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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Equestrian tourism and horse breeding in Hungary and Slovenia – environmental sustainability and conservation of cultural heritage: a strategic approach

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Abstract – Historically, horse-breeding and riding has been an integral part of Hungarian and Slovenian culture for over a thousand years. In a broader sense, the equestrian sector includes all related activities, without which the efficient operation of the sector is unthinkable. Examples include infrastructure development, fodder production, veterinary services, the institutional system operating in the sector (public and non-governmental organizations, etc.). In the narrower sense, the equestrian industry is the sum of all areas where the horse is the main driver of its operation. This includes all areas of horse-related activities, such as all-inclusive education, use of horses in organic agriculture, horse breeding, equestrian tourism, horse racing, traditional historic horse-events, equestrian therapy, recreational riding and horseback riding are key elements. A feasibility study was carried out in the Hungarian – Slovenian border region to explore the possibilities for joint cross-boundary development of horse-based tourism. Hungary's and Slovenia's contemporary natural qualities provide excellent opportunities for equestrian tourism. The starting point for formulating cross-boundary equestrian programme is that the mutually reinforcing, complex and holistic development of each sub-area can only produce results. We have identified the strategic goals of equestrian tourist destination development: a) people-centred and long-term profitable development; b) improvement of tourism reception conditions; c) attraction development, including target-group oriented special programmes; d) human resource development and equestrian education; e) PR and marketing; f) regulatory interventions / measures, which can be effective if they work closely with businesses, NGOs and the public sector (municipalities, government agencies), including conservation of horse-related material and intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords – Equestrian tourism, destination management, carrying capacity, horseback hiking, sleighing, horse sledding, equestrian therapy, conservation, Balaton Ecomuseum, intangible heritage

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Introduction

Historically, horse-breeding and riding is an integral part of Hungarian and Slovenian culture for over a thousand years. In the narrower sense, the equestrian industry is the sum of all areas where the horse is the main driver of its operation. This includes all areas of horse-related activities, such as all-inclusive education, use of horses in organic agriculture, horse breeding, equestrian tourism, horse racing, traditional historic horse-events, equestrian therapy, recreational riding and horseback riding are key elements, which contribute to the sustainable, multiple-use and conservation of the landscape (Fischer et al. 2012). In a broader sense, the equestrian sector includes all related activities, without which the efficient operation of the sector is unthinkable. Examples include infrastructure development, fodder production, veterinary services, the institutional system operating in the sector (public and non-governmental organizations, etc.). The

starting point for formulating Cross-boundary equestrian programme is that the mutually reinforcing, complex and holistic development of each sub-area can only produce results.

Hungary's and Slovenia's contemporary natural qualities provide excellent opportunities for equestrian tourism. Nowadays, the majority of people live in an artificial environment, which is such a break from the natural environment that it is not uncommon among children who have not seen a horse yet, although in Hungary the breeding of horses has been a millennial tradition. In equestrian education, we mean not only the riding itself as practical training, but also theoretical training with Hungarian and Slovenian traditions of breeding, origin, ethology, anatomy, physiology, keeping, feeding, care and nursing. The study area occupies the north-eastern part of Slovenia and south-western extremity of Hungary (Figure 1). Geographically the

region is characterized mainly by alternating flat and hilly areas.



Figure 1. Overview map of the study area: the Hungarian – Slovenian Border Region

General aspects of equestrian tourism

In horse tourism, horses are used as a part of the tourism product. They are an essential element of the tourism activity and the creation of an "adventure", a memorable experience. Programme services are produced in natural and/or man-made environments in an environmentally responsible manner. Horse tourism is very extensive. Refining the definition of the Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre (FITE), horse tourism products can be classified into four main categories¹:

1. Horseback holidays;
2. Horse-related events and tourism;
3. Special horse-related eco-agritourism (organic farming with horses and no heavy machines).²
4. Horse therapy

