

6 | Effects of regional development surroundings of Lake Tisza

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The formation of Lake Tisza (Reservoir at Kisköre) has significantly rearranged the social, economical and environmental factors of this area. The water system –originally developed for flooding and energy generation– soon became popular among tourists. The fish abundance evolved by refilling increased the fishing tourism, accompanied with establishing the port capacities. Thanks to the generating effect of fishing tourism the reservoir has been visited by more and more people –mainly from the eastern part of the country– who want to spend their free time at the waterside. By the first half of the 1980s, beside Balaton and Lake Velence, Lake Tisza has become one of the target areas of the waterfront tourism. Not only the waterside beaches but training areas for aquatics are provided, directing and controlling the sensitive balance between man and nature. The reservoir as a water surface and habitat has quickly become paradise of different groups, particularly a territory of different species of fishes and birds. Thanks to it, some areas are unique even at international level, so different degrees of protection can be applied to the usage of this area. Based on this, after the turn of the century ecotourism has become the buzzword of this area, so the region became one the ecotourism centers of Hungary – creating the balance among tourism, environmental protection and forming approach of tourism.

Key words: tourism, regional development, EU funds, regional operative programme

INTRODUCTION

During the period of socialism the main employer of this region still remained the agricultural sector, significant industry has not settled here. As a result of this industrial production infrastructure and production traditions have not evolved, and the (vocational) education level of population of the region remained low. Several factors of hindering the development of the region can basically be originated in one reason. The Lake Tisza region is on the verge of four counties, but more significant that the area is located between the national socio-economic lines of force, as in a vacuum. It is also determined for disadvantage by its inner peripheral feature. The main transport lines bypass the area: both the main road No. 3 from the North, the M3 motorway, and the main road No. 4 from the South is quite far away, the only connection is the No. 33 highway. The construction and quality of the secondary road system is at a very low level. Besides its linking role Lake Tisza works as a

separating element because crossing points are only at the northern (Tiszafüred-Poroszló) and the southern part (Abádszalók-Kisköre). In addition, three, water level dependent periodical ferries provides connection between two coastal settlements (Tiszacsege-Ároktő, Egyek-Tiszadorogma, Tiszaroff-Tizadasüly).

The low-key appearance of the area is determined by the combination of administrative fragmentation, internal peripheral situation, inaccessibility, the lack of economic centers, as well as the low-skilled population.

1. SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The disadvantage situation of this area is enhanced by that the region has been demarcated along different development plans so they impacted on smaller region in some cases and larger region in other cases. In physical sense, Lake Tisza is bounded by 23 settlements of 4 counties.

- Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (6): Ároktő, Tiszadorogma, Tiszabábolna, Tiszavalk, Négyes, Borsodivánka;
- Heves (6): Poroszló, Újlőrincfalva, Sarud, Tizsanána, Kisköre, Pély;
- Hajdú-Bihar (2). Tiszacsege, Egyek;
- Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok (9): Tiszafüred, Tizzaszőlős, Tiszaderzs, Abádszalók, Tiszabura, Tiszagyenda, Tiszabó, Tiszaroff, Tizadasüly;

The number of residents was 51907 in 2013, 53,3% of it was realized in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok (27686 people), 21,5% Heves (11159 people), 19% Hajdú-Bihar (9882 people), and 6,1% in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (3180 people). Number of inhabitants is below 500 in five of the villages and below 1000 in one, so one fourth of the settlements are small villages. The third of the settlements have 1–2000 inhabitants (typically between 1000–1500 people), while in 5 settlements there are 2–3000 residents. Only 4 cities have larger population: Abádszalók (4328 people), Tiszacsege (4754 people), Egyek (5128 people) és Tiszafüred (11616 people). The region can be described with relatively young city structure. Tiszafüred can be regarded as the center of this region because of its population and early promotion of settlement (1984), asserted by its subregional and district central role. In Hajdú-Bihar country not Egyek with 5200 inhabitants but Tiszacsege (4754 people) has become city at the turn of the century, so Tiszafüred's neighbor is not another city. Abádszalók and Kisköre together were appointed in 2005, which shows the city pair's strong connection. Tiszafüred's city pair, Poroszló, has not got appointment in spite of the fact that it is the most prospering settlement of the region but its population is under 3000 people.

