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**AKADEMIA WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO  
IM. BRONISŁAWA CZECHA W KRAKOWIE**

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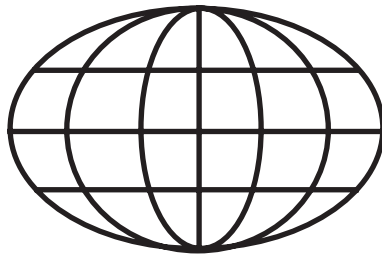
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## STATE TOURISM POLICIES IN SWITZERLAND AND SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES FOR POLISH TOURISM

*Katarzyna Klimek\**

### Abstract

**Purpose.** The aim of this paper is to analyze growing importance of the state in the implementation of strategic solutions to stimulate holistic development in the tourism sector in Switzerland.

**Method.** The research method is a qualitative analysis of source documents and data coming from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) as well as from the Swiss Tourist Federation, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in the Republic of Poland, and the Polish Tourism Organization. Moreover, the comparative analysis of the websites from 49 Swiss and 16 regional and 50 local Polish tourism organizations was conducted.

**Findings.** The paper presents the actual study of tourism policy implemented in Switzerland within the last 19 years. Moreover comparative analyses of strategic solutions implemented in Swiss and Polish tourism reveal important differences regarding the role of public-private partnership in tourism management and as well in the commercialization of tourism products.

**Research and conclusions limitations.** Qualitative analyses refer exclusively to the comparison between Swiss and Polish tourism policy and the role of Swiss and Polish tourism organizations in the destination management.

**Practical implications.** Swiss strategic solutions presented in the paper may constitute a solid benchmark for decision makers and governmental authorities dealing with support for the tourism development in Poland.

**Originality.** The innovative solutions implemented in Swiss tourism are usually neglected in various analyses and comparative reports published in Poland.

**Type of paper.** Descriptive article.

**Key words:** socio-economic development, tourism policy of Switzerland, tourism sector state support programs, public-private partnership and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).

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## Introduction

Tourism is one of the most dynamically developing service industries of the 21st century. Its strength of influence results from stimulating the economic development of countries, regions and areas of tourism reception due to revenues generated from the tourism consumption in a particular area. Global incomes earned from tourism are estimated at 5% of GDP, and the number of employees in this sector exceeds 270 million [UNWTO 2014, p. 2].

Switzerland is one of the oldest European tourist destinations. A 50-year-old tradition of receiving foreign tourists, the high quality of services, the country's prestige in the international arena and Switzerland's political neutrality are just some of the reasons for the country's rise to a leading position in the area of international incoming tourism.

According to the latest report of the World Economic Forum, Switzerland leads the world in terms of their travel and tourism industry competitiveness [WEF 2013, p. 16]. Nevertheless, a growing decrease in the number of foreign tourist arrivals traveling for leisure and business purposes has been observed since the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century.

This paper presents an analysis of strategic solutions implemented in Switzerland at the national level to stimulate tourism and include this sector in a holistic concept for the country's economic development. It consists of: a theoretical introduction, analysis concerning the development of tourism in Switzerland, national tourism policy within the last 19 years and a comparative approach regarding the possibility of applying Swiss good practices in the field of tourism policy in Poland.

## Literature Review

Tourism policy is a relatively new phenomenon developed in various countries, mainly after the end of World War II and due to the growing importance of tourism for their economic development. The first actions taken at the governmental level as to planning tourism development took place in European countries and in the United States in the 1950s and the 1960s<sup>19</sup> [Hall 1994; Hall, Jenkins 2008; Kaspar 1996].

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), whose objective is to determine directions for tourism development on a global scale, identified five major principles in which the public sector plays an important role in supporting tourism development. These are: coordinating and planning actions, the legislative process, regulations, stimulating entrepre-

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<sup>19</sup> One of the first key documents related to tourist planning after World War II was the report drawn up in June 1950 by US and European government experts entitled: "*Tourism in the European Recovery Program*". This was an initial plan for the development of tourism in Europe under reconstruction from damage [US Government 1950].

neurship and counteracting unemployment [UNWTO 2011]. M. Hall and S. Page [2006] also added the pro-social role to be played by tourism policy for the development of contemporary societies as well as a broadly understood protection of the issues of local interest groups.

Numerous studies indicate that within the last 50 years, there has been a change in the involvement of the public sector in shaping the tourism policy in highly developed countries from state interventionism after World War II, through the neoliberal policy of the 1980s and 1990s, where the state's role was mainly regulatory, to the strategic-relational approach and creating tourism policy on the basis of the broadest possible cooperation of the public sector with private entities and the non-governmental sector [Bevir 2009; Bramwell, Meyer 2007; Dredge, Jenkins 2007; Healey 2006; Jessop 2005, 2008; Krutwaysho, Bramwell 2010; Shone, Memon 2008].

Examples from several tourist destinations demonstrate that in order to create effective mechanisms for the implementation of tourism policy, the decentralized model, in which administrative and executive functions are separated, seems to be significantly more effective<sup>20</sup> [Anastasiadou 2008; Dredge 2006; Kimbu, Ngoasong 2013; Pastras, Bramwell 2013; Tosun, Dallen 2001; Tosun 2006; Wray 2009].

Due to the heterogeneous nature of tourism services, interaction between the public and the private sector becomes particularly significant in the context of creating global tourist market and increasing competition between tourist destinations, especially in Europe and Asia [Augustyn, Knowles 2000; Beritelli 2011; Cassidy, Guilding 2011; Gualini 2006; ETC 2013; Pechlaner, Tschurtschenthaler 2003; UNWTO 2011; Wang, Ap 2013].

According to D.L. Edgell [1990; Edgell *et al.*, 2008] the primary objective of the tourism policy currently carried out at the governmental level should be to integrate economic benefits with social and cultural development of countries and tourist reception areas in order to improve the quality of life for local inhabitants, increase welfare and balance the development of particular countries. Ch.R. Goeldner and J.R.B. Ritchie [2006] draw attention to the fact that tourism policy should be used to provide tourists with an appropriate service system, maximizing profits for local entrepreneurs while minimizing negative effects of tourism development within a given area. Therefore, the focus here is on promoting tourism development based on the terms of sustainable development.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This model is valid in the majority of European countries (also in Poland and Switzerland), At the national level, the most common regularity is the separation of administrative and executive functions between tourist administration authorities known as NTA (National Tourism Administration), situated in the central administration structure as well as NTO (National Tourism Organization) dealing with marketing and the country's tourist promotion.