FITE defines horse tourism as follows: recreational horse-related activity practised away from the customer's usual place of residence. Target groups range from professionals of the equestrian sector to persons with no prior experience of horses or riding. Horse tourism products include:

1. Horseback hiking;
2. Cross-country horseback riding;
3. Sleighing³;
4. Horse sledding;
5. Workhorse shows;
6. Assisted horseback riding;
7. Horse shows and other horse tourism activities (such as moving logs and ground handling);
8. Horseback riding training holidays and courses;
9. Skijoring and other horse-related events, including trotting and other competitions;

10. Horse related agritourism – "living on a ranch" – learning horse handling on-site or working on an organic farm where horses are used instead of agricultural machines
11. Special touristic product packages where horses are a complement (e.g. wine festivals with horse cart transport, historic trails on horseback, medieval tournaments, etc.);
12. Hunting tourism: horse carts instead of 4x4 vehicles;
13. Hunting riding for experienced riders;
14. Horseback archery – an ancient Hungarian tradition

Strategic principles

Based on the aforementioned key issues, a set of strategic principles can be established to guide the recommendations of the strategic plan. The following strategic priorities should be taken into consideration:

1. Partnerships

A strategic partnership, particularly in the multi-faceted tourist businesses will give the participating organisations competitive advantage and an opportunity to access a broader range of resources and expertise. This means that the partnership can offer clients distinctive skill sets and product lines that are different from the competition and enhance the development of new brands. Successful partnerships and alliances rely on the principle that the work involved in maintaining a partnership, and the benefits from the alliance are equally spread, rather than one partner carrying the load whilst the other reaps the benefits. The best results from a strategic partnership generally occur when each partner delivers excellence in service areas that are different but related to the other partners and where the partners are not perceived as adversarial in the market place and each partner can focus on its strengths, whilst having reliable people in other organisations to cover the areas outside its expertise. Partnerships among service providers are particularly important in equestrian tourism since successful operation within this branch is dependent on networking and the development of complex service packages.

National Parks and nature conservation areas

Work in conjunction with National Parks in the area (in Hungary the Balaton Upland National Park and Órség National Park and Landscape Protection Areas) in order to advocate for access to horse trails and associated facilities as part of the touristic product range and management plan of these parks.

¹ Originally there were only two categories, but educational eco-agritourism should be treated as a special category due to its complexity, network-systems and target groups; similarly, horse therapy, which also may be regarded as a touristic product, requires very special competences and addresses special target groups.

² <https://pethelpful.com/horses/Using-Horses-for-Draft-Power>

³ A sled, sledge, or sleigh is a land vehicle that slides across the surface, usually of ice or snow. In British English, sledge is the general term, and more common than sled. Toboggan is sometimes used synonymously with sledge but more often refers to a particular type of sledge without runners.

Municipalities of the research area

Partnerships with municipalities within the project area in relation to the provision of a regional facility, trail linkages, event opportunities, and club development will constitute the structural and administrative base of the joint strategic development projects.

Civil and professional organizations in Hungary and Slovenia

These are the most relevant civil organizations are those, which are dealing with conservation of cultural heritage, social development, and capacity building and promoting regional development and sustainable tourism (Lagerqvist and Bornmalm, 2015) and are or can be linked to equestrian tourism or other horse-related activities. Most important organizations (examples, far from complete):

