tourist organization.

Vocational training focuses on working with clients and providing tourist services, including: in hotels, tourist offices, shops and larger recreation centers (especially important for the entire tourism sector and the national economy).

5.5.3. Tourism education in Norwegian folk schools

A particularly interesting phenomenon in the Norwegian educational system are folk schools (Nor. Folkehogskole), whose tradition dates back to the mid-19th century. These are independent boarding schools that usually implement one-year educational programs. Schools are free, with students paying, among other things: for accommodation, trips and school materials.

The history of the folk school dates back to the 19th century in Denmark with Nikolai Frederik Seweryn Grundtvig. Grundtvig believed that the classical education of the time, with its emphasis on the study of Greek and Latin, created a gap between life and study. He was particularly concerned that schools should bring dignity to rural people, then the majority of Denmark's population at the time. He wanted education to instill a sense of pride in national culture and a passion for lifelong learning.

His philosophy of learning was based on an understanding of human identity, which includes individual, cultural and democratic identity. Individual identity cannot be separated from the community, and the wholeness of the individual happens in connection with the community. Grundtvig encouraged placing human identity at the center of education²¹.

Currently, there are approximately 100 folk schools in Norway, attended by students aged 18 to 25 who have completed secondary school. Folk schools compete with each other in terms of the attractiveness of their offer, offering a large selection of various programs focused on travel, recreation, sports (including extreme sports, sailing, mountain climbing). and tourism.

Folk schools do not award academic degrees and do not conduct formal examinations. After completing their studies, students receive a diploma, but do not acquire formal qualifications obtained within the public education system. Most facilities are owned by private organizations, with a few run by the government.

As Iryna Hrynenko writes: The task of folk schools is not so much to teach, but to help in shaping personality and choosing a profession. The student chooses only those subjects that will later be related to his studies at the university. And besides, it chooses a way of life all year round, because all public schools are a kind of family in which the student spends 24 hours a day. A lot of time in such schools is devoted to working in a team, implementing creative projects and trips in which both students and teachers participate²².

²¹ Iryna Hrynenko, *Folkehøgskole, czyli edukacja po norwesku*, <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/folkehogskole-czyli-edukacja-po-norwesku>

²² <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/folkehogskole-czyli-edukacja-po-norwesku>

5.5.4. Tourism education in Norwegian higher education

Tourism in higher education in Norway can be considered from two aspects:

- in the context of academic subjects such as economics, business administration, environment and life sciences, geography, planning, environmental sociology and sports, etc.
- activities carried out both in free time and during business trips.

As a social and economic sector, tourism encompasses knowledge from many disciplines, so researchers working in or involved in the tourism sector may have a variety of educational backgrounds.

There are twelve tourism programs in Norwegian higher education:

- seven bachelor's programs
- two master's programs
- three shorter higher education programs.

Nord University implements a number of study programs in various aspects covering topics related to tourism: bachelor's studies (in the field of business administration, human resources management, geography and planning, and nature management) and master's studies (in the field of social sciences).

Study programs focus on economics, nature management, business administration, planning or geography and use the region as an area for fieldwork, field trips, thesis topics and case studies.

6. Trends in contemporary education

The main trends shaping the contemporary educational landscape and posing a challenge to educators include: phenomena such as:

- change in the nature of work
- competing for the best students
- decline in public financing
- digitization of universities and the teaching process²³.

Zygmunt Kruczek included the following main trends and tools used in contemporary teaching:

- **Massive Open Online Course** – high-quality, publicly available, free online courses
- **Blended learning i On-line learning** – a hybrid education method combining traditional learning methods and direct contact with the teacher with activities carried out remotely via a computer
- **Flipped Classroom** – a method in which students receive educational materials to develop at home (access to educational content in the form of instructions, podcasts, videopodcasts, literature, etc.), and class time is devoted to other activities: discussions, deepening the topic, group work, etc. .

²³ Zygmunt Kruczek, *Edukacja dla turystyki w Polsce i w województwie podkarpackim, a potrzeby regionalnego rynku pracy*, Kraków – Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

- **Virtual conferences** – events carried out via the Internet, giving you the opportunity to participate anywhere
- **Social learning** - common use of social media, searching for information in interest groups, observing profiles with educational content
- **Open education** – using collected educational materials in publicly available databases (e.g. digital libraries, archives and repositories) made available to users under a specific license specifying the possibilities of using the content (modifying, adding or distributing)
- **Certificates** – educational blocks, courses and training, after completion of which a person receives a certificate confirming the acquired skills
- **Independent learning and effective research** - independent acquisition of knowledge and searching for opportunities to expand competences
- **Gamification** – transfer of game mechanisms to the off-line world in order to increase participants' involvement in the education process²⁴.

6.1 Labor market in tourism in the province Podkarpackie. Current status and expected needs

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship is located in the south-eastern part of Poland. It covers an area of 17.8 thousand square meters. km². In 2022, it was inhabited by 2.1 million people, which constituted 5.5% of the country's population. In terms of population, the Podkarpackie Voivodeship took 8th place in the country. In 2022, 854.2 thousand people lived in 52 cities. people, i.e. by 5.0 thousand fewer people than in the previous year. The urbanization rate was 41.1% and was the lowest among all voivodeships (for Poland it was 59.6%). The highest urbanization rate was in the Stalowa-Wolski powiat (57.7%), and the lowest in the Przemyśl powiat (1.1%)²⁵. It borders with Ukraine and Slovakia, and in Poland it borders with the Lesser Poland, Lublin and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships. In its southern part there are the Carpathians, and in the north and north-east the Sandomierska Valley and a part of Roztocze. The highest peak in the Western Bieszczady Mountains and the entire Podkarpackie Voivodeship is Tarnica (1,346 m above sea level). The longest river in this area is the San. It is 459 km long, including 430 km in the voivodeship, which is the largest Carpathian tributary of the Vistula. The Solina Reservoir created there is the largest facility of this type in Poland in terms of total capacity. Approximately 38% of the voivodeship's area is covered by forests, approximately 45% of its area is recognized as areas of particularly valuable natural values and is covered by various forms of nature protection. Among others, the following were appointed: Bieszczadzki National Park in the Bieszczady Mountains and Magurski National Park in the Low Beskids, and on the Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian border, the "Eastern Carpathians" International Biosphere Reserve. The Bieszczady National Park is the largest mountain national park in the country. The Podkarpackie Voivodeship includes 21 counties and 4 cities with county rights (Rzeszów, Krosno, Przemyśl and Tarnobrzeg). The capital of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship is Rzeszów, inhabited by 196,329 inhabitants in 2023²⁶.

²⁴ Zygmunt Kruczek, *Edukacja dla turystyki w Polsce i w województwie podkarpackim, a potrzeby regionalnego rynku pracy*, Kraków – Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

²⁵ Stan, ruch naturalny i migracje ludności w województwie podkarpackim w 2022 r., Urząd Statystyczny w Rzeszowie.

²⁶ <https://erzeszow.pl/41-miasto-rzeszow/1757-dane-statystyczne.html>

The rich values of the natural environment and the interesting cultural heritage of the borderland create favorable conditions for the development of the region's tourist function. According to data from the Statistical Office in Rzeszów, in 2022, 605 tourist accommodation facilities operated in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, with a total of 32.9 thousand accommodation places, including 26.1 thousand year-round places. The database included 138 hotels, 160 private accommodations (guest rooms) and agritourism accommodations, 74 tourist cottage complexes, 45 shelters, 22 holiday resorts and 21 health resorts. Most accommodation places for tourists were offered in hotels (9.9 thousand) and in health resorts (3.3 thousand). In other hotel facilities, private accommodation (guest rooms), holiday resorts and tourist cottage complexes, tourists were offered an average of 2.5 thousand places²⁷.

In 2022, 1.2 million people used the accommodation base and provided 3.4 million overnight stays (including 412,000 to foreigners). However, the actual volume and structure of tourist traffic may differ from those mentioned above, because the Central Statistical Office data do not include accommodation establishments with less than 10 beds. Moreover, the Central Statistical Office does not include one-day visitors in its statistics. Tourist traffic is concentrated in the mountainous part of the voivodeship, especially in the Western Bieszczady Mountains and the Sanocko-Turczańskie Mountains²⁸.

The monthly distribution of the number of people using accommodation places in the years 2020 - 2022 is presented in table 1 below.

Tabela 1. Tourists staying overnight in tourist accommodation facilities in 2020-2022 by month

Year/ month	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
2020	82,5	82,4	27,8	3,7	20,2	60,9	105,6	131,3	93,7	59,5	23,8	18,9
2021	7,9	24,0	26,6	16,9	43,8	85,1	127,2	141,1	114,2	96,1	67,0	54,0
2022	55,0	77,7	89,7	86,0	102,5	113,2	141,8	153,6	124,9	110,5	82,5	72,0

Source: *Tourism in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in 2021 and 2022, Signal information, Statistical Office in Rzeszów.*

According to statistics, in 2022 the number of foreign tourists using accommodation facilities in Podkarpace increased by as much as 373.4%. compared to 2021, but the largest share in this increase was the mass inflow of Ukrainian refugees, who largely benefited from from tourist accommodation facilities. In addition, the reference point was 2021, i.e. the so-called Covid, very difficult for tourism throughout the country. The war in Ukraine has a very significant impact on the tourism business, and all companies operating in this industry suffer mainly. Some regular tourists who visited the

²⁷ Turystyka na Podkarpaciu w 2022 roku, Informacje sygnałne, Urząd Statystyczny w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów 2023.

²⁸ Ibidem.

Bieszczady and Roztocze Mountains every year believed that it was too close to the border with Ukraine, which undoubtedly had a negative impact on the occupancy of accommodation places and contributed to a decline in the income of entities and people operating in the tourism industry.

When analyzing the Podkarpackie labor market, it is necessary to emphasize the various social and economic conditions of the region, in particular²⁹:

- the lowest share of population living in cities in Poland,
- uneven distribution of population in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. This process proves the co-occurrence of administrative units with low and high population density,
- a significant decline in natural growth per 1,000 inhabitants,
- the median age shows an increasing tendency in the middle age of the population - both in the country and in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship,
- low level of economic development (including the services sector and the most advanced of this sector - financial services) in relation to other voivodeships and regions of the European Union, which results, among other things, in low wealth of residents measured by gross domestic product per capita (penultimate place in the country),
- one of the lowest average monthly gross salaries in the inter-province ranking.