2. COOPERATION FIELDS AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

The tourism and conservationist role of the reservoir has been appreciated from the middle of 1980s and it has been revealed that without any economic capacity the only possibility of this region (besides agriculture) is the reservoir-based tourism. The 2048/1993. (XI. 18.) Government Decision concerning with the revaluation of utilization of Kiskörei Reservoir (Lake Tisza) and the main trends of development clearly assigned the way of utilization and for ensuring these some parts of the lake are terminated:

“the southern part of reservoir (Abádszalók Reservoir) and the coastal bar near the flood control dam should benefit of vacation, the middle part (Sarudi and Poroszlói Reservoir) of ecotourism and conservation, and the upper part (Tiszavalki Reservoir) of conservation.”

The resolution disposes that a regional development plan should be prepared for synchronizing the further development of the 14 villages of the region (Kisköre, Sarud, Tizanána, Újlőrincfalva, Poroszló, Borsodivánka, Négyes, Tiszavalk, Tiszababolna, Tiszabura, Abádszalók, Tiszaderzs, Tizzaszőlős, Tiszafüred) and to coordinate these developments Lake Tisza Regional Council has been established.

The region was listed as an emphasized recreational area by the National Regional Development Conception (35 /1998. (III. 20.) Parl.Decision) in 1998. Confirming this, the 28/1998. (V. 13.) IKIV decision disposes the creation and operation of Lake Tisza Regional Tourist Commissions (Lake Tisza RIB) and their labor organizations, which powers 68 villages expanding from Karcag to Heves and Füzesabony, from Polgár-Tiszaújváros to Fegyvernek. 25 settlements of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, 17 of Heves, 5 of Hajdú-Bihar and 21 of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok are enumerated into one item.

The task of Lake Tisza RIB is the development of the tourism sector, coordinating it with designating the corresponding trends, acquisition of resources, and strategy development. 4/2000 (II.2.) GM regulation continued strengthening the institutional system of tourism, creating the tourism system consists of nine regions. In 2003 Lake Tisza Development Council –established by the cooperation of 73 settlements – was established with the aim of reducing the disadvantage and to overcome the disadvantages arising from the inner periphery. With Hungary's accession to the European Union the resources for some areas, including tourism, has significantly increased. The changed expectations, the increasing of the amount of development funds and degradation of state resources led to the transformation of the system of regional development. The way to obtain the resources for the regional development is effective performances in the bidding system with the help of a professional staff. In the disadvantaged region not only establishing the professional background for preparing tenders and transacting projects is difficult but the existence of required private funds, and the activity itself is at a low level