- The Hungarian Equestrian Federation is the main organization of the equestrian profession which today became the main institution of equestrian sports, with the main task to organize the competitions of jumping, dressage, military, horse cart-driving, horse-racing, horse-riding and reining.
- The Hungarian Equestrian Tourism Public Benefit Association has been operating as a professional interest organization since 1998. Hungary's most prominent equestrian facilities have been set up to develop the sector, including the introduction and market access of equestrian facilities, and to improve the quality of services, by organizing training courses for service providers to increase the range of guests, to promote the efficient operation of equestrian facilities. It operates as a civil organization, its opinion is also sought at the legislative level, and it has the most comprehensive and up-to-date data on equestrian facilities offering active and passive riding tourism services.
- Hungarian Equestrian Leisure Sports Association stands for the organisation of "Leisure Horse Events" which are based on the rules of the Leisure Riding System. The Association organize equestrian sport events, competitions countrywide. The purpose of the alliance is:
 - to raise the physical culture of the population to a higher standard,
 - to promote, utilize and disseminate the outstanding physiological, psychological and socialization effects of riding in recreational sports,
 - to promote the creation of the necessary conditions and advocacy and interest protection of physical culture needs.
- National Federation of Riding Children and Pony Riders promotes the equestrian sport for the younger generation. Its main purpose is to promote equestrian culture,

equestrian traditions and to organize and implement animal therapy.

- Hungarian Pony Club Association is an international organization of horse sport especially for children and youth interested in riding. The first Pony Club (<http://www.pcuk.org/>) was founded in England in 1929 and is present in 18 countries, with over 110,000 members. It is a member of the Euro Pony Club (<http://www.europonyclub.com/>), which was founded in 1989 and is a gathering place for European equestrian youth organizations with over 700,000 members. With this, Pony Club is the world's largest youth equestrian organization.
- Hungarian Cold-blooded Horse Breeding National Association. In 1989, with the change of the political system, there was a significant change in the organization and management of national horse breeding, since the horse breeding community, with the help of the association law, created breeding associations. The Hungarian Cold-blooded Horse Breeding National Association was founded in Kaposvár on the 9th of December 1989 with headquarters in Keszthely. In Hungary, in Zala County, the breeding of cold-blooded horses is relatively oldest. Here you can find the traces of the old muraközi-horses in addition to the Belgian character, especially in the villages of Zalaszentgrót, Zalaegerszeg, Zalaapáti, Nova and Pacsa. Vas County's heavy-duty breeding, although mainly also working with Belgian-style stallions, can be said to be mixed with the character of the Pinzgau (Nór) horse. There is a great presence in the national fairs of the town of Szombathely. Somogy and Zala counties also have access to these fairs.
- Equestrian sport and tradition-guarding associations⁴
These organisations can be found in several places, usually linked to one particular settlement. Their main objectives are the introduction of equestrian sport, the organization of a recreational equestrian program, the widespread dissemination of equestrian culture, and the organization of historical horse-riding programs. Another goal of the association is to present the cultural values of the local community, to reveal the historical past of the settlements, and to present it in the framework of exhibitions. In the autumn the Hunting Riding is a popular activity. The association's long-term plans include horse riding and related traditions, as well as familiarizing and transmitting local cultural values with young people.
- Foundation for Autistic-Injured People in Zala County⁵
is an organisation, which provides even horse therapy. Established in 1994 to help autistic young people and their families. Since 2002, it is an organization of

⁴ In Hungarian: Lovassport és Hagyományörző Egyesületek

⁵ In Hungarian: Autista Sérültekért Zalában Alapítvány

outstanding public benefits. Services available for autistic young people:

- development therapies,
- horse therapy with the help of special educators
- educating and training young people with autism
- organizing summer camps
- creating a second home for autistic children and adults
- enhanced supervision, loving, family-friendly care.

- The Equestrian Association of Slovenia (KZS) is the umbrella equestrian organisation in the Republic of Slovenia. It has also been a member of FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) – the international equestrian organisation since 1991. It ensures the development of the equestrian sport in four equestrian disciplines:

- show jumping,
- dressage riding,
- carriage-driving and
- endurance competition.

The Equestrian Association of Slovenia joins equestrian clubs, societies, breeding associations, and tourist farms with equestrian activity. It has currently 62 members. Thirty members (competition clubs) participate in the show jumping competition and dressage riding, whereas other 32 members (societies, breeding associations, and tourist farms) deal in endurance and leisure riding.