Against the background of the above information, it is worth analyzing how the situation in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship has been changing in recent years in the group of entities related to the tourism industry, which may potentially be recipients of the services offered as part of the "Between the Fjords and the Carpathians" project. As indicated by the data presented in table 2 below, despite the unfavorable external situation (Covid-19, war in Ukraine), the number of entities is gradually growing.

Tabela 2. Entities of the national economy related to the tourism industry in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the years 2019 - 2022 according to the PKD section (excluding natural persons running exclusively individual farms)

LP	PKD SECTION	as of December 31 2019	as of December 31 2020	as of December 31 2021	as of December 31 2022	Growth pcs/%
1	activities related to accommodation and catering services (pcs.)	4965	5261	5686	5873	908 18,3%
2	activities related to culture, entertainment and recreation (pcs.)	3946	4110	4256	4324	378 9,6 %

²⁹ Raport „Analiza sytuacji na rynku pracy w województwie podkarpackim w 2022 roku”, WUP w Rzeszowie, Rzeszów 2023, s.17.

Source: data from reports: "Analysis of the situation on the labor market in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the first half of 2023." and "Analysis of the situation on the labor market in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the first half of 2022", Voivodeship Labor Office in Rzeszów.

This is undoubtedly very important information for all interested parties in the implementation of the project, as it indicates that this sector of the economy has relatively great development prospects in the coming years. This is related to the possibilities of developing the tourism potential, which includes all resources (elements) of the natural and cultural environment, tourism development, communication accessibility, paratourism infrastructure, human resources and elements of the tourism sector environment that create the possibility of taking actions aimed at achieving the intended goal in the field of tourism³⁰. Tourism potential also includes all elements of the geographical environment and human behavior that can be used to practice tourism, including: structural resources (tourist values, tourist development, transport accessibility) and functional resources (cultural, socio-demographic, ecological and other conditions). economic, political and technological opportunities) determining the development of tourism in a specific area³¹. This also translates into employment opportunities in the tourism sector.

It should be noted that in recent years, 2019 turned out to be the best period for Polish tourism, heralding further development of the sector. At that time, the contribution of tourism to the country's GDP was 6.2%, and Poles spent a record amount of PLN 79.5 billion on domestic and foreign travel³². However, the same year brought the development of the COVID-19 pandemic to the world, a kind of "black swan" of our times, i.e. a phenomenon occurring irregularly, unexpectedly and carrying serious consequences - in this case, major restrictions on tourism. The pandemic caused a crisis in the sector, lasting for the next two years, in which the share of tourism in the country's GDP dropped significantly (2020 - 2.2%, 2021 - 4.2%), as did Poles' travel expenses, which were prevented by pandemic restrictions around the world (2021 - PLN 57.5 billion)³³. Moreover, there has been a crisis of confidence in the tourism sector as an employer due to the difficulties in conducting business activities by entities from the sector during the pandemic. In 2022, the tourism industry continued to recover from this crisis, and experts estimate that this will continue until 2023 or 2024. Currently, one of the most important factors in tourism decisions is the safety of travelers. Another difficulty for the sector, growing since February 2022, turned out to be the war in Ukraine and its effects, as well as the situation in the country - inflation and rising energy costs (increased gas and electricity fees)³⁴.

Taking into account the above conditions, it should be noted that despite the threats to the development of the tourism industry, the number of people employed in the entities of this sector

³⁰ M. Borkowska-Niszczoła, Ocena potencjału turystycznego obszarów przyrodniczo cennych województwa podlaskiego, Economics and Management, nr 1/2014, s. 313, DOI: 10.12846/j.em.2014.01.19.

³¹ J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak, B. Włodarczyk, Produkt turystyczny, PWE, Warszawa 2005.

³² D. Micek, K. Roźniatowska, Ł. Maźnica, Branżowy Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego. Raport podsumowujący II edycję badania w sektorze turystyki przeprowadzonego w roku 2022, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości oraz Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Warszawa 2023, s. 22, https://www.parp.gov.pl/storage/publications/pdf/Raport-sektor-turystyki-2022_II-edycja_20230926.pdf.

³³ Ibidem, s. 22

³⁴ Ibidem, s. 22.

in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship shows a slight increase - table no. 3, which undoubtedly proves the stability of employment.

Table 3. Number of people working in national economy entities related to the tourism industry in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in 2018 - 2021 according to PKD sections (excluding natural persons running individual agricultural farms)

LP	PKD SECTION	as of December 31 2018	as of December 31 2019	as of December 31 2020	as of December 31 2021	Growth pcs/%
1	activities related to accommodation and catering services (pcs.)	10922	11487	10581	11476	554 5,1%
2	activities related to culture, entertainment and recreation (pcs.)	7041	7074	6995	7053	12 0,2 %

Source: data from reports: "Analysis of the situation on the labor market in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the first half of 2021." and "Analysis of the situation on the labor market in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in 2022", WUP In Rzeszow.

A very important element related to the development of the tourism industry in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship is its tourist image, which is one of the most important elements in choosing a place to visit, as well as a challenge for organizations managing selected travel destinations.³⁵ This is a very important issue because it affects, among others, on making future tourist decisions, behavior in the destination, level of satisfaction, and also - so important for the promotion and development of the region - recommending it to other people and repeat visits³⁶.

In a practical sense, a properly constructed tourist image of the region can bring positive changes, such as³⁷:

- highlighting the advantage of a given region over others,
- increasing consumer loyalty of tourists (translating into more frequent returns), who are more understanding of price increases - guarantees the use of the area even outside the season,
- expanding the tourist offer,
- obtaining a higher price,

³⁵ F. Kock, A. Josiassen, A. G. Assaf, Advancing destination image: The destination content model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 61, 2016, s. 28-44.

³⁶ D. Agapito, D.;P. O. do Valle, J. C. Mendes, The cognitive-affective-conative model of destination image: A confirmatory analysis. *J. Travel Tour. Mark.*, 30, 2013, s. 471-481.

³⁷ B. Marciszewska, Potencjał turystyczny regionu a kreowanie jego wizerunku, *Potencjał Turystyczny: Zagadnienia Przestrzenne, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego: Ekonomiczne problemy usług*, 590 (52), 2010, s. 19.

- increasing awareness and recognition of the tourist reception area,
- increased interest of tourists in a given area, contributing to an increase in their number, increasing the use of the area, providing a basis for the development of tourist development, and reducing the effects of seasonality,
- increase in market share,
- improving the competitiveness of a given region,
- increasing the investment attractiveness of a given region,
- increase in budget revenues in local government units located within the tourist region,
- improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of a given region,
- stimulating impact on other sectors of the economy in a given area.

The framework for the tourist image of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship is set by two documents adopted and implemented by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Board. These are:

- Tourism development and marketing communication strategy of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship for 2020-2025, adopted by resolution No. 167/3530/20 of June 16, 2020, and
- Revitalization of the brand strategy of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Guidelines for implementing brand strategy in 2020-2025 entitled Podkarpackie. An open space for resourceful people", adopted by resolution No. 199/4072/20 of September 15, 2020.

The status of implementation of the above strategies was examined by the Podkarpacka Regional Tourist Organization as part of the implementation of the task entitled: Podkarpacki Tourist Barometer 2023³⁸.

The aim of quantitative research conducted in 2002 was to provide an answer to the question - whether and to what extent the assumptions of decision-makers and publicly available individual opinions are reflected in commonly occurring associations about the Podkarpackie Voivodeship.

The research included a representative, quota-random sample of adult residents of Poland from outside the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The study was physically carried out by the Nationwide ARIADNA Research Panel on June 13-22, 2022. For a sample of n=1731 measurements, the maximum measurement error was 2% (assuming a 95% confidence level and a fraction of 50%)³⁹.

Respondents positively assessed the Podkarpackie Voivodeship compared to other voivodeships. For almost half of the respondents it was rather attractive (49.1%), and for 17.6% it was definitely attractive. Among the general associations, the most common were mountains (21.8%), Bieszczady (19.8%) and Rzeszów (10.6%). Other major cities were also mentioned: other major cities (Krosno, Sanok, Przemyśl, Łańcut, Jarosław, Jasło, Dębica, Mielec, Stalowa Wola), Solina, landscape, wild nature and animals, Carpathians, greenery, forests and meadows and others. You should pay special attention to the mountains, because the sum of the answers "Mountains", "Bieszczady" and "Karpaty" gave as much as 43.6%. On the other hand, 17.3% of responses indicated no associations with the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, and an additional 5.5% were associations unrelated to the region.

³⁸ M. Stopa, B. Gierczak-Korzeniowska, K. Szpara, Raport 2023 z badań wizerunku turystycznego województwa podkarpackiego, Podkarpacka Regionalna Organizacja Turystyczna, Rzeszów 2023.

³⁹ Ibidem, s. 15.

Negative responses also appeared quite often (6.3%). The most common ones can be described as "worldview conservatism"⁴⁰.

As the results of the study indicate, the most important element of the image of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship were the mountain areas (Carpathians), especially the Bieszczady Mountains. The sum of the answers: "mountains", "Bieszczady", "Carpathians" gave 43.6%, and after adding the answers pointing to the Solina Lagoon and the landscape (probably mainly mountain and foothills) - 49.9%. The references to wild nature, animals, forests and greenery appearing in the answers also concern the Carpathian part of the voivodeship to the greatest extent. It is therefore safe to say that in the case of more than half of the respondents, the most important element of the tourist image of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship was the natural environment of the Carpathians, especially the Bieszczady Mountains⁴¹.

As part of the research, the recognition of the voivodeship was also checked and analyzed using the BAV model, 37 of the region's most exposed brand products. 1,731 people from all over Poland were asked about their knowledge, of which only 32.1% (555) visited the voivodeship in the last five years for tourist purposes. These were people who actually had contact with tourist products in the voivodeship and had a basis for assessing them⁴².

The research results were not favorable for the voivodeship. Generally speaking, branded products from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship were poorly recognizable, respondents had no knowledge about them and did not associate many of them with the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The most recognizable products then included: Bieszczady National Park (68.5%), Solina Reservoir (60.1%) and Łańcut Castle (60.1%), taking into account the answers "definitely yes" and "rather Yes". Knowledge of other products remained at an average or low level. The research also made it possible to identify statements and opinions of respondents proving the lack or low effectiveness of promotional activities undertaken for the region and its attractions. There were, among others: such negative associations as: "little promotion", "not very recognizable", "lack of publicity", "more information in the media", "little information about this region", "little known", "poorly advertised", "poorly advertised", "or lack of coherent tourist information". Lack of consistent information linking specific branded products with the voivodeship and the long-standing tourist attractions related to its history, this is the weak side of promotional activities⁴³.

