

# Integrated endogenous regional development concept and the role of Šumava National Park administration

## Integrovaný koncept endogenního regionálního rozvoje a úloha Národního parku Šumava

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### Abstract

Extensive sociological research has been performed within the two projects named „Sustainable development strategy for Šumava Biosphere reserve“ and „Land-use and the future of Šumava Mts“ which examined essential problems of further development of this territory, and prospects of its key stakeholders (or social groups). Current life style of local population, including the readiness of people to participate in decision making in land-use was another issue addressed by these studies.

The concept of IERD was used as the methodological frame to assess developmental chances of Šumava region. Identification of whether there is a potential niche of „social entrepreneur“ in the model area as well as assessment of preconditions necessary the potential niche to be realized has been the main ambitions of the paper.

*Key words:* Šumava National Park, marginal areas, public participation, regional development, intergrated endogenous development

### Introduction

The concept of Integrated Endogenous Regional Development (IERD) began to be discussed as early as in 1970 when regional politicians started to think about new strategies for the developing countries. This approach is now taken into account by European Union as well when discussing the development of European rural areas (programmes LEADER, for example). JEHLÉ (1998) identifies the key points of the above mentioned concept the following way:

- viewing the area as a whole, not from one sector perspective only
- participation of local social groups (population) in decision making process, and
- development of regional endogenous potential

Concept of IERD represent thus one aspect of the more broadly defined concept of sustainable development defined as the official world development strategy for 21st century at The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Stress on participation of local public in decision making process means transition from the strategy of clashes and behavior based on power to the strategy of cooperation and negotiation. The process can be seen as transition from centralist and sectoral way of management in which the system of instructions prevailed coming from up downward to the system of „participatory democracy“ or let us say to the civil society in which the key role is played by local population and negotiations become prevailing method of communication. The result

should be a consensus, not enforcement of the idea of one subject on the expenses of the other one; i.e. introduction of a symmetry between the subjects. As PATEMAN (1970) said, traditionally, democratic theory has offered two basic rationales for citizen participation in decision making, namely that citizen participation is likely to produce better decision and better citizens. The critical point, however, always seems to be building of such a discussion platform.

Viewing from developmental perspective any process of consensus building could be seen as seeking for jointly shared strategy/mission for the future. The problem is, however, that the Czech Republic has still relatively strong centralized government. There is no representative authority on regional level that would take responsibility of the development of a region as a whole. The question is on political mechanisms effective enough to ensure public participation in decision making process in this context. As many analyses show, present day political systems proved to be weak in this point (BRYSON & EINSWEILER 1988). All they are dominated by state, i.e. more or less central power.

As a consequence of the above stated, any institution (more or less formal) representing what could be identified as joint vision/strategy need to be established by use of bottom-up procedure „clustering“ local stakeholders rather than by use of procedure delegating share of power from the top.

Support to local institutions (in the broadest sense of the word) should be then the main ambition of state policy following ideas of IERD. Identification of local key stakeholders, who could start creating core of local institutional network being considered as the driving force of regional development might be the first step on this long way. The term of „social entrepreneur“ is used in this context (GARFOLI 1992) to specify stakeholder(s), that could be considered as key driving force of future development of the region. It is expected to play the coordinating role of individual activities of private entrepreneurs, corporations as well as local institutions.

To assess developmental chances of Šumava region, concept of IERD was used as the methodological frame. Identification of whether there is a potential niche of „social entrepreneur“ in the model area as well as assessment of preconditions necessary the potential niche to be realized has been the main ambitions of the contribution.

## **Model area**

Šumava region is situated in the south-west part of the Czech Republic. Thanks to its geographical position this area retained natural character of practically untouched border forest almost by the end of the first half of 20 th century. Settlements and nature resources exploitation, however, was there for centuries – particularly glass making and wood processing industry – and was leading to a long tradition of harmony between man and nature. The post war period of development is characterized by ethnic shift in 1946 (MEJSTRÍK & AL. 1995, BARTOŠ & TĚŠITEL, 1996). Establishing of „iron curtain“ and military training areas in this territory were another specific phenomena the territory was famous of. Vicinity of western border, distance from centers and rural character of landscape were the main factors making the territory economically marginal. On the other hand, natural beauties of the area have sustained preserved which resulted in proclaiming of Protected Landscape Area in 1963 and National Park in 1991 there.