- The Slovenian Lipizzan Breeding Association was established in 1991 as an organisation of breeders of Lipizzans. The Association has been closely cooperating with the Lipica Stud Farm and the public service in the field of horse breeding with headquarters at the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Ljubljana since its establishment. In 2006 the association was acknowledged as the breeding organisation holding the studbook of ZRLS for Lipizzans owned by the Members of the Association in cooperation with the Lipica Stud Farm.
- The Slovenian Young Breeders (Studbook for Slovenian Warmblood Horses) consists of eleven young breeders, who all decided to dedicate their youth to horses. They are the very first Young Breeders team in Slovenia, their goal is to contribute as much as they can to Slovenian horse breeding, especially the breeding of Slovenian warmblood in a very quality conscious way. They declared that horse breeding isn't just something that interests only elderly people, but it is also starting to become more and more popular among the younger generation.
- Family Centre Kidričevo is a genuine establishment for the promotion of equal opportunities, social responsibility and sustainability. The Family Centre is a place for socializing and meeting the needs of different types of families in all life periods. With its mode of operation, the Family Centre helps to reconcile work,

family and private life and provides information and knowledge for the quality of life of families. In the post-modern world, the family has become an island in a turbulent sea where parents and children seek a balance between work, family and private life. The family itself is faced with ever more challenges in public space. At a time where the only constant is perceived as a change, the family centre provides space and time for the family, where members can turn to help and support and freely share their experiences of family living. Through their actions, they try to fill the gap that arises between the private way of living in the family and the activity of family members in the professional and educational sphere. Equestrian programmes and horse therapy constitute an important part of their activities.

Over the last few decades, the horse has gained an additional mission in all important roles that it has played in history – the horse became a member of the therapeutic team and assistant and co-worker in the process of horse therapy. Therapeutics using a horse in the developed world already represent an important part of medical and psychosocial rehabilitation and psychotherapeutic, special and social pedagogical treatment of people with special needs and mental health problems. Horse-riding activities also offer many other innovative options and approaches to pedagogical work and the implementation of a variety of activities with and on horses for all age groups of children and adolescents, adults and the elderly. The field of activity and therapy with the help of a horse is, therefore, an opportunity for professional specialization in various occupational profiles that want their users, clients and patients to work according to the principles of integrated approach, lifelong learning and mainstream and informal education, and thus contribute to a higher quality of their lives. Working in a team with a horse is very demanding, as it is necessary to master a wide range of special skills: knowledge of horses, professional skills, communication and social skills for working with people and the ability of team collaboration. Of great importance are the good qualifications of all participating experts and their attitude and openness to lifelong learning.

The Balaton Ecomuseum – to be established by 2021

Equestrian tourism will constitute an important part of the touristic product range of the Balaton Ecomuseum, which is being constructed now by coordinating the already existing touristic products, natural resources, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and new developments and remediation of deteriorated objects. An ecomuseum is a landscape area developed as an open-air museum, linking the natural environment and its ecosystem services, the cultural heritage components of the landscape into one holistic unit, focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities. Ecomuseums originated in France, the concept being developed by Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, who coined the term 'écomusée' in 1971. The term "éco" refers not only to ecology, but to a new idea of holistic interpretation of cultural heritage made available with new, interactive methods of museum education, embracing the

natural environment, the built heritage, and the intangible heritage in opposition to the focus on specific items and objects, passively presented by traditional museums.



Figure 2. The area of the Balaton Ecomuseum will be about 8500 km² (the World's largest ecomuseum) including the whole catchment area and even the surface of the lake, the area of the Balaton Wine Region, the Balaton Upland National Park, the Órség National Park and the Balaton Highlighted Design Resort District taking into account the geologically and hydrographically relevant areas. Source: LBDCA, Károly Fekete and Sándor Némethy, 2018.

Since the ecomuseum is a complex touristic product and contains a number of different touristic attractions, there are almost unlimited opportunities to develop touristic programme packages where horse-based tourism plays either a central role or a part of a programme such as “wine routes on horseback”.