It is worth mentioning here that the presence of an interesting branded tourist product that arouses positive emotions in a given area is valuable both for the managers of this product and for tourists. The use of branded aspects of the tourist reception area contributes to improving its tourist image and thus increasing the competitiveness of its offer. It is the branded products operating in a given area that help, among others, strengthen and increase the so-called perceived attractiveness⁴⁴.

In this context, it is worth emphasizing the importance of the "Carpathia" brand for the development of the tourism industry in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. It also fits into the broadly understood tourism development strategy and contributes to indicating the appropriate and desired image of the development of local space. Such a strategy allows, in the long term, to create its brand as a set

⁴⁰ Ibidem, s. 15.

⁴¹ Ibidem, s. 16.

⁴² Ibidem, s. 18.

⁴³ Ibidem, s. 18.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, s. 18.

of ideas, feelings and beliefs that the tourist associates with a given space or the tourist product it offers. The brand of such an area is a kind of promise that the area has specific desirable features, i.e. ensures safety for visiting tourists, provides tourist services (accommodation and other tourist service infrastructure) and is consistent with expectations in terms of quantity and quality, and tourists themselves evaluate and identify a given tourist destination as prestigious, special and unique⁴⁵.

A properly created tourism development strategy that meets the needs of a given economic space is very important for its tourist functioning and affects the shape and quality of relations with the competitive environment. This allows for the best adaptation to difficult market conditions, and survival and development are often determined by the ability to find and then use a tourist competitive advantage. The tourism development strategy also allows, in addition to the use of local resources, to take into account the impact of external factors or resources, i.e. natural (natural, e.g. the inflow of pollutants from outside the studied area, the occurrence of forms of nature protection in the surroundings of the studied area), economic (including the availability of external sources of financing, decline in overall tourist demand), socio-demographic (including general change in needs regarding the type and forms of tourism, aging of society, tourists' search for products and non-mass destinations⁴⁶.

This is particularly important in a situation where the EU has been working on the creation of the fifth macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian area for a long time (the previous four concern the Baltic Sea, the Danube region, the Adriatic-Ionian region and the Alps region). It covers eight Carpathian countries, including five EU countries: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary and Romania and three non-EU countries: Ukraine, Moldova and Serbia. In total, this is an area inhabited by approximately 68 million people. Podkarpackie, together with Małopolska, is one of the advocates of this strategy, which is intended to strengthen cooperation between countries and individual regions and contribute to their dynamic development.

The fifth macro-regional strategy in the European Union would be an important element that would have a real impact on the sustainable development of the Carpathians, similarly to the Alpine Strategy, which had a very positive impact on the development of tourism and the economy of the Alps and their surroundings. The implementation of the "Between the Fjords and the Carpathians" project undoubtedly fits into the development plans for the tourism sector of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and indicates areas and opportunities whose implementation may be an important stimulator of the development of this economic sector in the coming years.

7. Education profiles in Poland

In Poland, qualifications are awarded in the education and higher education systems, but also by industry associations and organizations operating on the basis of various regulations. Qualifications are organized by the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK), which refers to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The Polish Qualifications Framework is a description of the hierarchy of eight levels of qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK) and entered

⁴⁵ D. Filar, A. Rzońca, G. Wójtowicz (red.), *Ekonomia po polsku*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo CeDeWu, Warszawa 2007.

⁴⁶ D. Szostak, *Strategia rozwoju turystyki jako narzędzie kreowania lokalnej marki turystycznej na przykładzie powiatu gryfińskiego*, *Marketing i Zarządzanie* nr 4 (45) 2016, s. 101–113, DOI: 10.18276/miz.2016.45-09.

into the public Integrated Qualifications Register (ZRK), kept by the Educational Research Institute (IBE)⁴⁷.

The Polish educational system is also becoming more and more open to forms of extracurricular education and confirming learning outcomes obtained in the informal learning process (including by providing co-financing mechanisms⁴⁸).

7.1. Formal education

Formal education includes study at school or university as part of programs leading to the acquisition of full or partial qualifications (generally in the form of a certificate or diploma). Formal education consists of systems:

- general education
- vocational education
- higher education.

Formal education also includes postgraduate and doctoral studies, as well as compulsory schooling in the home education system⁴⁹.

Formal education - education provided by public and non-public schools and other entities of the education system, universities and other entities of the higher education and science system, as part of programs that lead to obtaining full qualifications, qualifications awarded after completing postgraduate studies, referred to in Art. 160 section 1 of the Act of July 20, 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws, item 1668, as amended¹), or qualifications in the profession referred to in Art. 10 section 3 point 1 of the Act of September 7, 1991 on the education system (Journal of Laws of 2019, items 1481, 1818 and 2197).

Definition according to the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System, Art. 2.⁵⁰.

In 2007, 148 universities in Poland (39 public and 111 private) were involved in the education of tourism staff at the higher level (at least at the specialty/specialization level). The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a decline in interest in studying tourism. The situation was also worsened by the unstable geopolitical situation (migration crisis and war in Ukraine).

The most tourist destinations are offered by Krakow (11), followed by Warsaw (10) and Poznań (7). Compared to 2014, in the Podkarpackie region there was a decrease in the number of universities with a tourist educational offer (from 5 to 3) and an increase in the number of centers with such an offer in the Lesser Poland region.

The current offer of universities offers approximately thirty fields of study related to the tourism sector. There were 27 different names of related fields of study recorded in 108 universities with

⁴⁷ <https://kwalifikacje.gov.pl/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/wyszukiwarka>

⁴⁹ <https://prk.men.gov.pl/polska-rama-kwalifikacji-prk/>

⁵⁰ <https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/zintegrowany-system-kwalifikacji-18267966/art-2>

tourism. In 2022, the most common education was in tourism and recreation (71% of all qualifications), followed by:

- tourism (3.97%)
- tourism economy (2.65%)
- gastronomy.

Universities also offer fields such as geotourism and guiding and tourist pilotage, historical tourism, hotel and leisure services, religious tourism, tourism and sports management⁵¹.

7.1.1. Vocational training

In 2014, there were 2,053 secondary schools with a tourist profile in Poland (including 631 technical schools, 86 supplementary technical schools, 141 post-secondary schools and 1,195 basic vocational schools). The largest number of tourist schools were located in the following voivodeships: Masovian (232), Lesser Poland (216) and Silesian (195). There were the fewest schools in the following voivodeships: Opole (68), Podlaskie (68) and Lubuskie (70).

Most graduates appear on the labor market in the fields of nutrition and catering services, hotel management, chefs and tourist services. The least interest is aroused by rural tourism technicians, waiters and waiter services technicians. At the same time, in the same period, the highest unemployment was recorded in the profession of nutrition technician and catering services.

Basic vocational schools educate mainly in the professions of cooks and waiters, but the level of preparation of school graduates for the profession is minimal and does not enable them to work independently (without the supervision of a professional).

Graduates with better grades have the opportunity to continue their education in supplementary general secondary schools or supplementary technical schools.

The diagnosis presented in the National Strategy for Regional Development 2030 illustrates the mismatch between the education structure and the needs of the labor market, which results in low professional activity of young people. The challenges in this area include, among others:

- insufficient cooperation between technical and basic vocational schools and the employers' environment
- ensuring the participation of local companies in the process of developing professional skills⁵².

7.1.2. Expert education

There is no single general definition of "expertise." However, this term should be understood as a high level of knowledge, experience and skills in a given field that enables the recognition, solution and analysis of advanced problems in this field. Having the so-called expert knowledge is the result

⁵¹ Zygmun Kruczek, *Edukacja dla turystyki w Polsce i w województwie podkarpackim, a potrzeby regionalnego rynku pracy*, Kraków – Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

⁵² Zygmun Kruczek, *Edukacja dla turystyki w Polsce i w województwie podkarpackim, a potrzeby regionalnego rynku pracy*, Kraków – Jarosław 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

of many years of experience, continuous improvement of competences and the result of consistent development, improvement and verification of knowledge.

Expert education refers to specialized educational programs or processes that prepare participants to achieve high competencies and advanced knowledge in a specific area. It focuses on developing specialized skills and maximizing the depth of a given area of knowledge.

Expert education may be offered by universities, educational institutions, industry organizations or companies specializing in a given area. Expert education programs are implemented at the postgraduate education level, through specialized courses and scholarships and international exchange programs.

In the field of tourism education, expert education may include, among others:

- academic postgraduate programs focusing on in-depth study of selected aspects of tourism (specialized courses on e.g. tourism organization, sustainable tourism development, cultural tourism management, heritage interpretation, environmental education)
- thematic training conducted by recognized entities dealing with tourism (dedicated to e.g. sustainable development of tourism, management of tourist resources)
- symposia, conferences and workshops providing an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences between experts in a given field
- study visits and expert visits enabling the exchange of knowledge and learning good practices in the field of tourism development
- participation in research projects, internships/internships in renowned tourist institutions, heritage interpretation centers, etc. (mainly outside the country).

7.2. Non-formal education

Non-formal education includes institutionally organized learning within programs that are not part of formal education. Even though non-formal education does not change the level of education, it leads to acquiring new skills (and expanding existing ones) in various areas of professional, social and cultural life - formal education.

Learning outcomes obtained in non-formal education can be confirmed, collected and transferred in the course of acquiring "school" and "academic" qualifications. Qualifications awarded as part of non-formal education may also be included in the Integrated Qualifications System (they may be assigned a level in the Polish Qualifications Framework), although not all programs implemented as part of this type of education must lead to obtaining qualifications.

Non-formal education - education and training provided as part of programs that do not lead to full qualifications or qualifications referred to in point 23.

Definition according to the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System, Art. 2.⁵³.

Non-formal education can be implemented by any entities - private individuals, groups and organizations (e.g. educational companies, associations, clubs, non-governmental organizations) using tools such as courses, training, internships, workshops, etc.

⁵³ <https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/zintegrowany-system-kwalifikacji-18267966/art-2>

Due to the many possibilities of implementing this type of educational process, there is no uniform certification system confirming the acquisition of competences. Most often, participants receive written confirmation of participation along with a description of the acquired competences.

