Lake Balaton and sustainable tourism development (Hungary)

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14\textsuperscript{th} Living Lakes Conference

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Location

- Central-Europe
- Carpathian basin
Nature
– the Lake and its surroundings

- Largest freshwater lake in Central Europe
- Natural shallow lake, average depth is 3.2 m
- Lake surface area is 600 sqkm

- Flora and fauna

- One of the most significant natural treasure of Hungary, a unique ecological asset of the CE region
- Large areas of nature and landscape protection, such as the Balaton Upland National Park, and Ramsar sites
Nature
– Facts number
• 2000 species of algae
• 1200 species of invertebrates
• 41 species of fish

• 616 km2 protected area, of which 147 km2 is under Ramsar Convention
• Natura 2000 sites 1981 km2 (43 sites)
• 207 species of protected plants
• 37 species of protected animals

Ecosystem services
• Provisioning services (food, water, row material…)
• Regulating services (climate regulation, purification of water, pest and disease control)
• Cultural services (recreational experiences, ecotourism, science, education, painting, folklore)
People
– Culture and History

• Cultural values, heritage sites, folk art as well as events cultivating these traditions and memories are determinative factors in developing the regional image.

• The permanent population is about 275,000 people, considering the families of weekend house owners it rises well above 500,000 people.

• In summer time, taking into account tourists and visitors, as well, the number of population increases up to 1-2 million people.
Economy

– Tourism: the driving force of the economy

• Bathing in Lake Balaton started in 19th century.
• About one third of tourism related revenues in Hungary are generated in the Lake Balaton Region. Similarly, it has the same share in tourism related infrastructure.
Institutional System
– Lake Balaton Development Council (LBDC)

Main task: coordination of the developments of the Lake Balaton Resort Area

Legal Base: the Act XXI of 1996 on Regional Development and Spatial Planning

Members (11):
• County Governments (6)
• Central government (1)
• Representatives of Ministries (4)

Operational body of the Council:
Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency
Trends and developments
Infrastructure
– already developed

- Waste management
- Drinking water supply and sewerage
- Gas, electricity and telephone connections, etc.
Transportation
– already in place: roads, railways, airports, navigation
Accommodation facilities
– private and commercial

- 186 Hotels (Hotels: 28 ****, 1 *****; wellness and thermal)
- 30% of the hotel beds of the country
- 70% of private accommodation beds of the country
Trends in tourism I.
– number of guests

• The average day spent in Lake Balaton dropped from **4,81 to 3,36** from 2001 to 2013, in case of domestic tourists from **3,29 to 2,81**, while in case of foreigner tourist from **6,25 to 4,91**.
Trends in tourism II.
– number of guest nights

- Significant European "sending" countries
  Germany, Austria, Russia, Czech Republic, Poland …
Environmental trends
- improved, but vulnerable water quality -

- Emerged in the early 70’s
  - eutrophication accelerated
  - mass blooms of blue-green algae
  - devastation of fish populations

- Action Plan was set by the Government to reduce nutrients load
  - Sewage system development
  - Reduction of effluents limit of P
  - Control of livestock breeding
  - Dredging in most polluted areas
  - Reconstruction of Kis-Balaton wetland
Environmental trends II.
- new and emerging issue 2000-2004: drop of water level -
Water balance

Natural water balance at lake Balaton
1921-2012

Source: Central-Transdanubian Water Management Directorate
Vision set in the strategy …
– leading lake destination in CE

The Lake Balaton region aims to become a model of naturalness with high standards of living in the Central-European Region. Building on the unique natural and cultural features of the lake and its surrounding landscape, the region offers exclusive and attractive living, recreational and working environment.

• Balaton Regional Development Strategy 2014-20, approved by Lake Balaton Development Council in October, 2014
• Balaton Development Program 2014-20, approved by Lake Balaton Development Council in October, 2014
Priorities of the strategy
– aim at increasing the competitiveness of the region

1. To improve economic performance and income-generation capacity
2. Coordinated development of tourism products and services
3. To improve health condition and quality of life of inhabitants and visitors
4. Encouraging processing and consumption of local food and products
5. Harmonious development of the society
6. To preserve natural value and cultural heritage, sustainable land use and preserving biodiversity
7. Eco-friendly and resources efficient transport system
How to manage sustainability
- examples -
Regional Development Database (example) – by settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of development</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Jel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels (4*, 5* new or upgrade)</td>
<td>7/40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ports (sail boats, boats)</td>
<td>2/30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaches, spas, aqua parks</td>
<td>1/36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme park, complex objects</td>
<td>0/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine tourism</td>
<td>0/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling, horserd., eco-tourism</td>
<td>4/44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf tourism</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Entertainment</td>
<td>5/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townscape revitalisation</td>
<td>7/114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and economic</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp sites</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Number in the specific town / total number in the region
Regional Development Database (example)
– by type of developments: ⭐️ hotels (4*, 5*) and ▲ campsites
Shore zone rehabilitation

- To restore/keep good environmental quality
- To ensure free public access to the lake
  (min 30% of the shore area that belongs to the built up area of the settlement)
On-line Environmental Monitoring

• The objective was to provide region specific information on the environment and identify links with the load resulting from traffic, tourism and natural forces.

• It provides management alternatives where possible with the option of immediate response.
Blue-Wave Flag
– quality standard of beaches and marinas

Aim:
- To ensure good quality of beach environments and services

Activities:
- By Lake Balaton Alliance
- Annual competition since 2004
- Country wide
- Expanded to marinas
Let's move your body!
– amateur sport programme series at Lake Balaton

Aim:
- Promote sports, active, healthy life

Activities:
- by Lake Balaton Development Council
- Summer program since 2004
- 33 settlements, 36 beaches, 329 playgrounds
- 24,022 people participated in 2014
Playful discovery of Lake Balaton – learning by playing

Aim:
- to learn more about the lake

Activities:
- by Lake Balaton Development Council
- 12 months program since 2009
- In- and out-door playgrounds,
- Set of 26 creative games
... if you have any questions, please contact us:

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