Opening of borders after 1989 introduced new situation which has resulted in changing of roles of individual regions within the Czech Republic as well as in European context. Šumava region has ceased to be viewed as being at the edge. Political changes plunged it immediately into European context. It is even anticipated this region is likely to be under

pressure from the side of „western“ developers who have recognized his role of „empty and relatively underdeveloped“ space within relatively densely populated and „sold“ Europe. The pressure has already been present in hidden form but the main attack is expected to start after entering of the Czech Republic into European Union where flow of labor and capital is expected to be free.

Despite the fact, that nature protection has a long history there, present day landscape is a result of historical interaction of local people and nature. With the exception of the (core) of National Park, cultural landscape has been the subject to protection. Therefore, it is a crucial need appropriate human activities to continue on the territory in order to keep the landscape cultural character for the future.

To find a way in which nature conservation and appropriate economic development of Šumava region can be compatible objectives seems, therefore, to be crucial point of the territory further development.

For the research purposes delimitation of Šumava region was used which is defined in the study „Šumava – Territorial Plan of the Region“ developed by TERPLAN, Praha in 1991. Šumava region specified this way includes protected areas (National Park and Protected Landscape Area) as well as unprotected landscape in the foothills.

## Methods

Extensive sociological research was done in the territory within two research projects, namely „Sustainable development strategy for Šumava Biosphere reserve“ and „Land-use and the future of Šumava Mts“ to identify critical points of the territory further development as well as key stakeholders (social groups) there. Present life style of local population, including readiness of local people to participate in decision making process on local land-use was another issue addressed by this research.

Qualitative and bottom-up approaches and methods with the special attention paid to techniques of citizen participation in decision making process, namely key informant interviewing, key stakeholder analysis, expert estimations, workshops, etc. were used in the research along with more standardized sociological method of questionnaire survey.

Relation to the territory of local population, problems of „everyday“ life, relation to the National Park, communal life and ideas of Šumava region future development were the main topics addressed by the questionnaire survey.

Precise formulation of questions resulted from pilot study done in the form of interviews with key personalities of territory studied (mayors, representatives of nature protection, civil servants, entrepreneurs in agriculture, leisure time activities, and representatives of cultural institutions, etc; 32 respondents altogether)

The sample for questionnaire survey (500 respondents, living in 61 municipalities) was derived using combination of quota and random sampling methods from the basic set (cca 50 th inhabitants older than 18). It was representative in accordance with following three criteria: district, level of landscape (nature) protection and settlements size (Figure 1).

## Results and discussion

By use of key informant interviewing method general developmental trends were identified as well as main problems being perceived as obstacles for further development of the territory studied.

Development of leisure time activities and related services is perceived the most promising future development strategy in the short run while development of spa and sanatorium facilities appears to be the predominant activities for the longer term „desired future“.



**Fig. 1.** – Model area – distribution of settlements where questionnaire survey was done  
**Obr. 1.** – Modelové území – rozmístění obcí, ve kterých byl prováděn dotazníkový průzkum

Intensive „classical“ agriculture is undergoing rapid decline. It is expected to transform into „service“ of some kind sustaining semi-cultural umava landscape – one of natural/cultural resources attracting tourists and amenity migrants to the territory.

Development of local processing industry sector is expected to be limited, and to occur only within municipal jurisdictions.

The critical points were discussed during the workshop in which representatives of National Park Administration, municipalities and district political bodies actively participated. As a output of the workshop, critical points were also ordered according to their importance (Figure 2).

Key stakeholders analysis was applied to identify four key stakeholders in terms of their behavioral patterns descriptions. They have their individual missions and own strategies:

- National Park Administration
- Municipalities
- Entrepreneurs in agriculture.
- Entrepreneurs in the branch of leisure time activities.