Currently, there is an increased interest in the offer of non-formal education. Opportunities to study in non-traditional institutions - outside schools or universities - are sought more often than before. The most important feature of non-formal education is voluntariness and responsibility of the learner, who is responsible for the learning outcomes and decides how to participate in the learning process. Appropriately designed activities of cultural institutions, educational centers, etc. contribute to the increase in the effectiveness of education.

Non-formal learning in the field of tourism education may include, for example:

- courses and workshops focusing on specific aspects of tourism education (guiding, tourism management, etc.) conducted by experienced practitioners from the tourism industry or experts in the field
- internships and internships in places related to tourism, such as travel agencies, hotels, event agencies or tourist institutions, allowing you to gain practical experience and knowledge and providing an opportunity to learn from professionals
- volunteering, community work in tourist places, giving tours of attractions or organizing tourist events
- educational projects including, for example, research or analysis of tourism trends, engaging participants in practical activities and enabling the development of tourism-related skills
- educational trips, study visits
- e-learning, i.e. participating in online courses or using platforms enabling remote learning using interactive materials, video lessons, quizzes, etc.
- activities in organizations and associations disseminating knowledge about culture, cultural heritage, etc., which often offer additional training and seminars and opportunities to participate in projects related to tourism education

7.3. Informal learning

Informal learning is described both as a series of activities undertaken in order to learn something independently, and as a learning process accompanying another activity (work, participation in various events or recreational activities).

Informal learning - acquiring knowledge, skills and social competences in the course of various activities outside organized forms of education⁵⁴.

Nowadays, the importance and possibilities of informal learning are increasing (including thanks to the development of technology and widespread access to the Internet).

⁵⁴ Definicja za: *Słownik podstawowych terminów dotyczących krajowego systemu kwalifikacji. A Glossary Of Key Terms Related To The National Qualifications System*, red. S. Sławiński, Warszawa 2014. [http://www.krak-
www.ibe.edu.pl/pl/strona-glowna/11-publikacje/617-slownik-podstawowych-terminow-ksk](http://www.krak-
www.ibe.edu.pl/pl/strona-glowna/11-publikacje/617-slownik-podstawowych-terminow-ksk)

Educational tourism may also be a type of informal education, i.e. a type of tourism that combines travel with the learning process, aiming to expand knowledge, develop skills and shape the attitudes of participants through direct experiences and interactions with the local environment, culture, history or nature.

Informal learning in tourism education is unstructured, flexible and accessible to everyone. It is not only a way to gain knowledge, but also to discover new perspectives and developing interests. This type of learning depends on your own initiative and interests, curiosity and openness to new experiences. Using a variety of information sources, taking advantage of opportunities to interact with local communities and exploring one's own creativity are key to the informal development of tourism-related knowledge and skills.

Selected informal learning activities in the field of tourism are listed below.

- Traveling gives you the opportunity to explore new places, cultures, history and traditions. While traveling, you can gain knowledge through observation, interacting with local people, visiting tourist attractions and exploring the environment. ☒ Reading and independent exploration of the topic – reading books, tourist guides, articles, blogs and other materials related to tourism, etc.
- Working or volunteering in the tourism industry - by working directly in a hotel, travel agency, travel agency or restaurant, you can gain practical skills, learn industry procedures and better understand the needs of tourists.
- Meetings, participation in discussions - conversations and interactions with other related people with tourism, such as guides, hotel employees, local residents or other tourists, enable the exchange of experiences and a change of perspective on certain issues
- Using social media (thematic groups) allows for updating knowledge and discussion providing new information.
- Trying local dishes is a form of learning about the culture and traditions of the region, during which you can learn more about the ingredients, methods of preparation and the importance of dishes for a given community.
- Participation in outdoor activities such as trekking, kayaking, climbing provides not only emotions, but also knowledge about nature and its ecosystems, nature conservation, the environment and sustainable tourism
- Virtual sightseeing using online platforms and mobile applications gives you the opportunity to explore tourist places from anywhere in the world, learning about their history, architecture and attractions.
- Podcasts and audiobooks devoted to travel and tourism.
- Travel photography as a way to both capture beautiful places and observe. By practicing photography, you can additionally learn technical issues related to this art, as well as creating visual narratives.
- Participation in local festivals and events (fairs, concerts, etc.) allows you to better learn about the culture, customs and traditions of a given place. It is also a great opportunity to connect with local residents and learn more about their communities.
- Visiting museums, galleries and monuments provides information.
- Mentoring and cooperation with local experts in the tourism industry (guides, travelers, historians and scientists) allows you to gain first-hand knowledge and skills, discover the behind-the-scenes of tourism-related professions and develop practical skills.

8. Educational areas

The education strategy will impact two groups of recipients:

1. internal recipients, i.e. living and operating in the territory covered by the Carpathia brand (staff, people handling tourist traffic and having direct contact with tourists, educators, activists, etc.)
2. external recipients, i.e. people visiting the Carpathia brand area for tourist and educational purposes.

Therefore, tourist education regarding the Carpathia brand should be two-track and meet the needs of both groups of recipients. The education of staff handling tourist traffic should be continuous, so that the staff can constantly update their knowledge and improve their skills.

This process may include both internal training conducted by the Carpathia brand and cooperation with educational institutions, tourist schools and local training centers.

8.1. Knowledge about the Carpathians (culture and heritage)

It is important that education in the field of knowledge about the Carpathians is interactive and engaging and adapted to different age groups and interest levels. It may be part of school educational programs, offers for tourists, initiatives of local communities and cultural institutions, and should include various forms and operate at various levels.

- Culture and history

Tangible and intangible cultural and historical heritage of the region. Traditions, art, folklore and local customs. Crafts, disappearing professions, handicrafts. Regional cuisine and local food products.

- Nature and ecology

Promoting ecological awareness and nature conservation. It is advisable to organize trips to National Parks, nature reserves and unique natural areas, during which tourists will have the opportunity to explore the diversity of plants and animals and learn about the need to preserve these unique environments.

- Active recreation

Introducing tourists to various forms of active recreation, such as mountain hiking, cycling, kayaking and horse riding. You can organize training and courses and sports events that will enable tourists to enjoy the beautiful areas of Podkarpacie in an active way.

8.2. Provision of tourist services

The educational offer for staff handling tourist traffic in the area covered by the Carpathia brand should be comprehensive and take into account various aspects related to tourist service.

- Customer service

Customer service training should be a key element of tourism staff education. Employees should be equipped with communication skills, problem-solving abilities, flexibility and the ability to cope with various situations. Training should also cover aspects of cultural sensitivity so that staff can effectively serve tourists with different cultural backgrounds.

- Knowledge of the region

Employees should be appropriately trained to have detailed knowledge of the region covered by the Carpathia brand, its tourist attractions, history, culture, traditions, as well as practical information regarding transport, tourist infrastructure and other relevant aspects. Training may include both theoretical and practical elements, such as field trips and workshops.

- Foreign languages

Due to the international nature of tourism, the educational offer should include training in foreign languages: English, Slovak, Ukrainian, Hungarian, and due to the specific location of the region, ethnic minority languages (Rusyn). Employees should be able to communicate fluently with tourists and provide information in various languages.

- Counseling skills

Tourism staff should be trained to provide tourists with advice, suggestions and recommendations regarding attractions, routes, hotels, restaurants and other services. Employees should be well versed in the tourist offer of the region operating under the Carpathia brand and be able to adapt the proposals to the individual preferences and needs of tourists.

- Emergency management

Training should cover emergency management and tourist safety (first aid, evacuation, emergency communication, etc.). The offer of industry education for staff serving tourist traffic in the area covered by the Carpathia brand should also include content related to the broadly understood catering industry. Education in this area should include both theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to the region's cuisine.

- Regional cuisine

Education should focus on learning and mastering the preparation of traditional dishes and dishes typical of the Carpathian region. Employees should learn about local ingredients, preparation methods, techniques, and the history and cultural context of the dishes. Training may include culinary workshops, tastings, etc.

- Regional wines and spirits

The educational offer should include knowledge about wines and regional drinks, which are often an important element of the gastronomic tourist offer. Employees should learn about different varieties of wine, production methods, characteristic tastes and rules for matching drinks to dishes. This may include tastings, sommelier training and workshops on regional wines.

- Catering services and waiter service

Education should include improving waiter service skills so that staff provide high-quality services. Employees should be trained in etiquette, communication skills with customers, table service and efficient order management. Training may include practical simulations, workshops and internships in restaurants.

- Food culture and diet

Aspects related to different eating cultures, special diets and food preferences of tourists. Employees should be aware of different dietary needs such as vegetarianism, veganism, gluten-free diet, etc. Training should include information on alternative food ingredients, menus adapted to different diets and the ability to provide appropriate nutritional service.

- Creating and promoting culinary experiences

The educational offer in this area should include the ability to create and promote authentic culinary experiences available to tourists. Employees should be trained in organizing culinary events, tastings, cooking workshops and organizing culinary festivals. Training may also include the ability to photograph dishes and promote them on social media.

It is important that the educational offer in the field of gastronomy is practical and tailored to the needs of tourists visiting the Carpathia brand region. Training should also take into account changing culinary trends, principles of healthy eating and issues related to sustainable food production.

8.3. Marketing and management, communication

The marketing education offer addressed to staff serving tourist traffic in the area covered by the Carpathia brand should primarily focus on developing skills related to promotion, communication and building brand recognition.

The second aspect of education in this area is the topic related to the Carpathia brand itself, the idea, values and specificity of which should be known to all stakeholders working for its success, so they should have knowledge of how to talk about the brand and communicate its values.

- Tourism marketing

Training should cover basic tourism marketing issues, such as market segmentation, market research, identification of target groups, competition analysis and creation of marketing strategies. Employees should learn marketing tools and techniques used in the tourism industry to effectively promote their offer and that of the Carpathia brand.

- Creating the brand image

Education should focus on building a coherent image of the Carpathia brand. Employees should learn about the values, unique features and competitive advantages of the region that can be effectively communicated to tourists. Training may also cover online image development, including social media strategy and online reputation management.

- Marketing communications

Tourist staff should be trained in effective marketing communication. Training may include the ability to create attractive promotional content, write advertising texts, prepare information materials, as well as use various communication channels, such as websites, brochures, posters or social media.

- Customer service and sales

Customer service training in the context of tourism marketing - effective presentation of the offer, reservation management, customer acquisition, negotiation techniques.

