

## TOURISM INFORMATION CENTERS – PROOF OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract:** *The tourism information centers are specialized information and tourism advertising structures, both for tourism potential and for tourism infrastructure. Among the main responsibilities of the tourism information centers we can mention: providing the necessary information for tourists, collaboration with tourism agencies, establishing relationships with similar centers, providing information regarding the tourism infrastructure (accommodation, transportation, treatment, recreation), organization and advertising of events with touristic potential. In this study the authors want to highlight the role of the tourism information centers in the development and support of the local tourism and their link with the practice of tourism management.*

**Key words:** *management, tourism, advertising, information*

### INTRODUCTION

Before and during their visit to a destination, the tourists require information services like sightseeing, accommodation services, catering services, transportation. In countries where tourism is developed all these services are provided by tourists or tourist information centers. [3]

A tourist information center is a physical location that provides tourist information to persons who tour the place or area locally. Tourist information center is a vital part of tourists' experience. [5]

Tourist information centers are usually located close to town centers, railway stations or airports. All tourist information centers are marked with internationally recognized "i".



**Figure 1** The international mark used for Tourist Information Centers

A great part of information delivered to tourists before and during the visit are electronic information because it have a strong impact and it is a need of such services in locations of high visitor concentration (airports, centers of cities, railway stations). [3]

Tourist information centers can offers support to tourists to plan their sightseeing route around or find available overnight accommodation. Also, TIC can give information about public transportation, events or local attractions and give promotional leaflets about the

town and the region by supplying relevant street maps, information booklets and guides or even advices about local Accident & Emergency facilities, specialist shops and current discount price offers for tourists.

In general tourism information center can be considered the showcase for the destination because many times it is the first place where tourists stop, is the place where they get information about the touristic attractions, certain events and even accommodation possibilities or public food services, for this reason the tourism information center must set the standard in terms of quality, integrity and customer care which other industry operators can follow. [3]

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Studying some sources from the specialized literature, sources which were mentioned in the biography section, authors present some aspects regarding tourism information centers and the role of the tourism information centers in the development and support of the local tourism and their link with the practice of tourism management. The stages from the realization of the article were: setting the purpose of the article, study of the specialized literature, setting the targets and conclusion stating.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of each tourism information center is advertising the tourism for a specific area, both from the natural/anthropic potential point of view and of the touristic infrastructure in order to attract tourists and to valuate the touristic attractions.

The main attributes of a tourism informational center are:

- Information of the tourists visiting the area and supplying information to those interested;
- Reservations for tourists (for example accommodation, transportation, visits of the touristic attractions, certain events)
- Strengthening the relations with local tourism businesses and supporting them to offer high quality services to tourists
- Organizing touristic events with advertising purposes (festivals, touristic evenings, etc)
- Establishing contacts with similar centers in order to advertise together a touristic region.

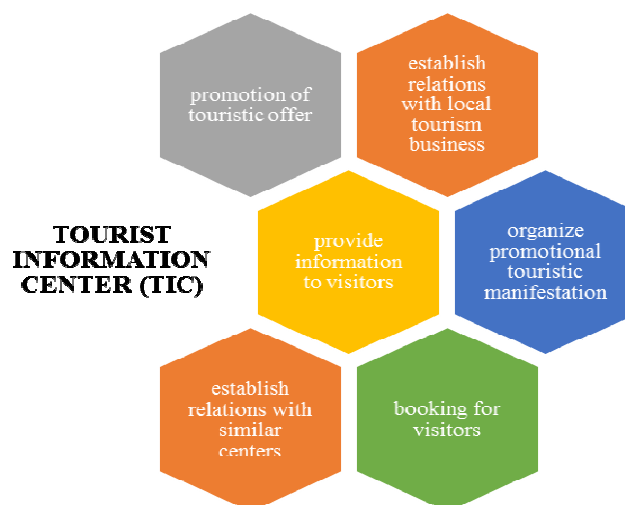


Figure 2 Main attributes of TICs

In Poland, Tourist Information Centers are divided into 1\*, 2\*, 3\* and 4\* Certified and Non-Certified. All Certified Tourist Centers provide information in one or more foreign languages and have an expanded range of services as compared to the Non-Certified. [7]

IT Center (1\* Certified) provide information to tourists in one foreign language at a basic level and distribute free local promotional literature.

IT Center (2\* Certified) provide information to tourists in one foreign language at a communicative level and distribute free promotional literature related to the local and regional area. Also, allow the use of a computer workstation with access to the Internet.

IT Center (3\* Certified) are located in the city center or near a main tourist route and provide information to tourists in two foreign languages at a good level and distribute free promotional literature about the local, district and regional areas. Also, allow the use of a computer workstation with access to the Internet.

IT Center (4\* Certified) are located in the city center or near a main tourist route, provide information to tourists in three foreign languages, distribute free promotional literature about the local, district and regional areas, also in foreign languages, and thematic material and allow the use of two computer workstations with access to the Internet and the use of a multimedia kiosk even outside office hours. [7]

In Romania, the tourism information centers network is quite new, most of the existing centers were created in the last 8 years and were financed by the Regional Operational Program 2007 – 2013, priority annex 5 “Durable development and promotion of tourism”, the major intervention domain 5.3 “Advertising the tourism potential and creation of the necessary infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness of Romania as a touristic destination”, operation “Increase of the of National Tourism Information centers and touristic advertising (CNIPT) and their improvement”. In Romania the Tourism information and advertising centers are specialized services which function under the responsibility of the local and county councils. [4,6]

The tourism information centers network from Romania is developed in different ways according to the residence environment (urban/rural), economic development level, tourism or touristic potential development level in the area/region/county/town where it is located.

The tourism information centers appeared as a measure to control and organize the touristic circulation.

An example of best practice in the tourism management which should be adopted is the one of the countries which pay attention to the cross border tourism by actively involving the tourism information centers from the border area. Such an example can be found in the cross border area of three European countries (Austria, Hungary and Slovakia) which collaborate very well in this sense. So, a tourist having accommodation in a touristic unit from the region Burgenland (Austria) can receive a card offered by the tourism information center from the town where the tourist has accommodation which is valid during the entire staying period. This card offer multiple advantages to the tourist (gratuities and discounts to certain events, visits to certain touristic objectives, public transportation, etc) and he/she can benefit of them during the staying in the cross border area of the 3 countries.

The tourism information centers are meant to receive and to provide information both in relation with the outside of the local information system and the inside of it. The activity of these units is deployed by specialized persons in tourism: tourism managers, operators, agents, etc [1,2]

## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism information centers have the purpose to present tourists the touristic offer in form of touristic advertising materials and actions, and also to support the operators from the tourism area.

Tourism Information Centers are a vital component of touristic management.

Tourism Information Centers should be an important part of tourists travel plan and reflect the objectives of the touristic destination strategy of each country.

Tourism Information Centers plays an important role in the tourism management destination of each country.

A functional tourist information center is a proof of tourism management which means a strong strategy in tourism management, especially destination management.

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