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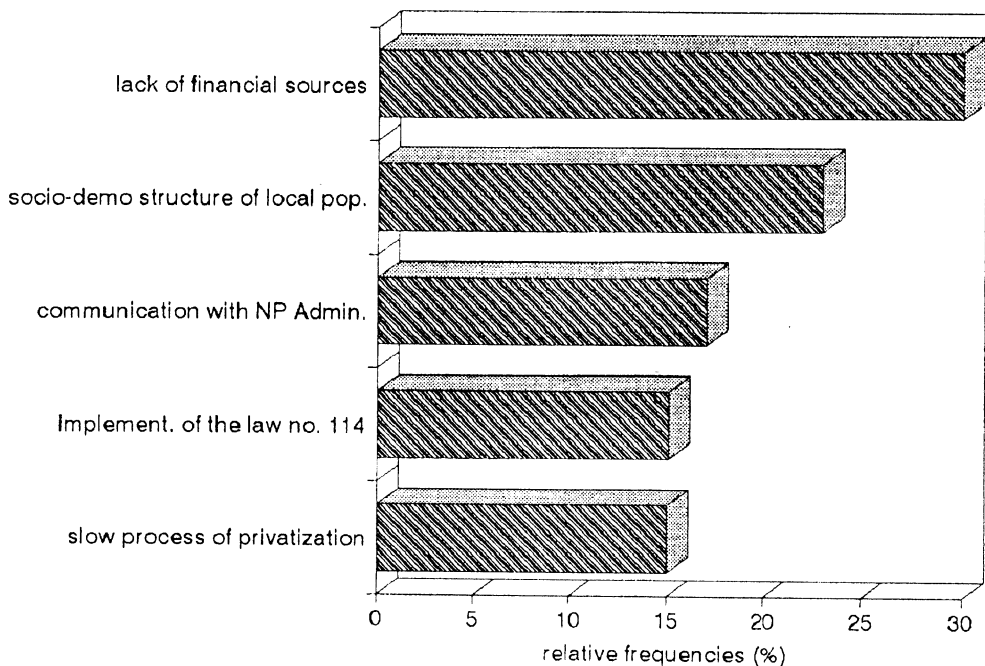
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**Fig. 2.** – Critical points in the territory development  
**Obr. 2.** – Hlavní problémy v rozvoji území

Communication among key stakeholders has been recognized as one of the most important obstacles for socio-economic wake of the territory. Jointly shared vision and/or strategy of future development of the territory is missing. The level of communally oriented thinking as well as feeling of responsibility for the development of the territory as a whole is very low in case of all stakeholders. Selforiented behavior patterns still predominate the reasons being historical – absence of up-bottom management, no space for discussion, no plurality, social structure of local population – as well as of present nature – official promotion to individualism

Importance of key stakeholders was assessed in accordance with their present social role in the territory and financial resources available. National Park Administration has been recognized the champion. The role of champion is accepted from both sides – it behaves like it as well as it is expected to play this role by local people as it is closely related to regional developmental trends as well as to the first four of five identified critical points.

The process of development and implementation of the Management Plan of National Park and Protected Landscape Area has been identified as an acceptable basis for joint strategy building for all stakeholders.

To have a chance of playing successfully the role of „social entrepreneur“ the National Park Administration however, should change its behavior. Besides doing properly its job of nature protection, as the most powerful stakeholder it should start the discussion with others. To learn how to communicate with other stakeholders as with partners having equal rights seems to be the necessity. The same is true about informing of local public on National Park activities.

There are, therefore, some points to be discussed in more detail in this context, namely:

a) Financial independence of National Park on the own economic/ commercial activities (timber production). Financing of the National Park activity should not be long-term dependent on the results of timber production. Model of „unity of control and ownership“ application in the forest economy led to the situation when the Administration moves on a very sharp edge. There is generally a great danger the situation of this type to be abused in the sense of simple „failure of the human factor“. It puts great moral claims on the management staff members of the Administration beginning with the director itself (any good idea could be abused).

With the existence of today's criteria of development evaluation the request for economic effectiveness could get easily into the contradiction with the requests of nature protection. When development of the Park would be built on the commercial basis it could betray its original mission.

Some kind of asymmetry between „wood-cutters“ and „nature conservationists“ inside of the Administration itself can be identified to be related to a prevailing perception of prestige based on the ability to earn money. From this point of view the „nature conservationists“ could be understood in better case as appendages and in worse case then as parasites of „wood-cutters“.

b) The role of The National Park Council. The NP Council has its Regional and Scientific parts. Regional Council could play the role of platform for (at least starting) discussion of the joint vision building of the territory future development. There are, however, some obstacles avoiding it to play this role:

- It does not represent all municipalities „affected“ by nature protection regulations in the territory.

- It is a priori perceived by other stakeholders to be related predominantly to National Park (representing thus only slightly interests of others).