- Monitoring and analysis of effectiveness

Employees should learn to evaluate the effectiveness of promotional campaigns and track indicators such as the number of reservations, website visits and tourists' opinions. This knowledge will help you make decisions regarding the optimization of your marketing activities.

9. Recommended activities and products

The Carpathia brand should be built by well-thought-out decisions regarding the operator's support for events, events and initiatives submitted by residents, social and professional organizations. The key guideline in this regard is the following sentence: The Carpathia brand supports economic, cultural, scientific and social initiatives that are consistent with the image of the region as a mystical space [...]⁵⁵

The Carpathia brand strategy document lists several proposals for tourist products to be implemented:

- a series of cultural events referring to the idea of the Carpathia brand
- Carpathian Festival promoting Carpathian traditions and culture
- Internet portal presenting Carpathia brand products, initiatives and events (with product sales function).

The products and activities proposed in this document are an extension of the recommendations contained in the brand strategy.

The tourism education strategy of the Carpathia brand is an action plan aimed at promoting conscious and responsible organization through the process of individual and social education of the community, which also aims to: notification of informative information, participation and compliance for legal communities, culture and community.

The tourism education strategy includes activities such as:

- education about local natural, cultural and historical resources and about the rules and recommendations regarding their protection and preservation
- organizing educational programs and workshops that aim to increase knowledge about local traditions, customs, cuisine, crafts, etc.
- creating training for local tourism service providers in the field of conscious tourism management, sustainable development, principles of ecotourism and ethical approach to tourism
- organizing training in the field of broadly understood marketing
- including the topic of tourism education in school curricula and local social initiatives in order to increase awareness and improve the competences of Carpathia brand stakeholders regarding the brand idea and its role in the development of the region.

9.1. Establishment of the DMO

Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) are organizations that manage and promote specific tourist destinations. DMOs are responsible for developing, marketing and coordinating various aspects of tourism in a given location.

⁵⁵ Cyt. za: Strategia Marki Carpathia

DMOs operate at various levels, from cities and regions to countries and territories. Their main goal is to attract tourists, encourage them to visit a given place and provide a satisfying tourist experience. They can conduct marketing campaigns, promote tourist attractions, cooperate with local tourism entrepreneurs, organize events and provide information to tourists. Well-run DMOs also have an advisory function on issues related to tourism development. They support the creation of tourism strategies, conduct market research, analyze trends and provide advice on the development of tourist infrastructure.

DMOs are today key players in promoting and managing tourist destinations: they attract tourists and stimulate the economic growth of a region/place.

Destination management organization (DMO), understood as organizations managing tourist reception areas, are the basic entities responsible for creating the tourist function of a given tourist reception area (ORT)⁵⁶.

DMOs should be included in the scope of activities in the Podkarpacie region:

- shaping the image of the region
 - working to improve the attractiveness of the area, including through the development of attractions, organization of events, programs, etc.
- marketing activities
 - Carpathia brand management, market research, brand management, advertising and PR activities, strategic activities
- leadership and coordination
 - setting the direction of tourism development, coordinating activities of the tourism sector components in order to achieve a "common voice" in development, building partnerships
- acting as a leader in tourism development
 - representing the industry, protecting the interests of customers, supporting the tourism industry to increase the benefits from tourism development, generating income, increasing employment, developing the economy
- development of tourist products
 - work on creating a pricing policy for tourist products
- educational activities
 - raising awareness of the importance of tourism among local communities; generating awareness of service quality issues among public and private organizations and the local community⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Jacek Borzyszkowski, *Koncepcja zarządzania marką Carpathia w formule nowoczesnego DMO*, 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

⁵⁷ Na podstawie: Jacek Borzyszkowski, *Koncepcja zarządzania marką Carpathia w formule nowoczesnego DMO*, 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

9.2. Development of a package of materials supporting education about the Carpathia brand

1. Guide to the Carpathia brand in the form of a simple user manual for brand stakeholders (three versions of the guide: for local governments, educators and the tourism industry, each emphasizing content important for a given group of stakeholders)
2. Printed educational materials: brochures, guides, thematic maps that would provide information on local tourist attractions, cultural heritage and history of the region (distribution in schools, tourist information centers, etc.)
3. Electronic educational materials (electronic versions of printed materials, educational videos, infographics, etc.)
4. Educational platform on the DMO website with lesson plans for teachers and educators who want to introduce elements of knowledge about the region into teaching programs.

9.3. Inclusion of the Carpathia brand in teaching programs

1. Establishing cooperation with educational institutions such as schools, universities and training centers. The partnership should include:
 - organization of student internships
 - organization of internships
 - joint research projects
 - exchange of data and tourist and educational materials
 - cooperation in creating teaching programs related to tourism.
2. Creating a team of tourism education animators from representatives of individual entities and institutions who would be responsible for activating the represented entity.
3. Development of ready-made educational programs addressed to local schools, universities, teachers and students related to tourism, containing scenarios of lessons, workshops, seminars, lectures and educational trips (see Educational platform on the DMO website)
4. Organization of scientific tours for students of tourism, during which they could gain practical knowledge about the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the region
5. Organization of an annual international scientific conference, which would be an opportunity to exchange experiences and share knowledge about the culture, heritage, nature and tourism of the Carpathian Euroregion.

9.4. Certification system

Certification systems allow place brands to set and maintain specific standards of quality and service, which helps ensure consistency of standard within the industry and provides customers with a certain level of quality assurance. Certificates are a tool for building trust among customers who want to be sure that their experience will be satisfactory.

The certification process requires assessing and sometimes improving various aspects of a place's operations, which helps streamline processes, raise standards and operational efficiency. The introduction of certification enables professional and competitive operation on the tourism market.

Below is a proposed certification system that can be implemented by the Podkarpackie DMO in the context of educational tourism⁵⁸.

Certification criteria

- Programs, activities and cyclical events: assessment of educational programs in terms of compliance with the idea and assumptions of the Carpathia brand.
- Staff: verification of qualifications and experience of staff conducting educational programs, ensuring a high level of knowledge and ability to talk about the Carpathia brand.
- Products: compliance with the assumptions of the Carpathia brand.

Assessment process

1. Application
2. Presentation
3. Assessment
4. Certificate

Certification categories

- EduCarpathia

Awarded to organizations that have qualified and experienced educational staff with excellent educational skills and to organizations that offer high-quality educational programs tailored to various age groups and educational levels; cyclical events, activities, initiatives

- CarpathiaValue

Awarded to products that implement and popularize the ideas of the Carpathia brand, confirming their high quality.

Promotion and visibility

- Organizations/individuals/products that have received the certificate have the right to use the certification mark on their promotional materials, websites, and information boards to distinguish themselves as places offering high quality tourism education.
- DMO promotes certified organizations through its communication channels, brochures, websites to inform potential participants about the high standard of educational programs offered. Monitoring i utrzymanie standardów
- Regular reviews of certified organizations by the DMO to verify that entities and products continue to meet established criteria.
- Education and support of DMOs through training, workshops and conferences for certified organizations to raise standards, exchange best practices, etc.

⁵⁸ Zob. także: Bartłomiej Walas, *Koncepcja budowy sieci marki Carpathia jako znaku jakości, wyróżnika konkurencyjności i integracji usługodawców*, 2022. Opracowanie w ramach projektu „Pomiędzy Fiordami a Karpatami – Platforma wymiany doświadczeń z zakresu edukacji turystycznej”.

The adoption of such a certification system in educational tourism by the Podkarpackie DMO would contribute to improving the quality of educational programs offered, promoting sustainable development and increasing tourists' confidence in educational offers. in the region.

9.5. Training

Training for guides

Training and courses for tourist guides should cover both historical and cultural aspects related to the region covered by the Carpathia brand activities, as well as topics in the field of effective communication and the best standards of service for tourist groups.

Below is an example plan for this type of training series.

1. Introduction to the Carpathia brand
 - Discussion of the goals and values of the Carpathia brand and the role of guides in promoting the region.
 - Presentation of the area covered by the Carpathia brand and its unique features.
2. History of the region
 - Main periods and events shaping the Carpathian region.
 - Characteristics of important places related to the history of the region, such as castles, palaces, battlefields and other historical objects, etc.
3. Cultural heritage
 - Introduction to the culture of the region, including customs, traditions, folklore and art and architecture.
 - Discussion of places related to local cultures and ethnic groups living in the region.
4. Tourist attractions
 - Presentation of the most important tourist attractions in the region, such as national parks, nature reserves, hiking trails and places of historical importance.
 - Discussion of special attractions such as festivals, cultural events and local products and their importance in the context of the development of the Carpathia brand.
5. Guide methodology
 - Communication techniques and skills for guides, such as storytelling, using multimedia and engaging tourists in interactive experiences.
 - Group management, ensuring safety and appropriately adapting information to tourists with different needs.
6. Workshops and field trips
 - Organization of workshops during which guides will have the opportunity to improve their skills and practice the acquired knowledge.
 - Field visits to various places in the region covered by the Carpathia brand.

It is important that the training series for guides is interactive, provides them with practical knowledge, and enables the exchange of knowledge and experiences between participants. Additionally, guides should be provided with access to educational materials such as brochures, maps, publications and multimedia resources that will support them in their work as guides.

Training for teachers and educators

To expand the reach of educational activities, it is worth considering developing a training/course for teachers and educators available on an e-learning platform, which would focus on the history and culture of the region covered by the Carpathia brand.

Below is an example outline of this type of course.

1. Introductory module
 - Introduction to knowledge about the Carpathian region (the importance of the culture and history of this area).
 - The goals and importance of tourism education in the context of the Carpathia brand.
2. Module on the history of the region
 - Main historical periods and events that influenced the shaping of the Podkarpacie region.
 - Significant historical figures associated with the region.
 - Historia tradycji, obrzędów i zwyczajów charakterystycznych dla regionu.
3. Module on the culture of the region
 - Ethnic culture and languages spoken in the Carpathian region.
 - Folklore, music and traditional dances of the region.
 - Folk art and handicrafts typical of the region.
4. Module devoted to the culture of the region
 - Unique ecosystems and natural attractions of the Carpathian region.
 - Species of plants and animals typical of the region.
 - Environmental protection initiatives and programs in the region.
5. Teaching methodology module
 - Teaching strategies and educational tools that can be used to convey knowledge about the history and culture of the Carpathian region.
 - Creating interactive educational materials, multimedia presentations and games that engage students.
 - Examples of activities and educational activities related to the Carpathian region.
6. Resources and additional materials

- Providing various materials on the e-learning platform, such as texts, photos, videos, interactive maps, audio guides, etc., that support the learning process of teachers and educators.
- Guidelines for planning field trips and lessons in the Carpathian region.