<sup>21</sup> The assumptions of sustainable tourism policy relate to aiming at achieving a balance between economic development, social development, and reasonable management of the natural environment qualities in order to preserve their resources for present and future generations [UNWTO, WTTC, Earth Council 1996; Ritchie 2003].

Sustainable development is a very broad notion and is currently often raised in relation to the tourism industry, particularly in the context of climate change and unfavorable consequences of tourism development in numerous areas of tourist reception [Connell, Page, Bentley 2009; Lee, Schaaf 2005; Priskin 2009; Tosun 2001; Yasarata *et al.*, 2010]. The devastation of the natural environment particularly affects regions whose attractiveness depends on the quality of natural resources (nature-based tourism). According to the report from the World Tourism Organization entitled: “*Climate Change and Tourism: Responding to Global Challenge*“, 4–6% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the dynamic development of the tourism industry in the world [UNWTO 2008].

One of the most endangered European areas in terms of extensive use of natural resources is that of the Alps. Numerous studies devoted to this issue have been published in recent years [e.g., Abegg, Agrawala, Crick, de Montfalcon 2007; Agrawala 2007; Klimek, Scaglione, Schegg, Matos 2011]. Researchers indicate that there is a strong tie between irreversible damage to the natural environment and the development of mass tourism, whose climax in the Alps falls in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Expansive tourism policy in numerous Alpine regions is related, among others, to the seizure of land to expand areas intended for tourist infrastructure.<sup>22</sup> This has a huge impact on the deterioration of the landscape as well as air and water pollution, and the degradation of fauna and flora. For this reason, according to a Swiss ecologist J. Krippendorf, tourism is the greatest “landscape eater”, causing irreversible changes to it [Krippendorf 1987].

G. Greenwood [2005] emphasizes the fact that 80% of mountain regions in the world, the offer of which is based on winter tourism, are particularly exposed to climate change caused by the greenhouse effect.

Switzerland experienced this particularly painfully, especially in the 1990s. Global warming and the presence of winters without snow contributed to significant fluctuations in tourist demand causing a crisis in the tourism industry [Serquet, Rebetez 2011].

The Swiss government, wishing to remedy these unfavorable phenomena, assumed, as its primary objective for all actions regarding tourism policy carried out since the early ‘90s, a departure from the formula of mass tourism and support for the development of quality tourism, based on respect for natural resources [SECO 2013].

The next part of this article presents the current situation in Swiss tourism, as well as basic assumptions of policy implemented at the federal level, which constitutes the basis for a decentralized tourism policy conducted simultaneously on three levels, i.e., cantons, regions, and municipalities.

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<sup>22</sup> Since the early 1950s, Switzerland has built approx. 50 new aerial tramways and ski lifts without taking into account seasonal fluctuations of demand as well as changing climate conditions (e.g., winters without snow) [Klimek 2010, p. 115].



## The Significance of Tourism for the Swiss Economy and the Current Situation in This Sector

Tourism has multidirectionally stimulated the socio-economic development of Switzerland for many years. This is manifested by, among others,:

- increasing foreign exchange receipts and revenues from export obtained on account of handling tourist traffic;
- generating added value thus affecting the growth of the Gross Domestic Product;
- creating new jobs and slowing down the depopulation of mountain and peripheral areas;
- expanding and modernizing tourist and tourist-related infrastructure;
- improving the conditions of life for local inhabitants;
- increasing budgets for local government units due to receipts from taxes;<sup>23</sup>
- income from other industries in the economy. [Switzerland Tourism 2003; OFS 2008; OFS 2012a].

On the global scale, Switzerland is ranked among the top twenty countries receiving the highest revenues from incoming tourism [UNWTO 2014]. Switzerland's foreign exchange receipts earned from incoming foreign tourism in 2013 amounted to CHF 15.6 billion (USD 16.5 billion), which amounted to 4.9% of revenue for Swiss exports [FST 2014].

An intersectoral comparison for the years 2006–2013 indicates that tourism is the fourth-largest export industry in Switzerland, ranking just behind the metallurgic and machine sectors, the chemical industry and the watchmaking industry [FST 2014] (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Revenues from Swiss exports with breakdown into more important industries in the period 2006–2013 (in CHF billion)

Branches	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1. Chemical industry	63.0	68.8	71.9	71.8	75.9	74.6	79.0	80.9
2. Metallurgical and machine industry	65.0	72.5	74.0	58.1	63.6	64.0	59.4	60.9
3. Watchmaking industry	13.7	16.0	17.0	13.2	16.2	19.3	21.4	21.8
<b>4. Tourism</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>15.6</b>
5. Textile industry	4.4	4.6	3.7	4.2	4.2	3.2	3.1	–

**Source:** Fédération suisse du tourisme [2014, p. 8].

<sup>23</sup> Switzerland collects two types of tourist taxes, which are directly transferred to communes: the *taxe de séjour* (temporary fee) and the *taxe d'hébergement* (lodging fee collected from administrators of the accommodation base and owners of apartments and summer homes).

As far as the share of tourism in Switzerland's GDP is concerned, it is estimated at the level of 2.7% [OFS 2012b]. It should be emphasized that the share of tourism in GDP varies from region to region. This share is definitely below the national average in regions that are not developed in terms of tourism, and it is the highest in cantons offering numerous attractions, especially in Alpine areas, i.e., in the cantons Valais, Graubünden (Grisons) and in the Bernese Oberland region. Tourism generates more than 25% of local GDP there [FST 2014; Rütter, Partner 2000, 2001, 2008].