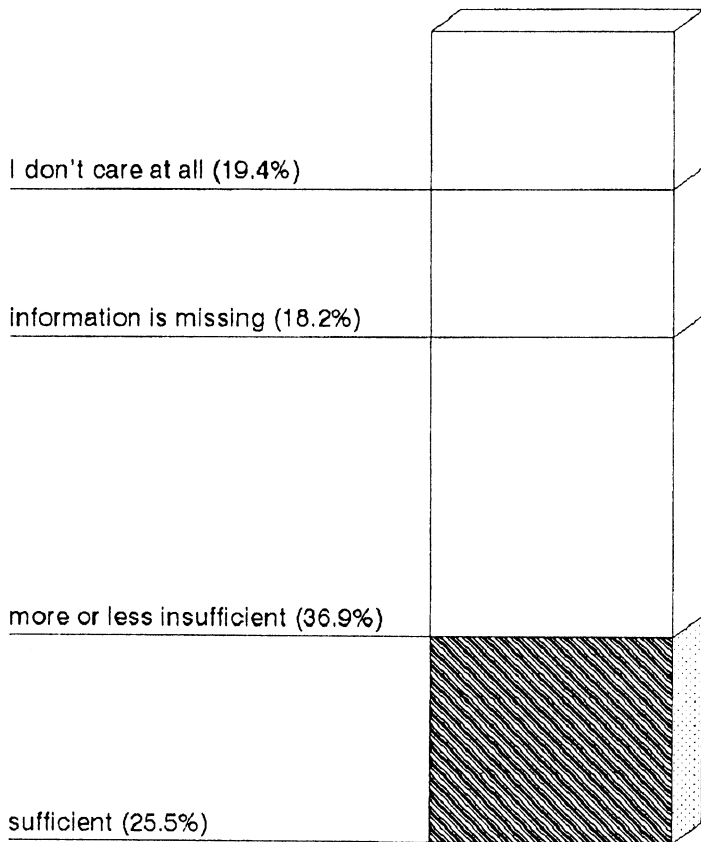
Scientific Council would be responsible for conception of research of the Park development and implementation it into practice. Vision of the Park future, however, should not be limited to definition of the target (desired) state and methods leading to this state. It should include also the feedback control link which would provide information whether the individual proposed (and realized) measures really meet their task. It is the question of monitoring system of the selected indicators.

The active interventions into the nature represent starting of an experiment in the landscape scale which should be properly „scientifically“ executed and evaluated in order the results would be „scientifically relevant“. It is a unique situation which need not to be repeated any more and it would enable the scientific community to investigate not only „statistic“ but also „causal“ relations of the type „cause - reaction“.

Scientific Council does not evidently play this role. The Council has so far given its opinion to individual „problems“ only, not to the total conception in the above mentioned sense. Furthermore, it is possible to state that „professional“ or „specialist“ composition of the Council evidently is not an optimal one. The composition seems to be given more by the criterion of „interest“ in Šumava than by the attempt for total coverage of the problems. In the end even the „complex description of the problem“ (i.e. conception of the research) as the basis for choice of experts hasn't evidently been done so far. The council is oriented exclusively biologically. Representatives of social- scientific disciplines are missing.

Cooperation of the Park with scientific institutions should be also subject of Scientific Council activities. It presents from the organizational lobbyist viewpoint creation of a net of cooperating institutions and individualists. That means supporting of the interest in research in Šumava (It is probably even now sufficiently large. But it enthrones the question of financing this research or of sources of this financing. Especially enforcement of the theme





**Fig. 3.** – Level of information supply  
**Obr. 3.** – Úroveň informovanosti

„Šumava“ among the leading themes of both domestic and foreign grant agencies (see e.g. GEF program) come into consideration. Creation of a regional grant agency for investigation (or development) of Šumava Mts. is another possibility.

c) The role of Public relations department. It should play double role – upbringing towards inside of the NP Administration and publicity toward outside.

Recognition of necessity of publicity role in image building of National Park within the territory by leading persons of NP Administration seems to be crucial momentum to be met.

Institutionalization of public relations in the form of a special organizational unit is only the first step. A team of qualified specialists is an indispensable precondition. Long-term strategy of publicity should be done in cooperation with an experienced „marketing agency“ or with a specialist on public relations. It should not be economized on that. It should be regarded an investment which will return in the future in the form of more cooperative public.

d) Information of local public on National Park activities. It is a very important matter to start the process of communication (or at least of image building) between NP Administration and others. Present situation within the territory, however, seems to be far from to be considered at least satisfactory one. As you can see on the Figure 3, one quarter of inha-

bitants states to be informed sufficiently. More information is needed by roughly one half of inhabitants for great deal of which information is totally missing. The rest does not care about information of this kind at all.