Location of Tisza Lake tourism region

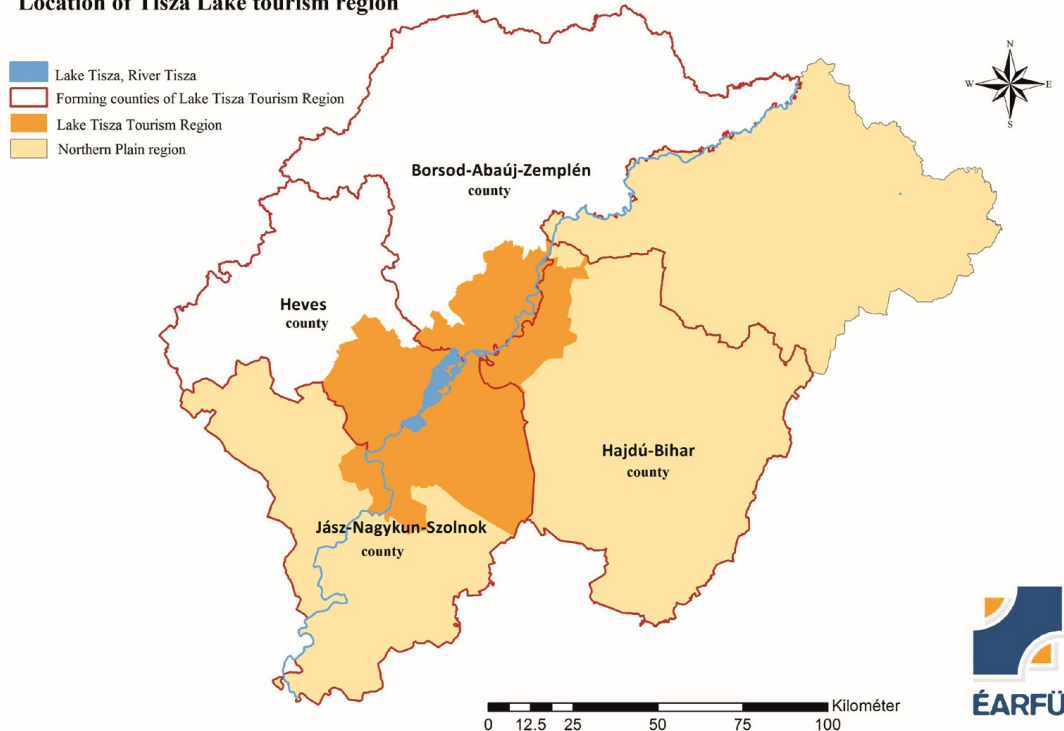


Figure 1: Location of Lake Tisza Tourism Region

The 2005 National Regional Development Plan lists the Lake Tisza region (riverside, and the region near Lake Tisza recreation area) to the areas of national importance where catching up can achieve results within an integrated development. The aim is – besides the expansion of existing water management system, dissemination of proper land use and the development of the agricultural sector– improving availability and developing tourism together with related infrastructure facilities. According to the concept, targeted development of the Tisza region may be possible under the framework of named program. Lake Tisza Tourism Region is situated on two regions (NUTS II), Northern Plain and Northern Hungary region.

The Tisza National Program (1701/2013 Govt. Can) identifies the integrated development of the region, settling economic development for the region. Within the framework of the Operational Program for Northern Plains announces tender opportunities for the economic development of Lake Tisza region with 500 million HUF allowance. In addition, ensures 300 million HUF for reviving the conventional so-called backyard farming, 300 million HUF for preparation of rural and economic development projects and 250 million HUF related to water management. The referred decision ensures the possibility of integrated tools in order to successful funding in the 2014–2020 EU development cycle and cooperation in preparing projects. The National Development and Regional Development Plan (1/2014. (I. 3.) Parl. Decl.), called the National Development 2030, sets out goals to achieve by 2030 and it disposes the necessary measures with indication of the range of possible sources. In the drafting of the document Lake Tisza is one of the county's outstanding tourism destinations, where "tourism, water management, conservation and regional development constitute a multi-county border, integrally treated system". Catching up of the region depends on the factors of activating the socio-economic sources, the coordinated, interdependent developments, as well as the increasing of fund performance. Lake Tisza is not listed as a region needs to be highly developed or paying special attention neither by the conception nor by its modification – Balaton, Budapest agglomeration and the Tokaj Wine Region is listed there. In 2012 Hungarian National Tourist Office contracted the management of Lake Tisza and the North Hungarian Regional Marketing Directorate but the separation of offices remained unchanged.

You can see that in case of Lake Tisza only the situation of settlements settled near the reservoir is certain. Many organizations operate in this region, covering the range of different settlements, as their goals and tasks are different as well. In this light it is less unexpected that instead of cooperation some centers stand out in the field of developments. However, Lake Tisza National Program and the government's intention behind it is a good opportunity to develop and implement an integrated concept.

3. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Documents relating to the area of regional development issues are mostly uniform in setting and solving problems. Significant documents of the last decade containing considerable possibilities in fundraising are Regional development of Lake Tisza region (2005), Lake Tisza region's tourism development strategy 2007–2013 (2006) which specifically focused on the 2007–2013 European Union's development period and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County Development Concept – Situation analysis (2012) which fits to the goals of the monetary period between 2014–2020. Documents were made considering community principles (for example subsidiarity, location-based approach), cooperated with organizations knowing problems and factors in their interrelations. Statements are mostly the same as difficulties listed in the national documents, forming a shaggy net of them. The problem of the documents that they are not supported by dedicated budget so they "hang in the air", as for named projects and

intervention they have to obtain funds from another organization, which significantly affect their implementation.