Swiss tourism also stimulates the shape of the job market both at the national and regional levels. It is estimated that every 10th inhabitant of Switzerland works in this sector or in directly-related industries [OFS 2012b]. The results of the last tourism satellite account indicate that 144,000 people are directly employed in tourism [full-time jobs], which amounts to 4.1% of all workers (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Share of the Swiss tourism industry in creating jobs and in gross value added in the years 2009–2011

Years	2009	2010	2011
Employment in tourism, full time jobs (thousands of people),	144.4	144.3	144.7
Share of tourist sector in job market (in %)	4.1	4.1	4.1
Share of tourist sector in GDP (in %)	2.8	2.8	2.7

**Source:** Office Fédéral de la statistique, <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/infothek/lexikon.html> (15.11.2014).

The condition of tourism in Switzerland largely depends on tendencies in foreign incoming tourism. According to researchers analyzing the Swiss tourism market, the end of the 1980s marks the beginning of the period of “maturity” of the Swiss tourism product, especially “Alpine tourism”. Between 1990 and 2012, the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Swiss accommodation facilities declined by as much as 35% (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Arrivals of foreign tourists to Switzerland in the period 1990–2013 (spending at least one night in the country) in millions of arrivals

1990	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2013/1990 in %
13.2	6.9	7.1	11.0	10.7	10.0	8.0	8.6	8.2	8.6	8.5	8.5	8.9	-32.5

**Source:** Own elaboration on UNWTO [2014, 2010].

Despite the fact that, as has been mentioned earlier, the tourism sector in Switzerland is one of the most competitive in the world, certain global trends and endogenic factors determine its present condition [WEF 2013].

These are:

- **Globalization of tourism and pressure from new destinations.** In 1950, Switzerland was the fifth tourist destination in the world and its share in the global tourist market was 8%. Currently, this country has to compete with 190 countries, and its position in the UNWTO ranking of the most visited countries in the world is lower and lower each year. In 2011, Switzerland was ranked 30<sup>th</sup> (Poland took 19<sup>th</sup> position in this ranking [UNWTO 2014]).
- **Fluctuation of demand and evolution in tourist behaviors.** Changes in Swiss tourism within the last 50 years are also inseparably related to structural changes in tourist demand on a global scale. After World War II (particularly in the years 1965–1979) Switzerland recorded a tourism boom. This was related to the accumulation of socio-economic factors fostering the development of mass tourism especially in highly-developed countries. Since the end of the 1980s, we observe the beginning of the period of “maturity” of the Swiss tourism product, especially “Alpine tourism”. The decrease in foreign tourist arrivals in Switzerland is mainly due to changing patterns of tourist movement to Switzerland. Due to the abundance of information, contemporary tourists may be characterized as individualistic and more unpredictable [Müller 2005]. Otherwise, more and more visitors are becoming experienced and empowered consumers capable of comparing the value of the tourist offer via easy Internet access [Laesser, Bieger, Beritelli 2007]. An unfavorable exchange rate of the Swiss franc as compared to basic currencies in recent years led to the fact that the offer of other Alpine countries, e.g., Italy and Austria, was more competitive and on average 20–30% less expensive than the one offered by renowned Swiss resorts [BAKBASEL 2012].
- **Structural problems of supply in tourism services.** The loss of Switzerland’s significance in foreign incoming tourism also results from the failure to adapt the supply to variable market requirements. The structure of Swiss tourist destinations only partially corresponds to the requirements of a global tourist market. Particularly in smaller mountain destinations, the hotel infrastructure is very fragmented (these are most often small family businesses) which makes it difficult to modernize and quickly adapt to changing market requirements. Frequent problems with the profitability of small hotel companies result in their being shutdown or their conversion into self-catering accommodations for rent or sale. This affects the local job market and the competitiveness of tourism products on a local scale.
- **Impact of climate changes and hazard to natural environment.** Switzerland, as an Alpine country, is particularly exposed to climate

change and global warming, as has been mentioned above. Winters without snow, melting glaciers, and natural disasters are only some of the phenomena that have directly affected the condition of incoming tourism in recent years. Another problem applies to spatial development and the protection of the natural landscape quality. In the second half of the 1950s, the tourist infrastructure was particularly related to a constant expansion of the ski infrastructure (mainly ski lifts and slopes) as well as a huge demand for the purchase of second homes. In numerous mountain towns, this contributed to the devastation of the landscape as well as to unfavorable phenomena related to the contamination of land and air, as well as to irreversible changes in the ecosystem [Switzerland Tourism 2008].

## **State Tourism Policy and Initiatives for Supporting the Tourism Industry in Switzerland**

### *Tourism Policy at the State Level from 1996–2009*

The crisis recorded in Swiss incoming tourism in the 1990s resulted in the need for a greater intervention of the state in the development of this sector [SECO 1996, 2000].

The activities of the Swiss National Tourism organization were modified in the first place with the use of legislative initiatives, transforming this institution into Switzerland Tourism by federal law dated December 21, 1995 [Conseil fédéral 1995]. This organization was given new competences. Apart from promoting Switzerland abroad, it also became a platform for cooperation between Swiss tourism regions<sup>24</sup> and stakeholders, strengthening interregional cooperation.

Then, in order to develop new legal instruments, the authorities prepared a strategic document in 1996 entitled:

*“Rapport sur la politique touristique de la Confédération”* offering innovative solutions that would counteract the stagnation in the tourism industry [Conseil fédéral 1996]. These actions resulted in:

- reducing the VAT rate for accommodation services (VAT reduction from 6.5% to 3.5%);<sup>25</sup>
- establishing a program supporting innovations in tourism in 1998 (Innotour) financed by the Confederation [Conseil fédéral 1998].

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<sup>24</sup> Thanks to this cooperation, all important Swiss destinations are promoted on a common online platform: [www.mySwitzerland.com](http://www.mySwitzerland.com). Switzerland Tourism also coordinates the sale of tourism products through an integrated web booking system: STC Switzerland Travel Center.

<sup>25</sup> *Arrêté fédéral du 22.03 1996 instituant un taux spécial de la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée pour les prestations du secteur de l'hébergement.* This act is currently in effect.

