

# THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION OF TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Význam spolupráce organizací cestovního ruchu na regionálnej úrovni

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## Annotation

According to the results from OECD countries, the position of the tourism sector in Slovakia has been unfavourable for a long time. Tourism in Slovakia is managed in a decentralized way, which is legally and financially supported in certain forms. Support is largely conditional on cooperation. Such an example is the support of the creation and activities of regional tourism organizations. In this paper, we will examine the economic significance and justification of cooperation among entities that are members of regional tourism organizations, by determining the relationship between the number of these organizations and the amount of revenue divided into four categories at the regional level. In this work we used multiple regression and correlation analysis. Based on their results, we identified the performance of companies according to the categories of achieved revenues. The results suggest that the most productive companies are companies with revenues ranging from 100000-500000 Euros per year. The paper also offers a framework of questions for further research related to sector governance, as well as an awareness of the importance and significance of cooperation.

## Key words

decentralization, cooperation, enterprises, regional tourism organizations, support

## Anotácia

Postavenie odvetvia cestovního ruchu na Slovensku je podľa výsledkov z krajín OECD dlhodobo nepriaznivé. Cestovný ruch na Slovensku je riadený decentralizovaným spôsobom, ktorý je určitými formami legislatívne a finančne podporovaný. Podpora je do značnej miery podmienená spoluprácou. Takýmto príkladom je aj podpora tvorby a činnosti oblastných organizácií cestovního ruchu. V príspevku budeme skúmať ekonomický význam a opodstatnenosť spolupráce subjektov, ktorí sú členmi oblastných organizácií cestovního ruchu, prostredníctvom zistenia závislosti medzi počtom týchto organizácií a výškou tržieb rozčlenených do štyroch kategórií na regionálnej úrovni. V práci sme použili viacnásobnú regresnú a korelačnú analýzu. Na základe ich výsledkov sme identifikovali výkony podnikov podľa kategórií dosiahnutých tržieb. Výsledky naznačujú, že najproduktívnejšie podniky sú podniky, dosahujúce tržby v rozpätí od 100000-500000 eur za rok. Príspevok ponúka aj rámec otázok, pre ďalšie skúmanie, ktoré súvisia s riadením sektoru, ako aj povedomím o význame a dôležitosti spolupráce.

## Kľúčové slová

decentralizácia, spolupráca, podniky, oblastné organizácie cestovního ruchu, podpora

**JEL classification:** R19, O17, Z3

## 1. Introduction

In many countries, concentration of power, centralized management and decision-making are seen as obstacles to more effective governance. This was one of the reasons why the responsibility for public functions was transferred from the centre to lower government organizations (Oliveira, 2002). Other authors perceive this shift in two lines. First, decentralization supports the ability to respond to the needs and aspirations of citizens. Second, decentralization improves the efficiency and effectiveness of government. Decentralization has become a key word in the development discourse, which is often associated with democracy and efficiency. In practice, instead of

making more effective use of local knowledge, the quality of services involving tourism is declining due to a lack of local institutional and technical capacity to perform new tasks, (Meszárošová, Levický, 2017), insufficient search new, fantasy tourism products, (Kontis, Skoultos, 2018), underestimation of the growing need for exclusivity and individualism in communication with the customer, (Berešková, Hudáková, Papcunová, 2018) insufficient creation of motivational stimuli determining participation in tourism (Beerli, Martin, 2004; Krogmann, 2005). Decentralization is expected to shift more power and responsibilities from one institution to another. New institutions need to develop expertise, financial resources and political support to achieve effective service (Rondinelli et al., 1989). Cooperation is essential for the creation and operation of new destination management structures. Most research on cooperation and cooperative behaviour in tourist destinations, as well as in other sectors, analyses the institutional level and focuses on companies and stakeholder groups as a subject of research. Beritelli reveals the basic dimension of institutional cooperation, cooperative behaviour in a tourist destination. Such behaviour manifests itself through people-to-people preferences, which are likely to take precedence over institutional arrangements. Cooperative behaviour is multi-layered and smooth, with companies and institutions acting with public goods and in public space. In fact, common beliefs and preferences, stable membership, and ongoing and direct relationships are typical of local and regional communities (Singleton, Taylor, 1992 In Boritelli). Formal rules create and enforce the state and companies to address collective redress through third-party sanctions, while informal norms emerge from networks and are strengthened through ongoing social relations to the extent that network members have interests and preferences independent of what they want. state and entrepreneurs (Beritelli, 2011). Cooperation between the public and private spheres also plays an important role in tourism. The result should be the creation of quality destination management, which includes the creation of a competitive product, job creation, sufficient skilled workers and benefits for all stakeholders. Each destination has its own territorial and administrative definition, it combines tourist products as basic and support services, natural attractions and man-made attractions under a common brand. It integrates several interest groups in the territory through a common vision, a unified concept and a common policy, implements activities and partnerships between the private and public sectors (Šenková, 2017). Several studies perceive and describe cooperation in tourism, usually through small and medium-sized enterprises providing tourism services (Haxton, 2015).

