

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM IN FOREST REGIONS. THE EXAMPLE OF SIMMENTAL AND DIEMTIGTAL (SWITZERLAND)

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Abstract

This COST E 33 research project aims in a first step to assess the regional economic impact of nature-based tourism by a value-added survey at the example of a forest region in Switzerland. In a second step the project identifies possibilities for enhancing the added value of nature-based tourism by a Delphi-survey conducted with selected experts from science and practice.

The main results of the value-added survey are that the forest-related economic impact of nature-based tourism is still relatively low. On the other hand, the results of the equipment branch-analysis suggest that the expenditures for equipment and sporting goods are significantly higher than the direct spending while in the test region.

The Delphi-survey shows that the demand for nature-based tourism activities will continue to rise in the mid-term. This holds especially true for leisure activities which do not require special abilities and which can be practiced by heterogeneous target groups. Possibilities to generate added value can be enhanced through the development of the tourist supply-chain by implementing attractive accommodation, gastronomy and services.

The value-added potential of nature-based tourism supply in forest regions seems to be not completely exploited. The forestry sees the recreational function of forests as primarily nature-based leisure activities that can be performed for free at any time. Bookable forest-offers which generate added value are so far limited to a few leisure activities.

Key Words

Nature-based tourism, regional economic success factors, forest management, delphi analysis.