Since 2003, the federal government has also been financially supporting the accommodation sector, granting low-interest credit by means of a branch association *Swiss Society of Hotel Credit* (SGH) (Conseil fédéral 2003). In recent years it has allowed for renovation of accommodation facilities and improving the condition of hotels' infrastructure in peripheral areas and in spa and wellness destinations.

*New Tourism Policy Based on a "Growth Strategy for Switzerland as a Tourism Destination."*

Despite the fact that Swiss banks were involved in the global financial crisis which began in 2007 with the crash of the mortgage market, the Swiss economy hardly experienced its effects (the unemployment rate does not exceed 3%, inflation amounts to 0.6%) [OFS 2012b]. However, the high exchange rate of the Swiss franc compared to the euro that lasted for a long time (especially from 2009 to 2011) and the crisis in major incoming markets [namely countries from the Eurozone] and in the US did have an effect on the condition of Swiss tourism.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, after extensive social consultations with the representatives of all key groups involved in the tourism development, the Federal Council in 2010 accepted the assumptions of the latest tourism policy based on the increase in the importance of tourism for the Swiss economy [SECO 2010]. This new strategy is a continuation of the previous tourism policy to provide better use of resources and potential for tourism development in order to reinforce Switzerland's image as an attractive tourist destination on the international stage (particularly among competing Alpine countries).

The main assumptions of the new tourism policy involve an increase in the role of the Swiss Confederation in supporting tourism development. According to the new strategic principles, it is supposed to be the leader in implementing four strategies performed simultaneously and attributed to the following strategic objectives:

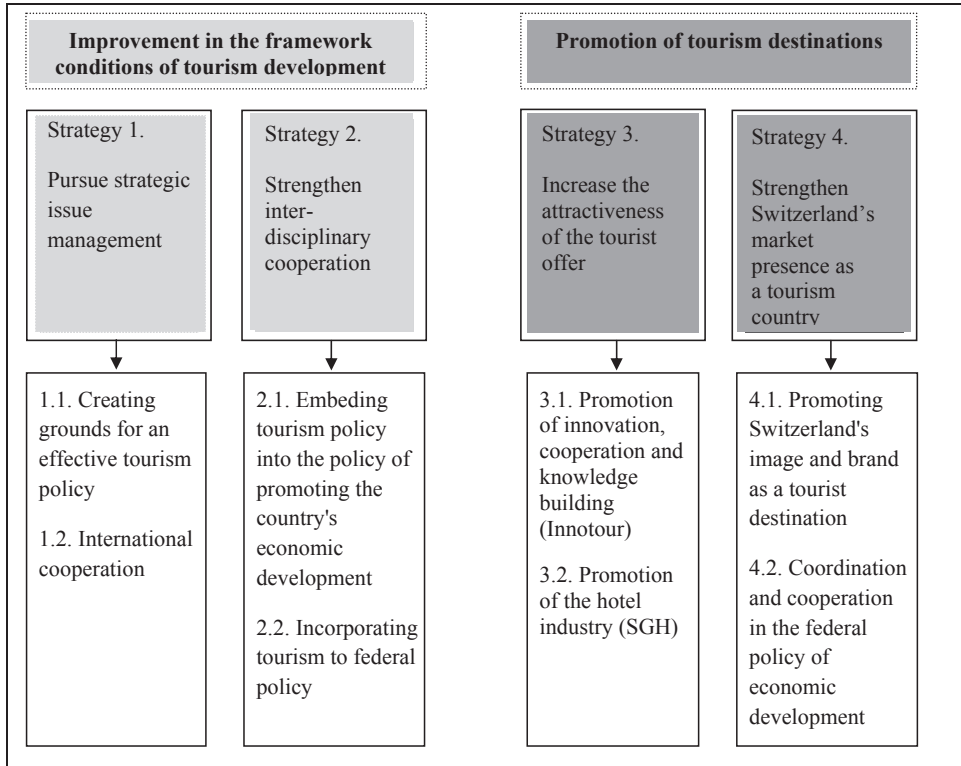
1. improvement in conditions for supporting entrepreneurship (through co-funding innovation and investment projects in tourist destinations as well as supporting cooperation between companies);
2. increase of attractiveness of the Swiss tourism offer;
3. strengthening the image of Switzerland as an attractive tourist destination on the international stage, particularly among competing Alpine countries,
4. pursuit of a tourism policy based on the assumptions of sustainable development.

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<sup>26</sup> In 2009, an 8% decrease was recorded in the number of bednights in Swiss hotels as compared to the previous year. This unfavorable tendency particularly affected Alpine regions where the decrease in the number of beds amounted to -13.3%.

These four strategies, implemented simultaneously as part of two strategic axes, are assigned to these objectives:

- I. Improvement in the framework conditions of tourism development;
- II. Promotion of tourism destinations (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** New Swiss tourism policy principles

Source: [SECO 2010, p. 6].

The assumptions of the four strategies mentioned above are discussed briefly below.

### *Strategy 1. Pursue strategic issue management*

This strategy intends to tackle issues related to state intervention in solving key problems of tourism development, e.g., implementation of strategic and legal solutions to minimize: negative consequences of climate changes; conflicts between various interest groups; planning and monitoring the expansion of tourism based on the principles of sustainable development, etc. The beneficiaries of this strategy are tourism organizations

and companies. This strategy is implemented by the Tourism Department (*Service du tourisme*) of the Office of Economic Development (SECO).

This strategy also assumes monitoring the place of tourism in the economy by fostering statistical research related to: the tourism satellite account, the tourist balance, monitoring of domestic and foreign tourist markets and the competitiveness of tourist destinations. These tasks were entrusted to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the research institute BAKBASEL (Basel Economics). Moreover, demand data is collected by Switzerland Tourism based on surveys conducted among tourists visiting Switzerland.

In addition, the Swiss Federal Council has been developing an exchange platform for strategic questions relating to the new tourism policy. Under the heading "Tourism Forum Switzerland" (FTS), regular meetings are being held between federal authorities and the representatives of cantons, regions and tourist destinations. The purpose of FTS is to monitor tendencies in Swiss tourism, solve problems and conflicts, and improve cooperation in the Swiss tourism industry. The first forum was held in Bern in November 2012.