It is important that the training series provides interactive and engaging educational materials, as well as offers the opportunity to conduct practical exercises and carry out project tasks. and encouraged participants to cooperate.

Marketing training

Marketing training that will help local entrepreneurs and organizations and tourism-related institutions to effectively promote the region covered by the Carpathia brand.

- Marketing internetowy i social media

Effective online promotion strategies, content management on websites and social media, website optimization (SEO), online advertising campaigns, etc.

- Creating the brand image in the context of the Carpathia brand idea

Training helping participants understand how to build a coherent and attractive image of a company, product or service in the context of the Carpathia brand idea. Discussion of the Carpathia brand strategy (such as logo, slogan, brand values, visual identification, communication, Carpathia brand language).

- Customer communication and customer service

Training in interpersonal communication, complaint management, problem solving and creating a positive customer experience.

- Content management and content marketing

Creating interesting, valuable and engaging content (articles, blogs, videos, infographics) that will attract the attention of tourists and encourage them to visit the region covered by the Carpathia brand.

- Photography and video in tourism marketing

Training in photography and video production, creating high-quality visual materials (composition, lighting, photo and video editing).

- Data analysis and market research

Training to understand the preferences, needs and behavior of tourists (how to make good marketing decisions and adapt activities to changing trends and customer expectations).

Training for entrepreneurs providing tourist services

When designing the training offer for entrepreneurs, care should be taken to ensure that the training is practical and tailored to the specific needs of entrepreneurs and the specificity of the tourism industry in the region covered by the Carpathia brand. It is also important to create a space for exchanging experiences and networking, so that entrepreneurs can learn from each other and create synergistic relationships in the tourism industry.

- Sustainable tourism management

Training in sustainable tourism management is extremely important in the context of the Carpathia branded region, which is an area of great ecological and natural importance. Entrepreneurs should acquire knowledge about sustainable development practices, environmental protection, and minimizing the negative impact of tourism on nature and local culture.

- Tourist service

Tourist service training should focus on high-quality services and creating a positive experience for guests visiting the region. Entrepreneurs should learn interpersonal communication skills, customer service, complaint management, negotiation techniques and work on improving the quality of services offered.

- Adventure and outdoor tourism

The region offers many opportunities for outdoor activities. Adventure tourism training may include: safety techniques, first aid, hiking, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, skiing and other outdoor activities.

- Management of nature reserves and national parks

Training in the management of nature reserves and national parks is important for entrepreneurs who run tourist activities in these areas. They should gain knowledge about the principles of nature conservation, sustainable tourism in protected areas, tourism management and broadly understood ecology.

- Marketing and promotion of tourism

Tourism marketing training should include, among others: creating marketing strategies, designing offers, positioning, building relationships with customers, marketing communication, using digital tools, data analysis and monitoring the effectiveness of marketing activities.

- Management of tourism activities

The training should cover aspects of financial management (including obtaining funding), product development, human resources management, market analysis, trends and competition.

9.6. Carpathian picnic

A Carpathian picnic engaging culture, learning and the opportunity to be diverse and interactive, emphasizing the richness and uniqueness of the Carpathians as a region. The program of this type of events should include the elements discussed below.

- Scientific presentations

Lectures and presentations with the participation of scientists, ecologists, geologists and other experts who would present their research and discoveries related to the area covered by the Carpathia brand.

- Educational stands

Educational stands where local organizations, institutions and companies would present their activities and research. The participation of representatives of national parks, research centers, nature museums and other entities that contribute to the protection and research of the Carpathians is recommended.

- Craft workshops

Workshops during which participants could learn about craft traditions, learn basketry and weaving techniques, learn how to carve wood and traditional carpentry techniques, etc.

- Concerts and artistic performances

Concerts as an opportunity to present the cultural richness of the Carpathians: presentations of local music groups, folklore performances, dance shows and other artistic forms that reflect the cultural heritage of the region.

- Local products fair

Fairs where local producers could present their products (food, handicrafts, natural cosmetics, agricultural products, etc.) as a way to support the local economy and promoting unique Carpathia brand products.

- Outdoor activities

Encouragement to spend time actively outdoors: hiking, bicycle rides, off-road rallies, extreme sports shows, i.e. attractions that allow you to discover the beauty of the Carpathian nature. A Carpathian picnic involving culture, science and economy should be accessible to various age groups and provide interactive and educational experiences. Intertwining science and culture and economy would allow participants to better understand and appreciate not only the beauty of the Carpathians, but also their importance as a unique ecosystem and source of resources.

10. Financing possibilities in the context of the Erasmus+ program

Currently, there are several options for financing tourism education activities.

- Subsidies and grants intended for developing training programs, organizing workshops, purchasing educational materials, etc.
- Partnerships and cooperation with the private sector in the tourism industry - providing experts to conduct training, sponsoring materials or co-organizing educational events.
- Government subsidies and European funds
- Self-financing – educational programs may be financed through fees for participation in courses, training, conferences or other educational forms (participants who want to improve their qualifications in the field of tourism may incur costs related to with such programs to increase your skills and knowledge).
- Scholarships and support programs offered by educational institutions, tourism organizations, etc. (scholarships for students or employees of the tourism industry, financing for study abroad, professional development programs, etc.).

Erasmus+ is a European Union program supporting educational exchange - a continuation of European educational programs implemented since 1998. Its aim is to support pupils, students, teachers, lecturers and volunteers in conducting international projects aimed at improving competences. Therefore, public and private institutions and organizations supporting formal education as well as non-formal and informal learning of people of all ages are also eligible to participate in the program. The program's European budget for 2021-2027 is EUR 26.2 billion. Together with the new financial perspective, the assumptions of Erasmus+ were expanded and, as a result, it became more innovative and inclusive, as well as more digital. It will also be of key

importance for the creation of the European Education Area planned by 2025, thanks to which the European Union intends, among others, to: ensure that all young people have access to the highest quality education and training, enable learners to move easily between education systems in different countries, and give them the opportunity to find work across Europe. The National Agency of the Erasmus+ Program and its implementer in Poland is the Foundation for the Development of the Education System⁵⁹.

Listed below are the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ program to support learning activities.

Erasmus+ program in the field of school education

A) Educational mobility⁶⁰ (foreign trips of students, teachers and staff for educational purposes)

B) Cooperation of organizations and institutions for the development of formal education⁶¹

Erasmus+ program for vocational education and training

A) Educational mobility⁶² (professional internships and participation in competitions for students, job shadowing, courses and internships for staff).

B) Cooperation of organizations and institutions⁶³ (development of educational institutions operating in the field of vocational training through international exchange of experience, knowledge and information).

Two types of projects to choose from:

- Cooperation partnerships - exchange of experiences and practices to ultimately create training programs, knowledge repositories and digital tools (at least 3 partners).
- Small-scale partnerships - exchange of experiences and practices to ultimately create training programs, knowledge repositories and digital tools (at least 2 institutions less experienced in this area).

C) Central activities⁶⁴

- partnerships for cooperation in vocational education and training, school education, adult and youth education submitted by European non-governmental organizations (supporting the development and transfer of innovative practices, as well as implementing activities promoting participation).
- Centers of Professional Excellence (supporting transnational cooperation platforms whose task is to find solutions for countries without an EU keyboard).

⁵⁹ Informacje ze strony: <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/>

⁶⁰ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-szkolna/akcja-1-mobilnosc-edukacyjna>

⁶¹ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-szkolna/akcja-2-wspolpraca-organizacji-i-instytucji>

⁶² <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/ksztalcenie-i-szkolenia-zawodowe/akcja-1-mobilnosc-edukacyjna>

⁶³ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/ksztalcenie-i-szkolenia-zawodowe/akcja-2-wspolpraca-organizacji-i-instytucji>
<https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/ksztalcenie-i-szkolenia-zawodowe/akcja-2-wspolpraca-organizacji-i-instytucji>

⁶⁴ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/ksztalcenie-i-szkolenia-zawodowe/dzialania-centralne>

Erasmus+ program in higher education

A) Educational mobility (educational trips for students and university employees)

- Students can complete a period of study at a partner university or complete an internship/apprenticeship in an enterprise, research institute, laboratory, organization, etc.
- Teaching staff may participate in activities abroad related to their professional development (trips to conduct classes, participation in training).

B) Cooperation of organizations and institutions for innovation and exchange of good practices. Projects aimed at the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices and the implementation of joint initiatives.

C) Central Actions

Actions Erasmus Mundus⁶⁵ (master's level study programs from different countries around the world, as well as other organizations with expertise in a given discipline and interested in their development; the aim of joint studies is to increase the attractiveness of European higher education and attract the most talented people to Europe).

Activities to develop joint Erasmus Mundus studies

Innovation alliances⁶⁶

- Actions for education and enterprises. The aim is to support innovation in higher education, vocational education and training, businesses and the wider socio-economic environment (innovation – climate change, demographic change, artificial intelligence, etc.).
- Activities for sectoral cooperation. The aim is to develop new strategic solutions and strengthen cooperation for a given industry. 14 of them were selected (including tourism).

Building the capacity of higher education⁶⁷

International cooperation projects for socio-economic recovery, growth, prosperity to benefit eligible non-associated third countries with the program.

Erasmus+ program in the field of adult education

A) Educational mobility⁶⁸

Organizations in the area of non-vocational adult education can send their staff and their students, i.e. adult learners, on foreign mobility (job shadowing, classes in a foreign organization, courses, training, inviting experts, teachers in training and preparatory visits).

Cooperation of organizations and institutions⁶⁹:

⁶⁵ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/studia-erasmus-mundus>

⁶⁶ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sojusze-na-rzecz-edukacji-i-przedsiębiorstw>

⁶⁷ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/budowanie-potencjalu-w-szkolnictwie-wyzszym>

⁶⁸ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-doroslych/akcja-1-mobilnosc-edukacyjna>

⁶⁹ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-doroslych/akcja-2-wspolpraca-organizacji-i-instytucji>

- Joint venture of organizations operating on a larger scale in order to strengthen the quality of tasks performed. It is important to implement and widely disseminate the developed results (including 3 organizations from 3 different program countries).
- Small-scale partnerships (e.g. 2 organizations from 2 different countries, often new in the program and less experienced).