In Slovakia, these are mostly family businesses, which belong to one of the oldest forms of business, they are one of the important elements of the economy. Compared to other countries (mostly Western Europe), family business in the Slovak Republic is much smaller (Hudáková et al., 2015). Small and medium-sized enterprises in the countries of Western Europe developed differently, depending on the traditions and economic peculiarities of individual countries, on ownership, organizational structure, financial barriers (Klímová - Winklerová, 2017). In these countries, their share in gross domestic product and their share in job creation and employment is gradually being assessed (Gozora, 1996). Tourism in Slovakia is a specific sector that has a cross-sectional character, affects several spheres of the national economy, its economic importance is undeniable, but in Slovakia it does not have a separate institutional anchorage, it does not have sufficient legislative background, resulting in problems (Berešková, 2019). In countries with developed tourism, on the basis of specific legislation, tourism associations, marketing organizations are engaged in cooperative marketing in destinations, or clusters are created. In Slovakia, interest organizations (interest associations of citizens, natural persons) may be established pursuant to Act no. 83/1990 Coll. on the association of citizens as civic associations or interest associations of legal entities as regional tourism associations, or micro-regions Act no. 453/2001 Coll. on general establishment. The new sector management system was introduced by the Tourism Promotion Act. Act no. 91/2010 Coll. on the promotion of tourism. One of the goals of the law was to motivate municipalities and tourism entrepreneurs to associate and establish destination management organizations - in the law called regional tourism organizations (OOCR). Currently, with the adoption of the Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the period 2020 - 2024, the government has the ambition to establish an agency that will be a partner for, already existing, regional tourism organizations (OOCR) in individual parts of Slovakia. in the given region of Slovakia. They represent cooperation between the local government and local entrepreneurs in the field of tourism. Improving the level of destination management should be stimulated with the help of the current network of tourism organizations, taking into account the strategic goals and tasks arising from the Strategy for the Development of Sustainable Tourism (Program Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2020-2024).

## 2. Objective and methodology

The aim of the paper is to examine the economic significance and justification of cooperation of entities that are members of regional tourism organizations, by determining the relationship between the number of these organizations and the amount of revenues divided into four categories at the regional level. In this work we used several statistical methods: regression and correlation analysis method, ANOVA. The method of regression and correlation analysis is used to identify and mathematically describe the statistical dependence between quantitative statistical features. The relationship between several quantitative characters, where one character is dependent (y)

from several independent ones ( $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_k$ ), we call multiple dependencies. Suppose that between the dependent variable  $Y$  and the explanatory (independent) variables  $X_i$   $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$  is the dependence described by the equation:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_k, \beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_k) + \varepsilon \text{ which we estimate: } y_j' = f(x_{1j}, x_{2j}, \dots, x_{kj}, b_0, b_1, \dots, b_k)$$

where the conditions of the classical linear model are met and the coefficients  $b_0, b_1, \dots, b_k$  are estimates of the unknown parameters  $\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_k$ .

We calculate the multiple dependency using the Data Analysis tool in Excel. The output of regression and correlation analysis consists of three parts: the first part is the output of correlation analysis, the second part is the ANOVA output, where we test the suitability of the model used, the significance of the correlation coefficient and the coefficient of determination. The third part is the output of regression analysis. The first part of the output is the results related to correlation analysis. The value of Multiple R (multiple correlation coefficient) the closer to 1, the stronger the dependence. If the value of the multiple correlation coefficient is from 0 - 0.3, it is a weak statistical dependence, 0.3 - 0.6 medium strong statistical dependence, 0.6 - 1 high statistical dependence between the examined variables. The value of R Square (coefficient of determination) after multiplication by 100 (%) indicates that the percentage of the chosen regression function explains the variability of the dependent variable, the rest represents unexplained variability, the influence of random factors and other non-specific influences. In the ANOVA section, we test the null hypothesis, which states that the model we have chosen to explain the dependence (in our case, the linear model) is not suitable, the alternative hypothesis states the opposite. The F test is used to evaluate this statement. Significance value  $F < 0.05$ . We reject  $H_0$ , which means that the model was chosen correctly.