### *Strategy 2. Strengthen inter-disciplinary cooperation*

Since tourism is a heterogeneous industry, the new tourism policy requires cooperation with other sectors of the national economy. The following policy areas, amongst others, are important for tourism development:

- *regional development and planning* (tourism should be developed in those areas where the raw materials for tourism exist: e.g., Zermatt lies at the foot of the Matterhorn, etc.);
- *transport policy* (by providing tourists with public transport to tourist attractions and promoting environmentally-friendly transport, i.e., soft mobility both in mountain resorts and in urban agglomerations);
- *support for agriculture* (e.g., by using the existing synergy between agricultural producers and hotel and restaurant owners, and the development of agritourism);
- *policy of environmental protection and protected areas* (mainly related to following the principles of sustainable development);
- *policy related to climate changes* (which has a huge impact on the present and future Swiss tourist offer).

The new tourism policy is also a part of a greater whole, namely the promotion of Switzerland's economic development. It fits into several strategic solutions, among others:

- strategy to boost entrepreneurship and foreign investments in Switzerland,<sup>27</sup>
- integrated promotion of Swiss exports.

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<sup>27</sup> Meaning the introduction of administrative facilitations for companies, among others, through the introduction of computerized administration, the promotion of innovations, and facilitating entry into new markets.

*Strategy 3. Increase the attractiveness of the tourist offer*

This strategy focuses on promoting innovations, collaboration between entities operating in the tourism industry and knowledge building (gathering information and exchanging good practices). First of all, the emphasis is put on support for tourism by means of revised federal legislation concerning, as previously mentioned, the Innotour program.

In addition, this strategy aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the hotel industry. This applies to supporting domestic administrators of accommodation facilities by providing them with the possibility to use low-interest loans.<sup>28</sup>

*Strategy 4. Strengthening Switzerland's market presence as a tourism country*

The aim of this strategy is to coordinate the marketing efforts of companies and tourism organizations on the local, regional, and cantonal level.

The increasing globalization tendencies have meant greater importance to promotion on the national level. The following tasks are performed by Switzerland Tourism (a national tourism organization) to increase the competitive advantage of the country:

- commercialization of innovative tourism products via various distribution channels, including various online platforms;
- promotion of Switzerland as an attractive tourist destination both in the domestic market and abroad;<sup>29</sup>
- implementation of integrated marketing of destinations combined with Switzerland's economic promotion through the cooperation of Switzerland Tourism with OSEC Business Network Switzerland,<sup>30</sup>
- combination of destination marketing with simultaneous promotion of Swiss agricultural products<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> As has already been mentioned, these credits are granted by the Swiss Confederation via the Swiss Society of Hotel Credits (SGH). For the years 2012–2015, SGH had a budget amounting to CHF 136 million [SECO 2010, p. 7].

<sup>29</sup> In the winter 2009–2010 Switzerland Tourism conducted an intensive promotional campaign for Switzerland in the domestic market and in 3 strategic markets (Germany, France, and Italy). This required the launch of additional funds amounting to CHF 15 million by the Confederation. This campaign resulted in 1.4 million bednights and CHF 400 million in revenue from tourist arrivals [SECO 2012, p. 7].

<sup>30</sup> The institution OSEC Business Network Switzerland has been fulfilling operational tasks related to promoting the Swiss economy on the international stage since January 1, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Since 2009, SECO has been cooperating with the Federal Office for Agriculture (OFAG) and agricultural and tourist townships to promote regional products.



## **The Implementation Program for New Tourism Policy to Increase the Importance of Tourism for Swiss Economy (2012–2015)**

The application of the new tourism policy began in February 2012 within the framework of the “Implementation Program” approved by the Swiss Parliament for the years 2012–2015. This program includes 30 key tasks intended to stimulate tourism development in Switzerland, listed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Main tasks of implementation program

<b>Strategies and main objectives</b>	<b>Projects and tasks for central administration</b>
<b>Strategy 1. Pursue strategic issue management</b>	
<b>Objective 1.1 Creating grounds for an effective tourism policy</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing methodology for tourism satellite account.</li> <li>2. Intensifying statistical studies regarding registration of tourists in hotel database (HESTA).</li> <li>3. Introducing statistics regarding registration of tourists in self-catering accommodation (i.e., in second homes and mountain apartments) in the so-called PASTA base.</li> <li>4. Supporting statistical and benchmark studies regarding forecasts for Swiss tourism and the competitiveness of Switzerland on the international stage (BAKBASEL).</li> <li>5. Preparing a database of tourism know-how (good practices) to share knowledge between all actors of the Swiss tourist market.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>6. Organizing the Tourism Forum Switzerland (FTS) for exchanging information, monitoring and solving problems of the tourism industry.</li> <li>7. Publishing a newsletter concerning Swiss and international tourism policy.</li> </ol>
<b>Objective 1.2. International cooperation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Intensifying cooperation with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).</li> <li>9. Closer cooperation with the OECD Tourism Committee.</li> <li>10. Intensifying cooperation with the European Union regarding work on tourism policy (exchange of experience and benchmarking).</li> <li>11. Developing cooperation and exchange of experience regarding shaping tourism policy with other Alpine countries.</li> <li>12. Using good practices related to the synergy between OECD countries' tourist policies and their economic development.</li> </ol>

<sup>14</sup> This action applies to the following issues: improving the quality of tourism products, repositioning Switzerland's offer as a summer destination, the adaptation of the development of tourism to climate changes.

Table 4. cont.