Schools

How can riding be integrated into everyday education? What are the additional opportunities for protecting the health of children and what are the costs? The topic of school riding education and the situation of equestrian training is an interesting issue of education programme development even in primary schools and even more in secondary education. The education of equestrian culture is an option that schools can choose where the necessary conditions are given, and which schools maintain the extra cost of education. At the school where the school keeper approved the Horse Education, the sessions can be organized in the afternoon sporting event, which can replace two hours of everyday physical education, as well as introducing an optional schedule for other activities.

In the new vocational secondary schools, in the agricultural sector, the students receive 4 years of vocational education and part-time education, and after 1 year they can obtain a vocational qualification and a qualification as an agricultural technician or a horseman. Then, in the course of the agricultural technician's so-called “build-up” training, an ambitious student or those from whom their jobs require may also qualify as agricultural commodity distributor, rural development and horticultural specialist.

Higher Education Institutions

The role of higher education institutions is to educate professionals in the equestrian industry in all levels of higher education: vocational higher education, BSc, MSc and to some extent even PhD levels (mainly for cutting edge research in breeding, genetics and equestrian services). Higher education institutions with equestrian research centres and sports facilities play also an important role in the dissemination of equestrian culture and equestrian sport, often linked to services available for the general public. The purpose of higher education vocational training is to train equestrian professionals who are able to perform the tasks of managing the equestrian facilities of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, studs. They plan and then manage the process of breeding work, coordinate the daily tasks of the facility and, if necessary, they can do it themselves. They are familiar with the feed and keeping technology guidelines for quality breeding and create the conditions for up-to-date and marketable breeding. They are actively involved in preparing horses for breeding, performance tests. With the necessary economic, financial, legal knowledge and IT skills, they contribute to the management of the economic life of the facility and to administrative work. On the BSc level the aim of the training is to train equestrian breeders, equestrian sports organizers who, with their knowledge of natural sciences, agricultural technology and animal husbandry, are able to apply their knowledge in the field of horse breeding and equestrian organization. They know the different organizational forms of horse racing and how they work. They have the appropriate knowledge to continue their studies in the Master's program. The aim of the Master of Science in Animal Science (MSc) program with an equestrian specialization is the training of professionals with a baccalaureate (BSc) who possess additional scientific, agronomic, food economics, product processing and special animal science knowledge appropriate to the specificities of economic, sporting and hobby animal husbandry. They are capable of solving complex professional and managerial tasks of animal production, processing, sales or service. In addition, they perform design, synthesizing and organizing innovation development activities based on the recognition of causal relationships with equestrian characteristics.

2. Community engagement

As an addition to the aforementioned partnerships, the involvement of local communities is requested, since it is a prerequisite to the successful and sustainable operation of equestrian tourism businesses. A feasibility study into the development of a regional equestrian facilities should be made to service the wider region to ensure the smooth operation of the trans-boundary trails. In this work, stakeholder management and public information are important to gain acceptance for local and regional development plans in connection with equestrian tourism and related services.

3. Sustainability

Many touristic destinations are associated with mass tourism, large scale construction and infrastructure development, which can result in the destruction of these sites, creating

hereby the paradox of short-sighted economies: tourism destroys its own destination. &Therefore, the key to planning and managing sustainable rural tourism is the assessment of the carrying capacity of ecosystems and the available ecosystem services of each touristic destination, taking into consideration the possible highest tourist-pressure in each season and constructing regulatory mechanisms to keep the environmental load within acceptable limits (Maggi, 2010; Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 2002; Manning & Dougherty, 2000). Equestrian tourism is considered as one of the most sustainable types of rural tourism.