Lake Tisza tourist region in the light of the tenders

The area belongs to two regions the Northern Plains and Northern Hungary region regarding its regional development. The development period 2007–2013 both regions had a dedicated source for achieving goals of their operational programs (Northern Plains Operational Program– ÉAOP, Northern Hungary Operational Program – ÉMOP). The objectives of both programs are closing up the disadvantaged areas, socio-economic cohesion and strengthening the activity. Special priority is to increase the competitiveness of the tourism segment. We used the database of EMIR (Integrated Monitoring Information System) which implements the evaluation of the tenders and the implementation of approved projects, date of filtration is July 1, 2013 and it spatially extend to the 68 settlements delimited by regulation of 1998.

In case of Priority 1. (Economic Development) 6.9 billion HUF (96,74%) of 7 billion HUF subsidy has been tied up by beneficiaries and payment has been 3,2 billion HUF (47,2%). The projects have a strong regional concentration (18 settlements) which binds to the region's poor industry and low education levels. Funds can be connected to five settlements: Karcag (1,9 Billion HUF), Polgár (1,4 Billion HUF), Heves (1,46 Billion HUF), Tiszaújváros (0,68 Billion HUF), ad Erdőtelek (0,72 Billion HUF). Only the industrial parks (Karcag, Polgár) and premises development of enterprises with significant production has been established. Developments strongly connect to the county's main transport roads (No 4 in case of Karcag and M3 motorway in case of Tiszafüred and Polgár). The activity of enterprises is extremely low increased by several factors. First, the region is traditionally a lack of fund-area, so the own resources required for the application is lacking even to start the licensing procedure. In addition, circuitous access to the area with low-level education prevents the establishment and initiation of larger enterprises. Examining the business segment of the region it can be said that predominantly self-employed and micro-enterprises are typical, who do not have extensive network of contacts. Breaking point can be the connection to supply network but it requires advanced technology, precise and consistent production. Expansion of industrial capacities are limited by the protected ecological role of the region as this area was left untouched because of the lack of industrial capacities. However, the presence of the major operators may change tourism (which ensures the main income of the region) negatively.

In case of Priority 2. (Tourism Development) more serious concentration can be seen. 99,4% (7,27 billion HUF) of the 7,3 billion HUF awarded financial support is deposited and the payment is on 53,5% (3,9 billion HUF). Only settlements along the Tisza performed successful and the distant tourist centers (Berekfüdő and Karcag), a total of 14 municipalities. The most significant investment of the area is Lake Tisza Eco Center established a few years ago which introduces the wildlife and traditions of Lake Tisza and its environment in interactive and practical, near-natural way. The building of Eco Center has become a symbol of the whole Lake Tisza so Poroszló symbolizes the prosperity of the region with 2,5 billion HUF funding withdrawal. Tiszafüred strengthened its capacities for tourism (hotels, attractions, for example Adventure Island) with 1,3 billion HUF financial support while the bike path between Tiszafüred and Hortobágy gained 0,8 billion HUF support. In Abádszalók accommodations and attractions related to waterside and water habitat were established from 0,46 billion HUF. Polgár spends its 0,54 billion HUF budget 0,5 billion HUF to hotel development. In Tiszaújváros the thermal bath was renewed, Kőtelek spent its 680 million HUF for the bike path between Tiszasüly and Kőtelek. Berekfüdő and Karcag are famous for their spa culture and healing mineral water so they renovated and expanded of their existing capacity of about 350 and 250 million HUF support. In addition, minor improvements were implemented in the field of accommodations.

Although the main source of income is tourism, and also plays a significant role in employment, very few applications were published in the appeals. Beside the lack of own resources it may be caused by the lack of information because people are not aware of the possibilities or do not pay attention to it. Economic development in such circumstances is an extremely difficult task, effectiveness can be evaluated after years. Development concepts for the region of Lake Tisza are unable to prosper development so their integration into higher level documentation, which has specific amount of available resources, is recommended.