Strategies and main objectives	Projects and tasks for central administration
<b>Strategy 2. Strengthening inter-disciplinary cooperation</b>	
<b>Objective 2.1. Embedding tourism policy into the policy of promoting the country's economic development</b>	13. Optimizing cooperation between the new regional policy (NRP) <sup>15</sup> and the tourism policy. 14. Entering priorities for tourism development into the policy of promoting Switzerland's economic development.
<b>Objective 2.2. Incorporating tourism into federal policy</b>	15. Closer cooperation between SECO and the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) <sup>16</sup> . 16. Preparing a document on compliance with the principles of sustainable development in tourism policy. 17. Intensifying cooperation between SECO and the Federal Office for the Environment (OFEV). 18. Valorization of agritourism potential (incorporating agricultural tourism services into the creation of tourism products), 19. Using common points between Switzerland's tourism policy and power policy.
<b>Strategy 3. Improving the quality of the tourism offer</b>	
<b>Objective 3.1 Promotion of innovation, cooperation and knowledge-building (Innotour)</b>	20. Enabling SECO as an information point when it comes to the condition of tourism in Switzerland. 21. Establishing an online platform for exchanging knowledge and experience between beneficiaries of the Innotour program. 22. Funding and implementing Innotour's model projects (bottom-up approach, i.e., the implementation of projects without main themes) (see item 4.2) 23. Funding and implementing Innotour's model projects (top-down, i.e., on the basis of issues determined by SECO). 24. Developing the Milestone program as a platform for innovations in tourism

<sup>15</sup> The new regional policy (NPR) and territorial organization policy was implemented in 2008. Its purpose is a holistic and long-term economic development of cantons with emphasis on the development of entrepreneurship and cooperation between cantons to stimulate tourism at regional and local levels.

<sup>16</sup> The project of the new territorial division in Switzerland from the point of view of the attractiveness of tourist regions, entitled "Projet de territoire Suisse", is one of the tasks conducted as part of the development of interdepartmental cooperation.

<b>Objective 3.2 Promotion of the hotel industry (SGH)</b>	25. Introducing legal facilitations encouraging hotel owners to finance the modernization of accommodation facilities by means of low-interest credits granted by SGH. 26. Introducing additional funds for the modernization of the tourist infrastructure. <sup>17</sup>
<b>Strategy 4. Strengthening Switzerland's market presence as a tourism country</b>	
<b>Objective 4.1 Promoting Switzerland's image and brand as a tourist destination</b>	27. In the years 2012–2013, the implementation of a program aimed at mitigating negative effects of the unfavorably high exchange rate of the Swiss franc. 28. Coordination and supervision of a project entitled: "Re-Invent Summer" implemented by Switzerland Tourism. <sup>18</sup> 29. Following the assumptions of the sustainable development policy.
<b>Objective 4.2 Coordination and cooperation in the federal policy of economic development</b>	30. Using similarities/synergies between the strategy of tourist marketing implemented by Switzerland Tourism and the marketing of Swiss agricultural products on priority markets.

**Source:** [SECO 2012, pp. 6–7].

As we can see, Swiss authorities are actively participating in the support of long-term and sustainable development of tourism in this country and the tourism policy (documents from the years: 1996, 2010 and 2012) is characterized by a high degree of consistency. Switzerland's tourism policy is thus one of the basic factors stimulating past, present, and future tourism development in this country.

## **Two Examples of Best Practice to Boost the Competitiveness of Swiss Tourism**

### *Destination Management Organization Concept*

As mentioned before, currently most Swiss destinations are in a mature stage of their development so they are more vulnerable to demand fluctuations, and environmental and economic stresses.

<sup>17</sup> Due to the high exchange rate of the Swiss franc, SGH received additional financial support for the years 2012–2015 from the Confederation to grant credits on preferential conditions to hotel owners.

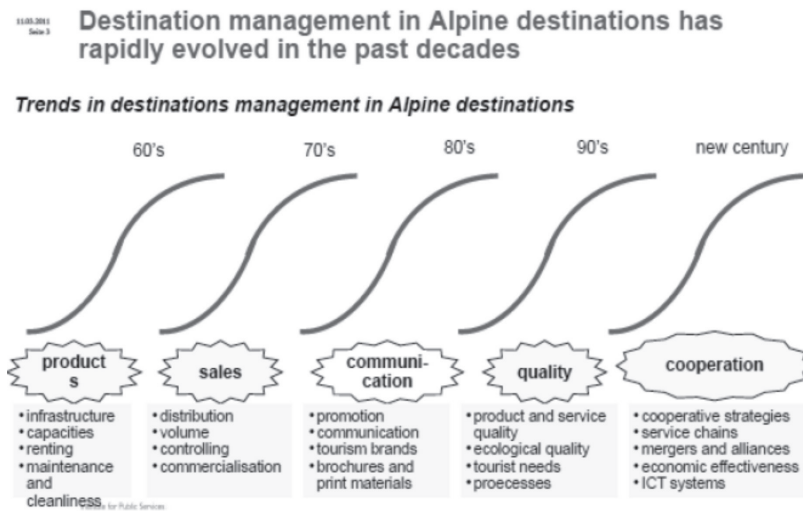
<sup>18</sup> This is related to the development of a competitive tourism offer and the promotion of Switzerland on the international stage as a summer destination.

Thus, strategic and integrated management of tourism is taking on ever-greater importance to find the right balance between socio-economic development of tourist resorts and their environmental protection to differentiate and strengthen their competitive position.

The model of Destination Management Organisation (DMO) based on public-private partnerships was developed in Switzerland by Th. Bieger and his team from the St. Gallen University in the mid-1990s [Bieger, Freyer 2005].

The term Destination Management Organization (DMO) refers to a coalition of many organizations and interests working together towards mutual goals [UNWTO 2007]. This organization does not control the activities of their partners but has the leading position in developing and managing partnerships through the destination to enhance its long-term competitiveness [Pike 2004]. The primary role of DMOs in the holistic management of tourist destinations focuses on planning, service coordination, marketing, branding, promotion and lobbying. These tasks are usually fulfilled at the local, regional or national level [Buhalis 2000; Gretzel *et al.* 2006].

Switzerland is one of the first countries where the destination management model was implemented. Figure 3 summarizes the evolution in destination management in Swiss destinations from the 1960s. From a product-based focus, destination management has evolved to a more cooperative system.



**Figure 2.** The development of integrated destination management in Switzerland

**Source:** [Bieger, Lasser, Beritelli 2010, p. 5].

Currently, scientists from St. Gallen University have been developing the 3rd generation DMO model. It is a structure that goes beyond the geographic boundaries of the destination and creates a network of relations necessary for holistic management of a tourist area by means of delegat-

ing certain tasks to external entities [Bieger, Lasser, Beritelli 2010]. The Confederation is financing the implementation of this concept in six Swiss tourist destinations.