B) Central activities⁷⁰

Cooperation partnerships in the vocational education and training, school education, adult and youth education sectors submitted by European non-governmental organizations (enabling organizations to improve the quality of their activities and develop and strengthen networks of partners, aimed at supporting the development and transfer of innovative practices, as well as the implementation joint initiatives promoting cooperation and exchange of experiences).

Erasmus+ program in the field of youth education

A) Educational mobility⁷¹

- Mobility of young people (educational exchange on any topic of at least two groups of young people).
- Mobility of people working with youth (support for the organization of training, study visits, seminars, meetings and internships for the professional development of people working with with young people in their free time from school).
- Activities supporting youth participation (activities outside formal education and training that make it easier for young people to participate in the democratic life of Europe at local, regional level, etc. in the form of workshops, debates, roles, simulations etc.).

B) Cooperation of organizations and institutions⁷²

- Partnerships for cooperation (increasing the quality and importance of their activities).
- Innovation partnerships (projects for the future/capacity building in the field of youth).

C) Discover EU⁷³ (an initiative to facilitate travel around Europe for 18-year-olds).

D) Central activities ⁷⁴ in the field of cooperation in the sector of vocational education and training, school education, adult and youth education. The main goal is to enable organizations to improve the quality of their activities and develop and strengthen their network of partners.

10. PR activities – strategic goals

Goal 1. Increasing brand awareness of the Carpathians as a tourist destination - all actors jointly and consistently engage in communication activities. His message should focus primarily on transmitting humility towards nature and Carpathian mysticism expressed in the diverse and authentic culture of the Carpathians. A space that gives residents a sense of freedom.

⁷⁰ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-doroslych/dzialania-centralne>

⁷¹ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/mlodziez/akcja-1-mobilnosc-edukacyjna>

⁷² <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/mlodziez/akcja-2-wspolpraca-organizacji-i-instytucji>

⁷³ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/mlodziez/discovereu-akcja-1-mobilnosc-edukacyjna>

⁷⁴ <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/sektory/edukacja-doroslych/dzialania-centralne>

Goal 2. Residents recognize the values of the Carpathia brand - Residents who truly create the "spirit of the brand" must recognize that their real assets are: Traditions, culture, customs, local cuisine, hospitality, folk music and costumes, and the dialects they speak, are unique to tourists. Tourists visiting the Carpathian region want to feel this unique atmosphere.

11. Tactical goals of PR activities

Increased interest in tourism in the Carpathian region - the development of conscious tourism has a huge impact on the development of the Carpathia brand. Thanks to appropriate communication and public relations activities, it will be possible to interest the brand among tourists who know what emotions and experiences they expect from the places they visit.

Building the brand image based on Carpathian mysticism and mystical space - the brand image should be based on the main attributes of the brand, i.e. natural and cultural values that favor the experience of mystical and spiritual emotions and raptures; the authenticity of the "mountain" people and their culture; possibilities of regeneration of soul and body; available nature and space that allows you to search for the meaning of your "own self".

Implementation of coherent image communication of the entire Carpathian area - a coherent image communication concept is necessary to be recognized by international consumers who must be aware of this when visiting places/using Carpathia brand products.

Promoting knowledge about the benefits offered by the brand - consistent messages sent to recipients must contain information about the brand's unique offer that distinguishes it from other brands. It is important to emphasize mysticism and space in the messages you send and activities.

Increasing the revenues of the tourism industry - increasing the revenues of the tourism industry resulting from appropriate communication and promotion of the Carpathia brand will contribute to the further development of the brand's offer based on its unique attributes, and will also help stop the outflow of residents from these areas.

Regular communication with target groups - regular communication activities with the media will allow you to build long-term, positive relationships between the brand and the media. Thanks to this, it will be possible to both develop the recognition of the Carpathia brand as a tourist destination, but also to educate residents and unite them around the brand, of which they are an important element.

12. Group target PR activities

Tourists – both explorers and professionals, aware of what they want to see and know, sensitive, wanting to regenerate and find themselves thanks to contact with mystical space. These are people who value the authenticity of the place they come to, who have a purpose in their travels, not just a senseless drive through and superficial seeing of the place they have visited. Tourists who want to experience the Carpathian mysticism during their stay, who want to learn about the multiculturalism of the region, the rituals and customs of the inhabitants, understand life on "this land", feel the magic and atmosphere of the mountains. Due to the fact that the space surrounding them is truly unlimited, they can absorb it with all their senses. It is an option for all those who want to take a break from over-frequented trails and tourist-exploited places, and want peace and the opportunity to contemplate the surrounding nature and culture.

Local entrepreneurs – this group should be informed about activities carried out as part of the development and promotion of the Carpathia brand. As co-creators of the tourist offer, they must be aware of what products the brand's consumers will expect and what they should not offer them. Entrepreneurs, mainly from the tourism industry (accommodation, catering and other tourist establishments that will offer customers original Carpathian products and services) should know the values offered by the brand and thus adapt their products and services to specific target groups.

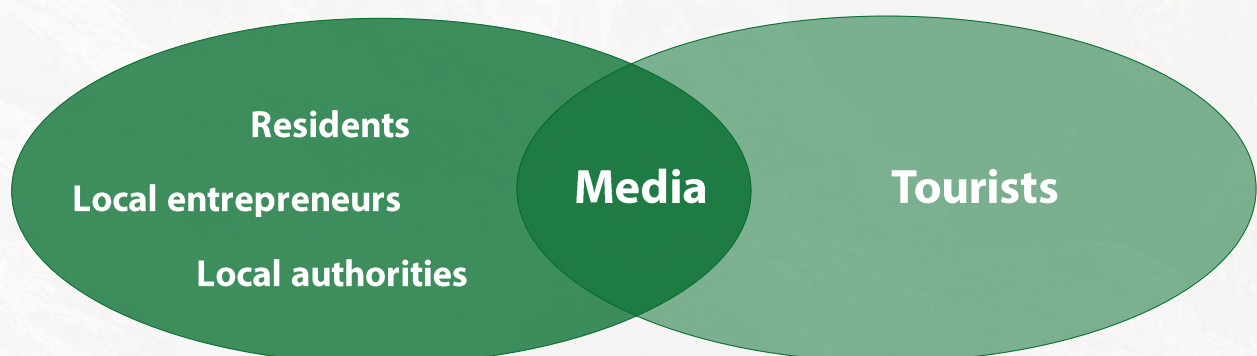
Residents of the Carpathian region - communication addressed to them must be based on encouraging residents to cultivate the authentic culture of the Carpathian region, maintain local traditions and rituals, and present brand attributes that distinguish the Carpathian region from other regions. It also seems important to encourage residents not to succumb to temporary fashions and not to lose themselves in a consumerist lifestyle.

Local authorities - authorities of local government units, as legislative bodies that create an atmosphere for the development and cultivation of local traditions and values, should support local initiatives in their regulations, and thus build a strong Carpathia brand.

Media – the media, as communication channels, are also an important target group for PR activities. Permanent contacts and establishment of long-term cooperation with regional, national and international media. Industry media devoted to tourism, mountain tourism and cultural tourism will also play an important role. Cooperation with the media, apart from sending press releases and invitations to conferences, should be based on invitations to brand events, taking media patronage over the events of specific titles or stations, but also on organizing study visits for journalists so that they can learn about the brand's offer in natural environment.

Internal communication

External communication



PR activities

Public Relations (PR) includes activities aimed at creating, maintaining and consolidating mutual relations between the individual and the environment, both internal and external. The aim of public relations is to influence the feelings of the environment, shape favorable and positive opinions, create the desired image and respond in the event of crisis situations. The essence of PR activities is also to develop the trust of the environment and ensure acceptance for the planned activities. Public Relations is not a one-sided shaping of public opinion.

PR is based on two-way communication, the sender of messages expects feedback from the recipient. Communication channels are created that give target groups the opportunity to express their messages. This is what distinguishes PR from traditional promotional activities that do not involve feedback from the recipient. Public Relations activities can take various forms. PR theory suggests that activities should be divided into the following forms: press, radio, television, internet, publishing, exhibition, postal, gift, charity and sponsoring.

Cooperation with unions and associations of local entrepreneurs - relations with associations and associations of local entrepreneurs should be established and developed, so that entrepreneurs have the feeling that the brand's activities will be based on cooperation with them. Entrepreneurs offering their products and services should know what benefits the Carpathia brand offers so that they can adapt their products and services to consumer expectations. Strengthening these relationships will help strengthen the brand's image as one that cares about local producers and service providers, is open to entrepreneurs and is ready to support them.

Business conferences - conferences organized by the brand to popularize the advantages of the Carpathians. Conferences may be scientific or open in nature, during which, in addition to expert panels, the opinions of entrepreneurs and their suggestions on the brand's development opportunities will also be presented.

Workshops and training – workshops and training on brand implementation addressed to local entrepreneurs. They will mainly concern the possibilities of brand development, available tools and financing possibilities for brand development, the quality of products offered, the way of communicating the brand to tourists and a coherent promotional policy for the entire area. In addition, workshops and training will play an integration function.

Carpathian Economic Horizon – publishing a magazine (quarterly or semi-annual) addressed to entrepreneurs from the Euroregion. The magazine should include information on the development opportunities of the company within the Carpathia brand, good practices of entrepreneurs related to the implementation of the brand's assumptions, and interviews with Euroregion representatives and external experts on development opportunities within the region's brand.

Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Forum - enabling local entrepreneurs to present themselves at the AKFW, this is an event of the highest importance in the Carpathian area, therefore entrepreneurs operating in the Euroregion's area of activity should be privileged to present their offers at the fairs accompanying the Forum.

Instructional publications - printed and electronic publications about the brand's promotional possibilities and the use of the offered tools. From these materials, entrepreneurs should learn how to use the brand logo in their promotional materials and how to communicate their offer so that it is consistent with the brand's assumptions and the activities of other entities involved in the activities of the Carpathia brand.

Lobby - lobbying local authorities for the Carpathia brand will allow the government to become interested in the topic of building a single brand of the region, and on the other hand will create a positive climate for the development of the brand in cooperation with the authorities, mainly local governments. Good contacts with the authorities will allow local governments to be involved in the brand's activities in the future.

Occasional correspondence - sending greeting cards by the organization managing the Carpathia brand, i.e. the Carpathian Euroregion, will allow you to build positive relations with the authorities and respect for the activities of your institutions. It is also a symbol of maintaining tradition and culture (it is suggested to include images related to the Carpathian area on greeting cards).