The regression function has the form  $y' = 329.13 + 0.0044x_1 + 0.0020x_2 + 0.001x_3 + 0.00000668x_4$

The null hypotheses that are tested in this section relate to the significance of the locating constant (Intercept) and regression coefficients ( $b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4$ ), while the null hypothesis states the insignificance of the relevant coefficient and the alternative hypothesis its significance. P-values will be used to evaluate these statements. If the P - value is  $> 0.05$ , the coefficient is statistically insignificant and if the P - value is  $< 0.05$ , the coefficient is statistically significant (Poláková et al., 2015)

Primary and secondary sources were used in the paper. Primary sources were obtained through a structured interview with members of regional tourism organizations in the number of 5. Secondary sources obtained from the Register of Tourism Organizations database from the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, as well as the FINSTAT database, were important for fulfilling the set goal.

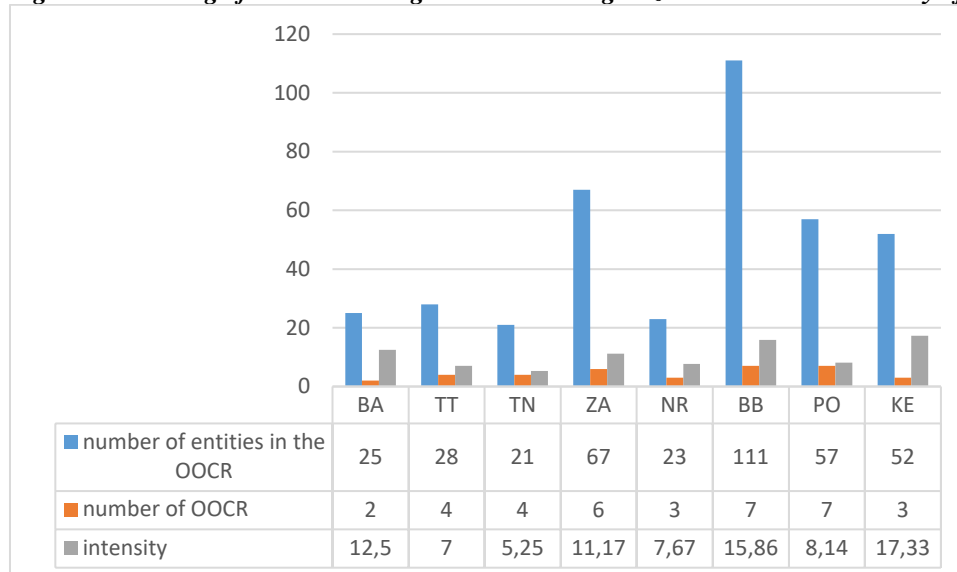
### 3. Results

The use of modern tourism management tools has been delayed in Slovakia compared to other developed tourist countries. Until the adoption of the first law on tourism support, regulating the support, rights and obligations of natural and legal persons operating in tourism, the creation of conceptual documents, financing the development of tourism, simple forms of tourism management and marketing were used. They focused mainly on ad hoc promotional activities, participation in exhibitions, the establishment of information centres, etc. This was a consequence of undersized support, the position of tourism in sectors of the national economy, low interest on the part of the state in the systematic development of this sector. The manifestation of a systemic approach to the solution of tourism development was the adoption of Act no. 91/2010 Coll. on the support of tourism, as amended, the law of which was to support the establishment of regional and regional tourism organizations. The Act in § 28 also considers the sources of financing, which may consist of membership fees, subsidies from the state budget, voluntary contributions of local government, natural persons and legal entities for the activities of tourism organizations, income from activities, sales of products and services, remuneration for intermediation, revenues from the activities of tourist information centres, revenues from the sale of advertising space, non-repayable financial contributions from domestic and foreign sources, including contributions from European Union funds, other revenues. Pursuant to § 29 par. 4 of the cited Act, the Ministry may provide a subsidy to a regional organization in the same amount as the total value of collected regional contributions of the regional organization in the year preceding the previous budget year, while the maximum amount of the subsidy to the regional organization is limited to 90% of the total value of regional organization in the year preceding the previous financial year. It may also provide a subsidy to a regional organization in the same amount as the membership fee of a higher territorial unit in the year preceding the previous budget year, while the maximum amount of the subsidy to a regional organization is limited to 10% of organization in the year preceding the previous financial year. Although the law lists several sources of funding, it also does not take into account that most regional tourism

organizations in Slovakia do not create their own product, which they could sell, so they can only use other sources of funding. (Medved'ová, 2015).