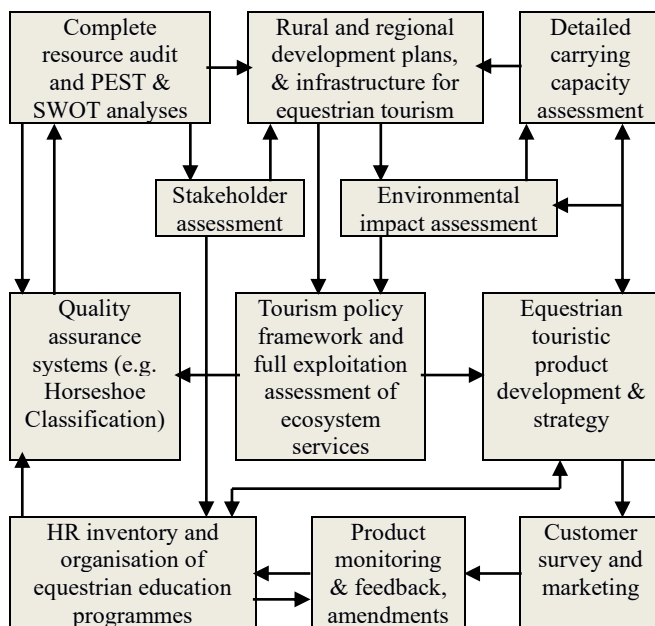


Figure 3. Management structure of sustainable equestrian tourism development based on the carrying capacity and sustainable use of ecosystem services taking into consideration ecological cycle processes, which continuously require the environmental impact assessment (Némethy et al. 2017).

The touristic carrying capacity should be considered on all levels of policy formulation and planning, detailed studies, and implementation and monitoring all based on the assessment of ecosystem services (availability and use) and audit of natural resources (Figure 3). When applying the concept of ecosystem-based tourism planning and management, it must be taken into consideration that management applications will vary according to the geographical, ecological, political, social, economic and cultural conditions of the particular area (Burkhard et. al. 2014; Sutcliffe et. al. 2013). Horse tourism might greatly contribute to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of regions, whose economic and social development is lagging behind. Furthermore, horses may make touristic destinations accessible for the equestrian

tourists, places, which would be almost impossible to access without horses or the provisions for better access, which might include road construction works with adverse impact on the environment. However, this kind of tourism needs to be properly introduced to the local communities in order to avoid conflicts.

4. Communication and Information

Maps: Develop a guide including maps for “Equestrian Activities in the Dráva – Zala – Mura region”. The maps should include the equestrian trails, the level of trails concerning required skills, providers of equestrian services, hotel and hospitality facilities, which are equipped for horse-tourists (including stable and other facilities for horse care), agritourism destinations with complete bed and breakfast services, riding schools, horse-breeding farms, etc. These maps should be available even on GPS applications to ensure fast updating and smooth operation.

Signage: Develop and install warning and advisory signs for both horse riders and motor vehicle drivers. Trail and recreation site signs inform, warn, guide, and educate users. For best compliance, provide just enough signs to convey the required messages. Too many signs clutter the landscape and prevent signs with critical messages from receiving the attention they deserve. Design, install, position, and maintain signs and posters so they:

- Fulfil a legal requirement or an important need
- Command attention
- Convey a clear, positive, friendly, simple message
- Look professional
- Allow users enough time to follow the instructions

5. Management, Operation, and Maintenance

Audit of trails

It is important to undertake an annual audit and inspection of trails, since there might be a need to provide replacement equestrian facilities for those that have been deteriorated, temporarily or permanently displaced through local or regional development. Additionally, there may be a need to plan for further equestrian provision for those that may be displaced from the existing sites in the future. Through this process, there may be an opportunity to combine facilities and increase usage in conjunction with already existing facilities. Audits have also the function to assess the carrying capacity of equestrian touristic destinations in terms of the state of the trails and the impact of possible future development and expansion on the ecosystem services of the given environment.