Only few university graduates are in the last group. The attitude of young people, i.e. those up to 20 years of age, is ambiguous – they do not care about National Park very much but they state they need more information. Nevertheless, in both cases they are very critical.

The most satisfied age group as to the information supply is that created by people older than 60. Their attitude may result from their time available to search actively for information they need or want. Their forbearance may be another reason.

Information is missed by middle age people having secondary school education, as well as by most of entrepreneurs within the territory.

As to the spatial distribution, inhabitants of Klatovy district feel to be informed sufficiently unlike of inhabitants of Český Krumlov district. Information is perceived to be totally missing predominantly within Prachatice district where, paradoxically, headquarters of NP Administration is situated.

Analysis of two ways contingency tables proved relations between variable of „level of information supply“ and those of „age“, „level of education“ and „district“ to be statistically highly dependent (see Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Based on knowledge gained three target groups has been identified to be subjects of potential „publicity campaign“ of National Park Administration. Individual target (social) groups vary from each other, as to age, sex, education level and occupation of their members.

**Table 1.** – Level of information supply vs. age groups (row %)

**Tabulka 1.** – Úroveň informovanosti u různých věkových skupin (%)

inform. / age	> 20	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	60 <	total
sufficient	3,9	18,1	24,4	23,6	15,0	15,0	100,0
insufficient	7,1	21,7	23,9	26,6	11,4	9,2	100,0
inf. is missing	5,5	19,8	29,7	25,3	14,3	5,5	100,0
I don't care	18,6	28,9	18,6	21,6	6,2	6,2	100,0
total	8,2	21,8	24,0	24,6	11,8	9,4	100,0

statistics	value	degrees of freedom	probability
Pearson chí square	33,755	15	0,0037

**Table 2.** – Level of information supply vs. level of education (row %)

**Tabulka 2.** – Úroveň informovanosti u skupin s různým vzděláním (%)

inform./ education	prim. sch.	apprenticed	sec. sch.	university	total
sufficient	9,4	28,3	37,8	24,4	100,0
insufficient	5,5	31,1	49,2	14,2	100,0
inf. is missing	13,3	36,7	37,8	12,2	100,0
I don't care	10,3	37,1	51,5	1,0	100,0
total	8,9	32,6	44,7	13,9	100,0

statistics	value	degrees of freedom	probability
Pearson chí square	32,614	9	0,0002

**Table 3.** – District vs. level of information supply (row %)  
**Tabulka 3.** – Úroveň informovanosti podle jednotlivých okresů (%)

district/inform. level	sufficient	insufficient	inf. is missing	I don't care	total
Č. Krumlov	13,2	53,8	23,1	9,9	100,0
Prachatice	22,7	37,8	24,4	15,1	100,0
Klatovy	32,2	29,4	11,9	26,3	100,0
total	25,5	36,9	18,2	19,4	100,0

statistics	value	degrees of freedom	probability
Pearson chí square	42,222	6	0,0000

If NP Administration wants to improve information level of local public on National Park activities efficiently it should practice three different strategies of information flow to address target groups individually. Target groups as well as suggested general strategies described following way:

People who actually feel lack of information. They can be characterized as middle age class with secondary school education, entrepreneurs. Recommendations for strategy success is to provide them by information in the most appropriate (accessible) form.

People who don't care at all about National Park activities. They belong to young generation. Recommendations for strategy success seems to be to „enforce“ them the desired information.

People who are informed sufficiently (and critical to National Park activities). They are predominantly men, university graduates. Recommendations for strategy success is to go on in informing them this way, with the aim to „draw them into dialogue“ with National Park.

## Conclusions

Publicity activities should be targeted primarily to middle age entrepreneurs with secondary school education living on the Prachatice and Český Krumlov district territories.

Public participation in development and implementation of Management Plan should be considered as a proper manifestation of democratic practices in decision making process on land use. The long term strategy of National Park Administration, as the most powerful stakeholder in the territory, should be to introduce such milieu in which local inhabitants would feel „coauthors“ of Management Plan rather than its opponents.

The domain of National Park „image“ building could become one of promising domains of mutually advantageous cooperation with other players provided the Park will assist to „image“ building of the territory as the whole. The final aim could be reaching of such a situation the National Park would not be perceived only as limitation for the development of local communities but also as a comparative advantage (attracting e.g. holiday-makers).

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