According to the above law no. 91/2010 Coll. is a regional tourism organization a legal entity that supports tourism and creates conditions for its development in the region and protects the interests of its members. Only one regional organization can operate on the territory of a higher territorial unit. The members of a regional tourism organization are a higher territorial unit and at least one regional organization that operates in its territory and is established pursuant to this Act. A regional organization that has a non-profit character is a legal entity established under this Act, which supports and creates conditions for the development of tourism in its territory and protects the interests of its members. Currently, the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic registers the following number of regional tourism organizations:

**Fig. 1: Networking of entities into regional tourism organizations and their intensity of cooperation**



Source: own processing

Most OOCR entities are located in the Banská Bystrica Region (111) and, conversely, the least OOCR entities are located in the Trenčín (21) and Nitra (23) regions. The highest number of OOCRs is again in Banskobystrický (7), but also in the Prešov region. The smallest number of OOCRs is in the Bratislava Region (2). The highest intensity of revenues per number of entities in the OOCR is in the Košice Region (17.33) and the lowest is in the Trenčín Region (5.25).

The number of entities in each OOCR varies. We were interested in their performance parameters. Therefore, we have chosen the amount of revenues achieved by entities that are members of the OOCR. The following table provides us with their categorization as well as regional breakdown.

The highest revenues of entities in euros are achieved by entities in the Bratislava Region per 1 entity (1968.79 € 10312.72 € 64968.71 €). The lowest revenues of entities per one entity are achieved by entities in the Žilina Region (€ 5.09) and also in the Trenčín Region (€ 4.26, € 0) and in the Košice Region (€ 3.42).

**Tab. 1: Revenues of entities in euros that are members of OOCR for the year 2018**

Territorial unit	number of entities in the OOCR	0-30tis	30-100	100-500	500-more
Bratislavský kraj	25	4339.03	49219.65	257817.9	1624218
	1 subject	173.56	1968.79	10312.72	64968.71
Trnavský kraj	28	7620.391	47056.57	254703.7	936491.2
	1 subject	272.16	6.18	5.41	3.68
Trenčiansky kraj	21	11576.76	64069.11	272914.3	0
	1 subject	551.27	5.53	4.26	0
Žilinský kraj	67	9209.583	46853.29	206778.6	2474495
	1 subject	137.46	5.09	4.41	11.97
Nitriansky kraj	23	8501.444	48368	232764.2	583635.5
	1 subject	369.63	5.69	4.81	2.51
Banskobystrický kraj	111	6333.417	47762.5	217802.3	846042.7
	1 subject	57.06	7.54	4.56	3.88
Prešovský kraj	57	9180.655	51057.9	226339.4	582031
	1 subject	161.06	5.56	4.43	2.57
Košícký kraj	52	5004.529	52419.73	235563.1	805893
	1 subject	96.24	10.47	4.49	3.42

Source: own processing

**Tab. 2: Regression and correlation analysis**

SUMMARY OUTPUT									
Regression Statistics									
Multiple R	0.8145872								
R Square	0.6635524								
Adjusted R Square	0.21495569								
Standard Error	27.432117								
Observation	8								
ANOVA									
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F				
Regression	4	4452.437	1113.109	1.479174	<b>0.003894</b>				
Residual	3	2257.563	752.521						
Total	7	6710							
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	329.13878	156.9654	2.09688	0.12694	-170.395	828.67	-170.395	828.672	
0-30tis	0.0044003	0.005392	-0.81608	0.04742	-0.02156	0.0127	-0.02156	0.01276	
30-100	0.0020049	0.003151	0.63634	0.00569	-0.00802	0.0120	-0.00802	0.01203	
100-500	0.0014388	0.00066	-2.18103	0.01172	-0.00354	0.0006	-0.00354	0.00066	
500-	6.68E-06	1.8E-05	-0.37213	0.00734	-6.4E-05	5.05E-05	-6.4E-05	5.05E-05	