Audit and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure

Undertake regular audit and develop a maintenance program, which includes cavalettis,⁶ hitching rails and watering troughs. It is also important to make several trails accessible for horse tourism and create and maintain the necessary

⁶ Cavaletti (Italian: "little horse") are small jumps, originally made of wood, used for basic horse training. Most consist of rails that are about 10 cm wide.

service network (e.g. resting stations for horseback tourists and their horses).

6. Infrastructure Renewal/Development

Linked network of trails: The need for a safe and interconnected network of trails that provide increased recreational opportunities.

7. Review and Monitoring

Equestrian Strategy and GIS layer: Regularly review and updating a specially constructed Equestrian Strategy and GIS layer. The proposed network shall provide better links in the Zala – Mura – Drava region for the municipalities and a connection between the networks in the long term. Additionally, the trail network requires improved connections to key equestrian facilities such as horse and pony clubs, equestrian centres and parks.

Strategic directions

The following twelve Strategic Directions should be considered in connection with the development of equestrian tourism in the Zala – Mura – Dráva region:

1. Improve the range of opportunities for equestrian users in the region
2. Improve safety for equestrian users in the region by
 - a. equestrian education facilities for the general public
 - b. health and safety information on trails and in equestrian centres, available even as mobile applications
 - c. appropriate signage on trails and, when relevant, public roads
3. Improve the competence of equestrian service providers by
 - a. equestrian education programmes from intermediate to higher education level
 - b. introducing quality assurance systems, with competence requirements (in Hungary already existing system is the Horseshoe Classification System)
4. Develop a safe and interconnected network of equestrian trails and facilities
5. Ensure that equestrian riding facilities and activities are appropriately planned and managed to protect environmental values.
6. Ensure that equestrian facilities are located in areas that are likely to be managed for long term equestrian activities.
7. Increase awareness of equestrian use in the general community
8. Involve the equestrian community in the design and management of equestrian facilities

9. Consolidate and enhance equestrian club facilities
10. Improve access to all relevant non-urban areas for managed equestrian riding
11. Develop touristic product packages in which equestrian facilities play either a key role or constitute a natural complement to other facilities
12. More conscious marketing based on quality assurance, economy and branding

Products available and product development

The most significant area of active tourism in Hungary along with sailing and water sports is perhaps that of equestrian tourism, which is rooted in ancient traditions, and many places have riding schools offering the possibilities of informal education to take part in dressage, show-jumping or cross-country riding. An accreditation system operated by the Hungarian Tourist Equestrian Association was set up in 2000 in the area of equestrian tourism. Hundreds of equestrian establishments have been considered for accreditation, and more than 170 of these have been awarded the requisite 1-5 horseshoes⁷ upon fulfilling the accreditation criteria. However, the equestrian tourist sector is still quite scattered, and the proper development of infrastructure and horse trails as well as complex touristic packages is necessary.

Products and service providers available in the Slovenia-Hungary border region, primarily in the Zala – Mura - Drava cross-boundary region

The range of products currently available is not sufficiently diverse, much more could be done. Improving overall service quality requires effort; the horse tourism sector would benefit from a quality classification scheme that would ensure professional and safe implementation of all products and services. Product development activities have much untapped potential:

1. A cross-boundary Zala – Mura horse tourism route and service provider network, which could serve both international and domestic horse tourism would be essential.
2. Products could be made more dynamic and attractive by utilising the existing traditions and stories and by making the experiences more memorable and entertaining
3. The objective must be to implement functional, tested, high-quality product packages.
4. Memorable and exciting, fact-based *Muraközi* and *Lipicai* horse activity excursions such as courses, seminars, camps and hiking trips for horse enthusiasts and, in the future, also for professionals.

⁷ The horseshoe qualification system is a quality assurance particularly developed for the equestrian tourism sector. Already to achieve one horseshoe, the providers have to satisfy a whole range of requirements. Main qualification criteria include environmental aspects, considerations regarding the keeping and fitness of horses,

aspects of horse services, personal factors and other programs, options. Rating categories: from one to five horseshoes.