Regarding the developed areas their development of tourist attractions related to water, they are designed to expand the attractions and extended the time spent by visitors. In this context, the development of hotels and motels has been emphasized. By developing the bike paths not only the international Euro Velo cycling route No. 11 was finished but also connection between distant tourism target areas was created.

Priority 3 (Traffic Engineering) had the largest source of demand, indicating that the reduction of availability problems is the most urgent task for this region. Candidates awarded 11 billion HUF from two operative programs, 99,5% of it was hold and in the field of payment performance is 52%. Two-thirds of the settlements successfully participated in the tender system which indicates the need for the development and also shows activity in this direction by the local governments, according to their opportunities. That's why the amounts of financial support are smaller, avg. 100–200 million HUF; only a few municipalities got larger amount of money. On the score of regional availability Karcag won 2,7 billion HUF, Abádszalók 1,3 billion HUF for renovating the four and five digit roads which has significantly improved access to the region: from the direction of the main road No. 4 and from the north, the main road No. 3 and the M3 motorway. Lake Tisza bike path was established in Tiszafüred from 230 million HUF support and from 200 million HUF the roads led to the surrounding settlements has been reconstructed. Tiszadorogma's nearly half a billion development aimed at increasing the flood and water safety.

Priority 4 (Human Resource Development) has available data only on the Northern Plains Region. The almost 4 billion HUF has been fully committed, payment is on 80%. The four-fifths of the settlements competed successfully because the categories of beneficiaries is limited to the public sector, though it was directed to several segments of it. Kindergartens, primary schools, health infrastructure renewed significantly under this priority. The improvements include into the spectacular investments, as well as more obvious for the general public and visitors. In Tiszafüred the primary school has been renovated and the social service system has been expanded from approximately 730 million HUF. In Abádszalók, also kindergartens, primary schools and the social system has been developed. Kishegyes spent half a billion HUF for the development of the primary school. In Karcag the support for renovation of primary schools were 250 million HUF.

The region belongs to the migration areas, in the last 20 years the emigration increased significantly. In order to keep the population the local governments are forced to develop their educational capacities even with the decreasing number of children.

In case of Priority 5 (Regional Development and Environmental Protection) the financial support was 8.7 billion HUF, of which 8.4 billion (99.4%) were committed, 45% were paid. The majority of the resources of the priority can be connected to the functional and social renewal of the interior of settlements with the aim to keep the population and ensuring modern living conditions and the scope of the necessary functions (Polgár – 770 million HUF). In addition, in Kunhegyes, a development connected to the further development of Plan Vásárhelyi – which affected the whole region – is aimed at increasing flood and water security, the financial support was 2,5 billion HUF. Tiszafüred developed its rainwater drainage.

After totalizing the funds and distributing them to settlements it can be concluded that the region of Lake Tisza received 40 billion HUF financial support from the EU Structural Fund (ERFA funds), via two operational programs. A significant proportion of developments can be connected to the public sector, the activity of the municipalities classed as average. Its

aim is to maintain population, to establish new features and functional areas and to ensure education and social services to reduce the population loss. Building infrastructure elements to protect against rain and flood serve the safer living conditions. Improving the quality parameters of traffic routes helps increasing the competitiveness of the economy which is in connection with tourism growth. Innovation of the private sector is concentrated in economic development in case of settlements far from Lake Tisza. Enterprises involved in tourism have been implemented mainly attraction and accommodation development, complementing the existing items and focusing on the expansion of attractions and adventure elements.

The map of the most significant support is fairly concentrated. Although almost all of the settlements win some support for development, only a few of them are significant. The economy of Poroszló is said to be one-sided, improvements were made only in the field of tourism, as tourism is the main employer. In contrast, the developments of Polgár, Tiszafüred, Abádszalók, Karcag and Berekfürdő expanded to more areas, development for the public sector and tourism economy was also highlighted. Four-fifths of the settlements have won some support in some priority, while much of the settlements it has not reached half a billion HUF, which indicates that the tendering activity remains low or concentrated to a certain area, the long-term plans and ideas are not strong enough in this region.