### *Innotour Program*

Development of integrated management and other innovative solutions are supported by the Confederation in the framework of the Innotour program. The purpose of this project, under way since 1998, is to implement innovations in tourism both at the national and regional levels.

Confederation financial support for the years 2012–2015 was budgeted at the level of CHF 20 million for the most innovative projects submitted by entrepreneurs, scientific-research units, and public institutions.<sup>19</sup>

There are five major domains supported by this program (top-down approach):

1. Implementation of new, innovative products and channels of distribution for tourism services, e.g., development of summer villages in selected tourist destinations.<sup>20</sup>
2. Improvement of existing tourism services, e.g., implementation of Swiss quality management system – *Label de qualité*
3. Development of new organizational structures both in tourist companies and in destination management, e.g., DMOs of 3rd generation.
4. Improvement of professional skills, e.g., elaboration of new training program for mountain guides.
5. Research and development, e.g., financial support for research drawn up by Basel Economics (BAK) on “International Benchmarking and the Development of Urban Tourism”.

Novelties introduced for the third edition of the Innotour program until the year 2015 focus on:

- supporting the most innovative projects, surpassing the five thematic domains mentioned above, submitted by entities from the tourism industry based on a bottom-up approach.
- granting additional financial funds by the Confederation for sharing knowledge and experience as well as implementing and monitoring the implementation of the best projects.

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<sup>19</sup> It should be added that only consortiums consisting of several entities, i.e., tourist destinations, scientific and research institutions, can apply for financial support. The amount of financing each time is 50% of the requested sum.

<sup>20</sup> Currently, Innotour’s funds are used to finance a guide for townships as well as tourist investors entitled: “*Implementation de villages de vacances et d’hôtels. Guide pour les communes, les autorités et les promoteurs touristiques*”. [Implementation of holiday villages and hotels. Guide for townships, authorities and tourist entities – translated by the author]. This project aims at increasing the tourist occupancy in the long-term perspective through an optimized commercialization strategy. The guide presents all procedures and stages for creating this type of infrastructure within tourist communes.

To receive financial support, three basic conditions have to be met:

- contributing to strengthening Switzerland’s competitiveness as an attractive country in terms of tourism;
- complying with the principles of sustainable tourism development;
- creating employment opportunities for local communities.<sup>21</sup>

Every year the best and the most innovative projects are awarded the prestigious *Milestone Award*. It is the most prestigious award granted since 2000 to the best tourist companies and individuals operating in the Swiss tourism industry. Milestone is also a platform for exchanging information and experience between the most innovative tourist companies.

Tourism policy in Poland. Swiss good practices regarding public-private partnerships and commercialization of tourism products.

Tourism is becoming an important field of business activities also in Poland, especially after joining of the European Union in 2004 [ETC 2014]. In the years 2002–2012, the number of foreign tourist arrivals rose by 4.2%<sup>22</sup> (see Table 5).

**Table 5.** Arrivals of foreign tourists in Poland in the period 2002–2012 (spending at least one night in the country) in millions of arrivals

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change 2012/2002 in %
14.2	13.7	14.3	15.2	15.7	15.0	13	11.8	12.4	13.3	14.8	4.2

**Source:** Institute of Tourism, <http://www.intur.com.pl/itenglish/arrivals.php?r=99> (15.11.2014).

According to the last report of World Travel and Tourism Council, the direct contribution of tourism to Poland’s GDP in 2013 amounted to PLN 34.7 billion (USD 11.3 billion) (2.1% of GDP) and this is forecast to rise by 5.2% each year, from 2014 to 2024. Tourism plays a significant role in Poland’s trade exchange and employment rate. At present, 4.9% of total exports and 2.2% of employment are generated by the tourism industry (WTTC 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Until this day, the Innotour program has financed more than 300 projects, on the one hand fostering development of local entrepreneurship, creation of new jobs and, on the other hand, strengthening Switzerland’s image as a tourist destination that is still innovative and competitive.

<sup>22</sup> The method used in Poland to provide the number of tourist arrivals and the basic characteristics of tourists is based on international tourist arrivals at borders (including one-day visitors), (Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Poland 2012). Since Poland joined the Schengen area, precise counting of incoming traffic is not possible.

As regards Polish tourism policy, the leading strategic document for tourism development in Poland is “*Directions for Tourism development until 2015*” and “*Programme of tourism development until 2020*”. Those documents not only define tasks for the Polish government aiming for a harmonious and sustainable development of the tourist sector but also indicate actions in which all tourism stakeholders should be involved, e.g., local government units, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs, trade organizations, and the scientific environment.

Both governmental strategies bear some resemblance to the tourism policy implemented in Switzerland, especially regarding the reference to the significance of tourism for economic development and its links with other industries (among others, the construction and transport industries, and agriculture, environmental protection and sustainable development).<sup>23</sup>

One of the main goals in regard to tourism development in Poland until 2015 is to shape a legal and institutional framework favorable to public-private partnerships (PPP) and the development of competitive tourism products.

The Law on public-private partnership (PPP) has been binding in Poland since 2009. However, as is shown by reports from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and the PPP Foundation Centre, public-private partnerships relate to tourism and its management system only to a small extent [Herbst, Jadach-Sepiolo 2012; Herbst, Jagusztyn-Krynicky, Szewczyk 2012]. The Law on PPP simply underlines the fact that the partners should jointly split tasks and risks between the public and private partners without giving them any specific regulations defining the category of risks, which affects the implementation of this law in practice. According to R. Stanek and D. Toft [2011] and the last PARP report [2013], legal barriers, lack of experience in local government offices, and psychological barriers (fear of the unknown) in public-private cooperation constitute the main obstacles to PPP development in Poland.

When it comes to the tourism sector, interviews carried out by the author in 2011 [Klimek 2013a] with the representatives of local and regional tourism organizations in Poland confirm PPP constraints and demonstrate that managers of these entities were afraid of cooperation with private partners. Comparative studies conducted by the author in Poland, Switzerland and other Alpine countries [Klimek 2013b] also reveal important differences in destination management.

