



Research on environmental awareness and attitudes of people, entities and institutions related to the Małopolska Region's landscape parks

Summary

Małopolska Regional
Development Observatory

Department
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This report is a summary of the **“Survey of environmental awareness and attitudes of people, entities, and institutions related to Małopolska region’s landscape parks”**, which results will serve as a basis for the implementation of specific activities and projects in the field of nature and landscape protection policy by the regional authorities, including increasing the attractiveness of landscape parks when considering the opinions of many user environments.



The report consists of a theoretical part, a part presenting the results of research, and a summary containing conclusions and further recommendations. The first part is the theoretical introduction containing the methodology and course of the study as well as the main information on the protection of nature and its individual forms in Poland and the Małopolska region.

The study was conducted with the use of the following research methods and techniques:

A) Analysis of existing data (*desk research*),

B) Quantitative research:

- direct individual questionnaire interviews (PAPI) on a sample of 2000 inhabitants, 1077 tourists, 550 entrepreneurs and 31 representatives of local government,
- online survey (CAWI) available to anyone interested in environmental protection and landscape parks (on a sample of 53 respondents),

C) Qualitative research:

- 4 group interviews (FGI) with representatives of entities operating in landscape parks,
- 20 individual in-depth interviews (IDI) with representatives of local governments, local non-governmental organizations and cultural institutions,
- 4 workshops for teenagers.

As part of the theoretical introduction, **a historical outline of the development of the nature protection system in Poland was presented**. The effect of works aimed at securing areas in their natural state is creating the area of legally protected areas constituting over 33% of the country’s area. Then the forms of nature protection occurring in Poland were discussed. One of them - landscape parks have been presented in detail - their purposes, functions, and subject of protection have been listed. Additionally, this sub-chapter presents issues that were verified during the study, e.g. the attitude of local authorities to landscape parks.



The following part of the theoretical introduction focuses on forms of nature protection in the Małopolska Voivodeship. **53% of its area is covered by at least one form of nature protection**. Particular attention was devoted to 11 landscape parks created in this region. In total, they cover an area of approx. 4,000 ha. This report presented the characteristic features of each park. It can be concluded that these are areas with high tourist potential and room for various kinds of tourism: wellness tourism, pilgrimage tourism, sports tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, and sightseeing.



The budgetary unit responsible for coordinating the protection activities of landscape parks in the Małopolska Voivodeship is Landscape Park Complex of the Małopolska Voivodeship (Zespół Parków Krajobrazowych Województwa Małopolskiego). The further part of the theoretical introduction is devoted to ZPKWM- its history and activities. Next, the legal conditions of nature protection at the regional and local level were discussed. **The analysis of strategic municipal documents showed that a large percentage of communes perceive landscape parks primarily as a valuable tourist resource around which you can build a brand of the region and fuel its economy, but at the same time is probably**



a constraint for the development of the commune. What is more local government relatively rarely mentions the ZPKWM as a partner of undertaken activities in the development strategies. This matter was also the subject of further research.



The next part of the chapter presents the results of previous research on the social attitude to environmental protection, which also showed that at least some of the inhabitants of the Lesser Poland Voivodship understand the role of nature protection and are involved in various campaigns promoting their protection of landscape parks. A total of 63% of the surveyed companies conduct business in line with the CSR concept; some make it unknowingly.

The level of awareness related to the functioning and role of landscape parks among NGOs is relatively low, lower than in other areas of environmental protection, for example, protection of atmospheric air and animal rights.

The next part of the report presents the results of the study divided into those thematic areas:

A) thematic areas:

- environmental awareness of the respondents,
- the attitudes of the surveyed groups towards landscape parks,
- sources of information about landscape parks,
- cooperation between the Landscape Park Complex of the Małopolska Voivodship and users of landscape parks,
- prospects of development of landscape parks in the Małopolska Voivodeship.

B) including territorial areas of:

- Jurassic area,
- area of the Carpathian Foothills,
- area of the Poprad Landscape Park,
- the area of the Little Beskids.

The study confirmed that **it is necessary to conduct further awareness-raising activities among all landscape park visitors.** What is more, the report presents the opinions of various stakeholder groups regarding the purpose and reasons for creating landscape parks. The awareness was also examined by testing the knowledge of the rules and principles concerning the landscape parks. At the same time, residents and entrepreneurs have demonstrated a lot of knowledge about the characteristic elements of the landscape parks in which they live or operate.