Source: own processing

The value of Multiple R (multiple correlation coefficient) is equal to 0.81. The closer the value is to 1, the stronger the dependence. In our example, there is a high degree of tightness of the relationship between the number of entities in the OOCR and the sales in the range. The value of R Square is the value of the coefficient of determination, it is a value of 0.66. This value, after multiplying by 100 (%), indicates that the chosen regression function explains the variability of sales to approximately 66%, the other part represents unexplained variability, the influence of random factors and other non-specific influences. In the ANOVA section, we test the null hypothesis, which states that the model we have chosen to explain the dependence (in our case, the linear model) is not suitable, the alternative hypothesis states the opposite. The F test is used to evaluate this statement. Significance value  $F = 0.0038 < 0.05$ . We reject  $H_0$ , which means that the model was chosen correctly.

The regression function has the form  $y' = 329.13 + 0.0044x_1 + 0.0020x_2 + 0.001x_3 + 0.00000668x_4$

The locating constant is statistically insignificant. This means that with zero sales, we cannot expect an increase in the number of entities in the OOCR. The P-value for the regression coefficient b1 (sales in the range of €0-30 thousand) is  $0.047 < 0.05$ , which confirms the significance of this coefficient. Its fair value is 0.0044, which means that when sales increase by €1,000, we can expect an increase in the number of entities in the OOCR by 4. The P-value for the regression coefficient b2 (sales in the range of €30-100 thousand) is  $0,00569 < 0.05$ , confirming the significance of this coefficient. Its fair value is 0.002, which means that when sales increase by €1000, we can expect an increase in the number of entities in the OOCR by 2. The P-value for the regression coefficient b3 (sales in the range of €100-500 thousand) is  $0.01172 < 0.05$ , which confirms the significance of this coefficient. Its fair value is 0.001, which means that with an increase in sales of €1000, we can expect an increase in the number of entities in the OOCR by 1. The P-value for the regression coefficient b4 (sales in the range of €500 thousand and more €thousand) is  $0,00734 < 0.05$ , confirming the significance of this coefficient. Its fair value is 0.00000668, which means that with an increase in sales of €1000, we can expect an increase in the number of entities in the OOCR by 0.

Interviews with representatives of regional organizations showed that ... "the law, which also affected the financing of tourism, was formed slowly and difficult", ..... "is not the best, it lacks a roof - a body that can be turned to the problem at any time", ..... "unified marketing needs to be resolved", ..... "the law does not support the creation of products that could be created by OOCR". The aim of the interview was welcomed, did not know and did not examine the economic impacts of membership and involvement in the regional tourism organization.

We supplemented our knowledge of the problems and processed outputs with opinions on the activities of regional tourism organizations presented in magazine sources. "It is positive that the system of financing destination management works and has become, even according to the statements of politicians and employees of the ministerial section, one of the key systematic tools of the state tourism support policy," says the chairwoman of the Banská Bystrica regional tourism organization. The statement is given in the magazine TREND.

The President of the Association of Tourism Organizations adds that this "way of support is an excellent systemic measure that provides space for strategic planning and sustainable development of tourism".

The President of the Slovak Tourism Association stated that law "the Act on the Promotion of Tourism is a good thing, but it should be moved further. In order for OOCR to be able to generate resources for investments in tourist attractions that would attract tourists to the regions. A system similar to that in Austria - either compulsory membership or compulsory contributions - would certainly help" (Horváthová, 2018).

#### 4. Conclusion

Opinions on the activities and rationale of regional tourism organizations are fragmented. It is argued that the current OOCR management and financing system has limitations and is not sustainable. It is true that, like the lay and professional public, it has not examined and is unaware of the economic implications associated with membership of these organizations for tourism businesses. The results suggest that networking and cooperation are important for the development of tourism. However, cooperation in tourism must be seen as a partnership and not a competitive participation in the result. The adopted law on the support of tourism, based on the achieved results presented in this paper, brings economic benefits to tourism companies. The more entities involved in the activities of regional tourism organizations, the higher revenues are achieved in tourism enterprises. The results of regression coefficients indicate that the most efficient are companies achieving sales in the range of 0-30000 thousand euros. The paper has certain limitations regarding the scope of the document, a wider selection of economic indicators, a deeper identification of the outputs of primary research, etc. However, it provides a basis for further scientific research, which could also lead to legislative changes and minimize the limitations perceived by practice.

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