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<sup>23</sup> The government side appointed an interdepartmental team of experts to pursue statutory tasks determined in the study. The “*Information on the Implementation of Statutory Tasks of Members of the Interdepartmental Team for the Coordination of Governmental Tasks in 2012*” specified in the “*Directions of Tourism Development until 2015*” published in 2012 demonstrates that particular ministries were involved in the implementation of numerous tasks. However, some of them do not refer directly to tourism but contain a description of implemented projects used, e.g., to stimulate entrepreneurship and increase the competitiveness of the Polish economy by supporting innovations in the industry and services.

In contrast to Swiss DMOs, the role of Polish tourism organizations is limited only to information and tourism promotion but these entities are not managing the places of tourist reception in an integrated manner. For this reason the DMO concept is still hardly known in this country.

Moreover, the author's current analysis of 56 Polish and 49 Swiss tourism organizations websites [Klimek 2014] demonstrates important differences with regard to the role of tourist organizations in commercializing tourist products.

Poland, like Switzerland, has a three-level system of promotion and tourism management. According to the Act on the Polish Tourism Organization [Journal of Laws 1999, No. 62, item 689], one of the most important tasks for regional and local tourism organizations in Poland should be the development of tourism products around tourist attractions.

Hence, currently, not one local or regional tourism organization in Poland is developing integrated tourism products (holiday offers, accommodations, transportation, tickets, etc.) [Klimek 2013 a, b, 2014]. Those products are not commercialized at the national level by the Polish Tourism Organization either.

In contrast to Poland, the majority (approx. 90%) of Swiss tourism organizations sell various forms of accommodations by means of online booking systems. Tourism offers in the form of packages of services are also commercialized using different Internet tools<sup>24</sup> [Klimek 2014]. This is only achievable thanks to active cooperation between different suppliers on the basis of public-private partnerships [Bornhorst, Ritchie, Sheehan 2010].

Hence, Swiss DMOs seem to be an ideal reference point for Polish destinations to increase their competitiveness, thanks to the implementation of integrated management. For this reason, the government's actions regarding tourism policy in Poland should head in this direction.

## Conclusion

Switzerland can be considered the cradle of modern tourism, where innovative solutions in tourism policy and holistic management have been implemented for many years.

The consistent concept of tourism policy and tools implemented in this country indicates how important tourism development is for Swiss authorities. Initiatives embedding tourism development into a comprehensive state economic policy and searching for synergy between tourism and other branches seem to be particularly interesting.

Moreover, putting emphasis on monitoring the tourist market, financial support for the hotel industry and constant improvement of quali-

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<sup>24</sup> A service package is any previous combination of at least two services offered to the customer as one product [Kaczmarek, Stasiak, Włodarczyk 2005].



ty through the development of innovations can be considered as a set of good practices regarding the direction in which the tourism development should be headed.

Swiss solutions related to the destination management concept based on public-private partnerships seem to be particularly valuable and transferable to Polish tourism.

However, the result of the studies cited above and previous observations of the tourism market in Poland suggest that currently there is not sufficient teamwork and constructive cooperation that would integrate all stakeholders, a basic concept of the DMO approach.

Therefore, successful implementation of integrated management in Poland will not be possible without a change in the attitude of public and private stakeholders concerning the advantages of common cooperation.

The present study was limited to Polish and Swiss tourism development. The critical analysis of integrated management strategies of other European DMOs would constitute an interesting option for an extension of this research. Thus, it would help to get more information in those key areas to reinforce the competitiveness of European tourism destinations.

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## PROTURYSTYCZNA POLITYKA PAŃSTWA SZWAJCARSKIEGO. WYBRANE DOBRE PRZYKŁADY DLA TURYSTYKI POLSKIEJ

### Abstrakt

**Cel pracy.** Ukazanie rosnącej roli państwa we wprowadzaniu rozwiązań strategicznych w celu stymulowania holistycznego rozwoju turystyki w Szwajcarii.

**Metoda.** Jako metodę badawczą zastosowano analizę jakościową danych źródłowych pochodzących ze Szwajcarskiego Departamentu ds. Ekonomii (SECO) oraz Szwajcarskiej Federacji Turystycznej, Ministerstwa Sportu i Turystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Polskiej Organizacji Turystycznej. Dokonano także porównawczej analizy stron internetowych 49 szwajcarskich oraz 16 regionalnych i 50 lokalnych polskich organizacji turystycznych.

**Wyniki.** W artykule zaprezentowano przekrojowe studium dotyczące pro-turystycznej polityki państwa implementowanej w Szwajcarii w okresie ostatnich 19 lat. Ponadto analiza porównawcza stosowanych rozwiązań strategicznych w zakresie stymulowania rozwoju turystyki w Szwajcarii oraz w Polsce pozwoliła ukazać zdecydowane różnice jeśli chodzi o rolę partnerstwa publiczno-prywatnego w zarządzaniu turystyką oraz w zakresie komercjalizacji produktów turystycznych przez szwajcarskie oraz polskie organizacje turystyczne.

**Ograniczenia badań i wnioski.** Analiza porównawcza dotyczyła jedynie porównań w zakresie polityki pro-turystycznej Szwajcarii i Polski oraz roli polskich oraz szwajcarskich organizacji turystycznych.

**Implikacje praktyczne.** Opisane w artykule przykłady mogą stanowić zestaw dobrych praktyk dla decydentów i organów rządowych zajmujących się wspieraniem rozwoju turystyki w Polsce, w celu stworzenia efektywniejszego systemu zarządzania turystyką.

**Oryginalność.** Innowacyjne rozwiązania pro-turystyczne stosowane w Szwajcarii są rzadko prezentowane w opracowaniach naukowych publikowanych w Polsce.

**Rodzaj pracy.** Artykuł o charakterze przeglądowym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy, proturystyczna polityka państwa szwajcarskiego, programy wsparcia turystyki na poziomie krajowym, partnerstwo publiczno-prywatne, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).