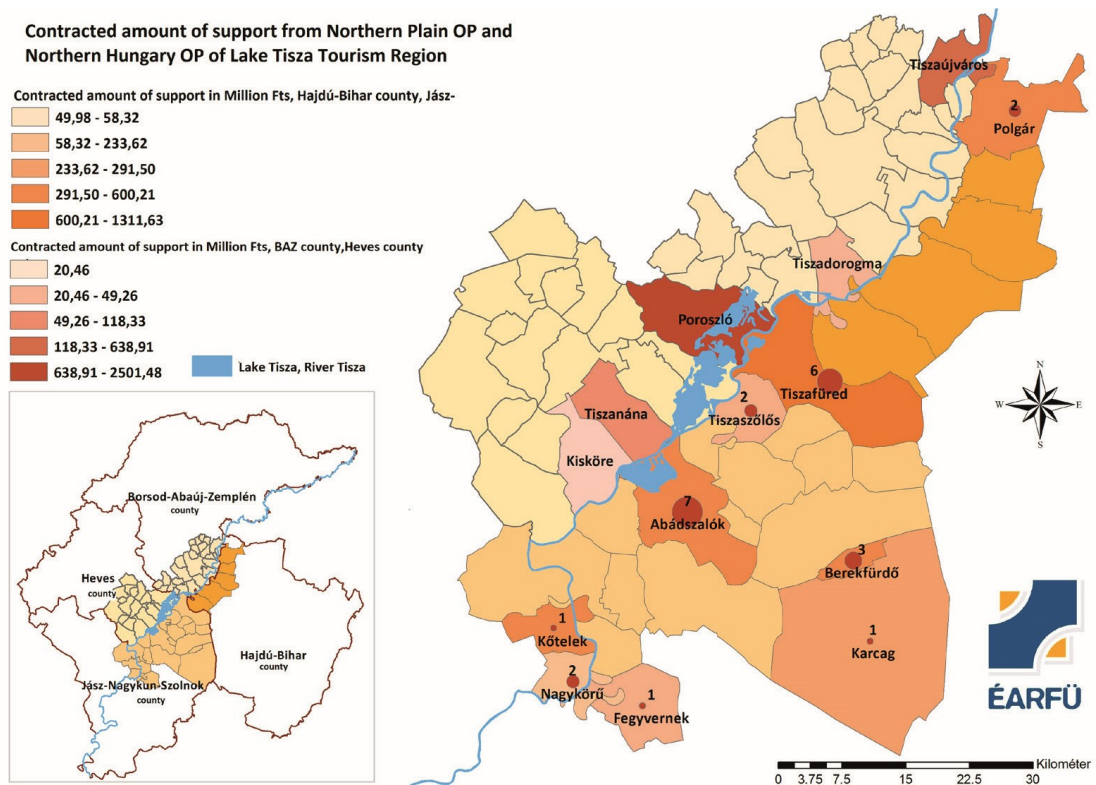


Figure 2. Contracted amount of support from ÉAOP and ÉMOP of Lake Tisza Tourism Region (source: based on EMIR database)

CONCLUSION

Recent made studies states that in spite of the often spectacular developments the region is declining and in the next few years aggravation of problems can be expected. The low tendering and investment intention, as well as co-operation can be increased slowly, while the region remains a source lacking area. The availability problems, the poor condition of

the roads is also bad for tourism. Watching the trends, number of visitors do not grow more significantly, guests typically stay for one or two days, and the spending is low because of the absence of sufficient service scope. There is no other alternative besides water tourism so in case of bad weather there are only a few number of attractions for families and the older generation. In recent years Lake Tisza had been maximally exploited in the field of fishing, further expansion is not feasible, however, it may also decrease the fishing guests.

Despite the fact that the tourism industry has been regarded as a breaking point of the area since the 1980's, tourism marketing of the region is fragmented, several organizations are concerning with this, but the only efficient organization is the Hungarian National Tourist Ltd. Lake Tisza Regional Marketing Directorate. Regional and local tourism destination management organizations (TDM), supported by the regional operational programs, operate only in Poroszló and Berekfürdő, locally. Development of ports and equestrian tourism have been on the agenda only in the last few years, which could be the success story of the region beside bike tourism with ensuring adequate supply and marketing activities.

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