As part of the study, the attitude of the users of landscape parks towards this form of nature protection was verified, which after analysis can be described as positive. Yet the impact of residents on parks, according to this group, is neutral. What is more, **both residents and entrepreneurs declared a high level of acceptance towards the regulations implemented in the parks.** At the same time, the report discusses those principles that, according to respondents, are onerous and more limitations that should be introduced in the parks. This topic was also related to the problems and inconveniences

arising from the existence of parks, including building restrictions. In addition, the opportunities and benefits stemming from the location of landscape parks and its impact on the local labour market and employment, as well as other aspects of socio-economic life, were also presented.



The next part of the report refers to the analysis of landscape parks in terms of touristic attractiveness, which in the opinion of all respondents is high. This is confirmed by the results of the previously presented research, which showed that, **according to representatives of local governments, the tourism potential of landscape parks should be**

used for the development of the entire commune. People representing this community also defined their vision of development of their commune in the respect of landscape parks. The study also allowed to assess the impact of tourism from the perspective of various groups of respondents.

The next analysed aspect were the sources of information on landscape parks and the activities of ZPKWM. **The results indicate a low level of search for information in this regard by both residents and tourists.** The most frequently selected information channels and communication tools with ZPKWM were also presented. These include information boards located in the park, books and articles, social media, meetings with representatives of ZPKWM, the official website of ZPKWM and other internet sources.

The next chapter gives information about the cooperation between ZPKWM and users of landscape parks. The research shows that the most varied cooperation occurs between local government units and their subsidiaries (educational units). However, this cooperation is not conducted at the same level in every LGU. **The level of cooperation with residents and entrepreneurs is rather low - a significant number have not heard of such an entity as ZPKWM.** This chapter also presents forms of previous cooperation with park users as well as potential development opportunities. The participation of various groups in educational activities carried out by ZPKWM was also discussed.



An important part of the study was to define development prospects for landscape parks in the Małopolska Voivodeship. This subsection is somehow an introduction to the next part of the report, which contains the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the study. To a large extent, it is based on the results of qualitative research which allowed to gather a lot of valuable information which could provide ideas for further activities of the ZPKWM in the future. This section describes the potential fields of ZPKWM's cooperation with park users. Additionally, the actions of ZPKWM has been identified. All

of which could be used to improve the living conditions of residents, conduct business or social activities, or positively affect local development. These include, for example, the organization of grant competitions, enhancement of educational activities, the establishment of a landscape park board, an increase in promotional activities including the creation of a brand of landscape parks, improving existing and building new educational centres. What is more the residents' expectations regarding the development of parks were determined, including creating new walking or cycling routes as well as the unification of the periodic events' calendar.

The last part of the report is a summary of the results of the expert panel. This meeting consisted of several parts - a summary of information about the project, an indication of the role and vision of the Landscape Park Complex of the Malopolska Voivodeship, steps to be taken into account in terms of natural and landscape values. Continued, directed to the designated form of cooperation with park users and local government representatives, as well as the assessment of ZPKWM in terms of entering into partnerships for stakeholder groups. The theme ending the panel was communication and education in the parks.



A summary of conversations that can be used that **continuing and increasing the scale of educational activities is a priority for ZPKWM.** You should proceed to implementation using the desired position among groups - residents and users using services in the park. Enriching prices and benefits related to the protection of landscape park areas Help in detecting among them care for their own environment. The valuable joy of experts is used for this purpose to design ecosystem services, high communication value. ZPKWM is also expected to provide information on residents in spatial plans - an explanation of

the effects of adopting measures and actions based on building conditions. It was emphasized that building understandable connections is possible in recent connections with forms of communication and with those used ZPKWM.



Experts pointed out that sustainable tourism will be one of the basic development changes. The role of ZPKWM in attracting tourists can be implemented by: engaging in creating products and a tourist offer including an educational component, supplementing the tourist infrastructure with playgrounds for children and designating new routes with the least impact on the environment, maintaining existing infrastructure, networking agritourism offers and the development of public transport in cooperation with partners.

To direct local development to the use of strengths while maintaining them, ZPKWM must take the role of the initiator - leader who must act and take into account the creation of the region's development, development of a certification system for facilities, products and services within the boundaries of landscape parks referring to local traditions. The expected form of support from the Voivodship Government is preferential treatment for communes located in Lesser Poland parks and the organization of grant competitions. In order to prepare ZPKWM to implement the priorities assigned to them, you can change the organization and employment in this unit.

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