Media database - media relations activities should start with preparing a database of media with which the brand wants to cooperate. The media database should be prepared for journalists from local, regional, national and industry media. The database should contain the editorial office's addresses, editorial office's e-mail addresses, names of journalists who deal with a given topic and, if possible, e-mail addresses/telephone numbers of journalists. The media database should be updated and expanded on an ongoing basis.

Press conferences - the basic form of communication with mass media (local, regional, national, industry). Conferences may be organized at the headquarters of the Euroregion or in the places covered by the conference (e.g. in the case of special events). Representatives of the media with whom cooperation has been established and those with whom such cooperation is planned should be invited to the conferences. Journalists should be invited to conferences well in advance, with the opportunity to confirm their presence. Each journalist should receive a press kit, i.e. a set of prepared and developed press materials.

Interviews - interviews given by Euroregion representatives to local, regional, national and industry media are a way to build a favorable image and encourage people to visit the Carpathians. Interviews may also concern planned events or events that are worth communicating externally. We should also not ignore online media, which are an increasingly effective channel for reaching target groups.

Sponsored articles – they are particularly effective and desirable in the context of communication with tourists. Presenting the values and benefits of visiting the Carpathians may result in an increase in tourist traffic. Content marketing may be an element of such ordered publications. However, this form of action involves financial outlays, which should be included in the budget. A method to reduce expenses for this purpose is the participation of local entrepreneurs in the costs. The joint initiative also highlights the image of the local government being open to cooperation with other entities. Sponsored articles are especially recommended in the industry and national media.

Media tour – organizing a study visit is worth using in the context of communicating, especially to tourists. Inviting and organizing a comprehensive study visit for journalists from tourism and travel media will contribute to increasing awareness of the tourist values offered by the Carpathian region and will develop the brand's publicity with new, potential tourists who will be interested in the special cultural and natural resources of the Carpathians.

Determination of human resources and division of tasks

The implementation of the PR plan will be possible if the roles in the organization managing the brand, in this case the Carpathian Euroregion, are divided and specific responsibilities are assigned to them. Each person in the organization must have a specific scope of tasks for which they will be responsible. Division of tasks allows not only to effectively manage the team, but also to enforce the execution of tasks specified in the schedule.

Managers of the Carpathian Euroregion have three variants of public relations organization in organisation:

- internal public relations team,
- outsourcing public relations activities to external companies,
- creating an internal team with the support of external advisors.

Analyzing the current activities of the Carpathian Euroregion, the most optimal solution seems to be the creation of an internal team responsible for the implementation of the PR plan, with the support of external advisors. Some tasks included in the PR plan may, of course, require hiring an external company, but tasks within the organization should be divided in such a way that such solutions are used only occasionally. The advantages of creating your own team implementing PR activities are as follows:

- good knowledge of the organization, its strengths and weaknesses,
- commitment to the program and loyalty to the organization,
- possibilities of collecting information in the organization,
- use of informal channels in the organization,
- facilitating the decision-making and control process.

However, the disadvantages include:

- loss of impartiality and an objective view resulting from the fact that the team is part of the organization,
- the risk of being burdened with very different, often emergency cases,
- the usual concentration of carrying out tasks without research.

It is recommended that subteams be created within the public relations team to deal with specific tasks:

- Organizational team – dealing with organizational issues of events, training, workshops, meetings and formal and legal issues in the case of other tasks
- Brand press team - a team of people responsible for contact with the media (fulfilling the role of a press spokesman, but in the case of a territorial brand we should speak of coordinators of the brand's contacts with the media). Such a person should coordinate all activities related to the brand's presence in the media. Send information to the media, organize conferences, invite journalists, have constant contact with the media based on the prepared media database.
- Interactive media team - their task will be to update and coordinate the website of the Carpathian Euroregion and visitcarpathia.pl, as well as to create content and coordinate brand profiles in social media.
- Team for cooperation with entrepreneurs - the main task of the team will be to coordinate and organize cooperation with entrepreneurs, supervise the organization of training and workshops, issue materials for entrepreneurs, supervise the creation and publication of the Carpathian Economic Horizon. Identification of risks to the program and methods of mitigating the threats. Determining the risks that may affect the success of PR activities is an important step in creating a PR plan.

Risks can occur at various levels, the most important of which are:

- Internal structures of the organization implementing the plan - risk identification in the case of internal structures of the organization is an element of creating the operational strategy

of a given organization. In the case of Public Relations activities, the risk within the organizational structure may be related to: internal communication problems between decision-makers and people performing activities, lack of personal resources who would coordinate or carry out activities specified in the program, financial problems of the organization - lack of funds for the implementation of tasks, lack of communication in crisis situations, too many messages sent simultaneously by the organization, providing outdated information and messages, using ineffective tools that are not tailored to the recipients, poor team management, failure to monitor the opinions and suggestions of communication recipients.

- Environment – risks coming from outside the organization that influence the reception and perception of the brand as well as its communication activities cannot always be prevented. However, you can predict a group of risks coming from the environment and protect yourself against their consequences, the most important of which are - mismatch of the content to the recipients' expectations; negative attitude towards the presented messages and denying them; socio-political situation in the Carpathian Euroregion, presenting the Carpathian region in the context of negative information in the media, uncontrolled economic development that may negatively affect the natural environment, strong competition in the promotion of regional brands.
- Crisis events unrelated to the plan - random accidents in the Carpathians, fortuitous factors caused by force majeure (air horn, avalanches, floods), economic crisis in the Euroregion countries, which may influence the brand image.

Risk directions:

1. Very likely - internal communication problems, lack of people to coordinate and implement PR activities, lack of financial resources to carry out tasks, too many messages sent simultaneously by the organization, mismatch of the content to recipients' expectations, lack of monitoring recipients' opinions, negative attitude towards the presented messages and negating them, presenting the Carpathian region in the context of negative information in the media, strong competition in the promotion of regional brands
2. Unlikely - lack of communication strategy in crisis situations, provision of outdated information and messages, use of ineffective tools that are not tailored to the recipients, poor management of the organizational team, socio-political situation in the Carpathian Euroregion, uncontrolled economic development that may negatively affect the environment natural, random accidents in the Carpathians, random factors caused by force majeure, economic crisis in the Euroregion countries
3. Of great importance - internal communication problems, lack of people who would coordinate and implement PR activities, lack of financial resources to carry out tasks, too many messages sent simultaneously by the organization, transmission of outdated information and messages, use of ineffective tools that are not tailored to the recipients, lack of monitoring audience opinions, socio-political situation in the Carpathian Euroregion, presenting the Carpathian region in the context of negative information in the media, uncontrolled economic development that may negatively affect the natural environment, strong competition in the promotion of regional brands, random factors caused by force majeure, economic crisis in the Euroregion countries.

4. Of little importance - negative attitude towards the presented messages and denying them, random accidents in the Carpathians. It is necessary to monitor the risk level at individual levels and, if possible, prevent crises from occurring.

For this purpose you should:

- Prepare internal regulations for communication in teams on which activities will be based, define the organization's hierarchy and the method of solving problems,
- Train employees and improve their professional competences in the field of communication, promotion and coordination of communication activities,
- Regularly prepare reports on the possibilities of obtaining financial resources for brand communication activities,
- Determining the degree of importance of information/actions and based on this, performing them from the most important to the least important,
- Dating and determining the validity of the information provided,
- Monitoring and determining the effectiveness of the PR activities used,
- Research on the team in the organization in terms of the quality of team management,
- Monitoring whether the content of messages meets the expectations of recipients,
- Development of a crisis communication plan.

Methods of assessing project implementation

Action	Method of assessing implementation
Implementation and maintenance of the website	A functioning website, the number of unique users, the number of clicks on articles, the number of redirections from search engines
Creating and running a fanpage for tourists	Number of fans, number of engaged fans, fanpage statistics, number of comments under posts
Creating and maintaining an Instagram account	Number of people following the profile, number of people liking Carpathia brand photos, number of people commenting on the photos, number of hashtags used related to the Carpathia brand
Organization of image competitions (photos) on Instagram	The number of photos participating in the competition, the number of fans involved in voting, the number of comments on the profile
Creating a YouTube channel and publishing videos	Number of channel subscribers, number of videos posted on the channel, number of comments, number of video shares
Establishing cooperation with bloggers/Organizing a study tour for bloggers	Number of contacts established, number of posts published by bloggers, click-through

	rates on posts, sharing of content presented on blogs
Preparation and publication of an image folder	Number of folders issued, interest in the folder, number of mentions in the media (social media) about the folder
Participation in tourism fairs	Number of fairs in which representatives of the Carpathia brand participated, number of people interested in the offer during the fair
Creation of a mobile application	Number of application downloads, number of active users
Organization and support of branded events	Number of events organized, number of event participants
Newsletter for tourists	Number of newsletters sent
Creating a "Residents" tab on the Euroregion website and updating it with content	Interest in the tab, clickability of the content
Adding a contact form for residents on the website	Number of messages sent, number of feedback received
Establishing cooperation with local media	Number of articles and information about the brand in local media
Placing information inserts in the local press	Number of inserts placed, number of press returns
Maintaining a Facebook profile for residents	Number of fans, number of engaged fans, number of comments, number of content uploaded
Mailing to residents	Number of messages sent, number of messages read, number of feedbacks
Cooperation with organizations associating entrepreneurs from the Euroregion	Number of meetings organized, number of relationships established
Organization of a business conference	Number of conferences, number of conference participants, interest in the conference in the media
Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Forum	Number of guests, number of exhibitors, number of panels and invited experts, number of accompanying events, amount of media information about the Forum
Organization of workshops and training for entrepreneurs	Number of participants, number of training days, scope of knowledge and information provided

Instructional publications	Number of copies, feedback from recipients
Carpathian Economic Horizon	Number of copies, number of articles/interviews, circulation, interest in the magazine
Lobbying with local authorities	Number of initiatives undertaken together with local authorities
Occasional correspondence	Number of Christmas cards sent, feedback
Trainings and workshops for local authorities	Number of training sessions, number of training days, number of participants
Creation of a media database	Number of media and journalists in the media database
Organization of press conferences (depending on needs)	Number of conferences held, number of invited journalists, number of materials provided to journalists (press kit), number of media information after the conference
Sponsored articles – media publications	Number of publications in the media, feedback after publications
Media tour for journalists from the tourism industry	Number of invited journalists, number of long-term relationships established, number of media mentions after the visit

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