5. Adventure excursions to the roots of the horse breeding and activity centres to be established in attractive nature destinations. Each of the centres would focus on their own specialties, but through cooperation, they could offer a very wide range of complex touristic products for the clients.
6. Unique and memorable events involving famous breeds such as horse shows, historic events such as medieval tournaments, equestrian sport events

The following factors should be addressed in the range of products currently offered and/or planned to be introduced in the future:

1. Products targeted at selected customer groups (groups and individual travelers)
2. Utilisation of existing product criteria
3. Winter, year-round activities
4. Utilising the special characteristics of local nature
5. Demand
6. Paying attention to food and restaurant services
7. Different themes, such as local stories and tranquillity
8. Emphasis on creating memorable experiences
9. The famous breeds (e.g. *Muraközi* and *Lipicai*)
10. Increased use of the horse as a means of transport
11. Well-being
12. Culture
13. History
14. Sustainable development
15. Utilisation of technology
16. Products and services created for special tourist groups
17. Products and services as a part of welfare and health tourism
18. Products and services as a part of conference services and incentive tourism
19. Products and services targeted at professionals
20. Horse tourism centres and services can be established in connection with existing riding schools, trotting tracks, and tourist centres.
21. The popularity of multi-activity packages is increasing, and horse tourism should be made a part of them. Some examples:
 - a. Horseback-trails connecting historic destinations such as castles, palaces, old abbeys, monasteries, ancient battlefields, accessible archaeological sites, etc.
 - b. Hunting riding or hunting tourism with carriages or coaches
 - c. Wine and gastro-tourism on horseback
 - d. Horseback archery and horse polo
22. Many horse tourists are professionals whose skills should also be employed in product development. Examples:
 - a. Joint programmes with less experienced tourists, where participants with great experience can naturally share their knowledge and skills
 - b. Team building programmes for organisations through equestrian events,

cross-country riding or joint participation in riding school training

23. More effective utilisation of the existing route network is in line with the principles of sustainable development.

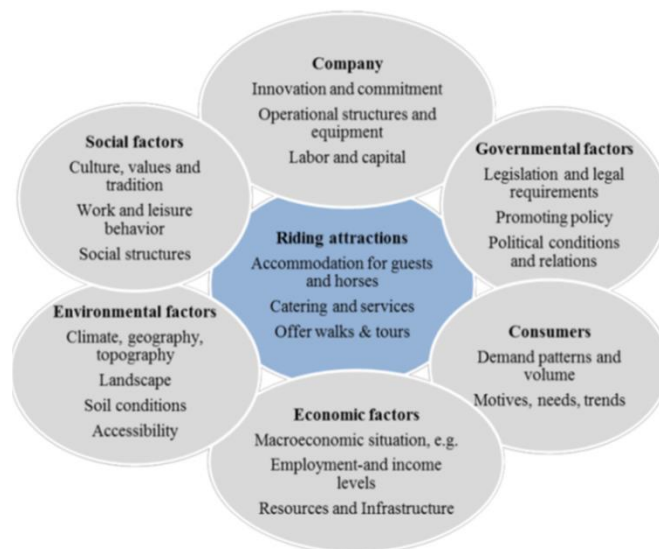


Figure 4. Factors determining the type, quality, feasibility and attractiveness of riding attractions. Source: Sidali et.al. 2013.

What the market needs now is functional, tested and high-quality product packages, where close attention is paid to the quality of accommodation and restaurant services and other, so-called ancillary services in relation to the equestrian tourism business. The best way for meeting customer expectations is to carefully select the "spearheads" that the packages rely on and develop them in a logical way in view of the factors, which determine the type, quality, feasibility and attractiveness of riding attractions (Fig. 4).

Historic Horse Breeds – the base of all equestrian attractions

Before dealing with the equestrian touristic products available in the Hungarian – Slovenian cross-boundary region, it is important to assess the main historic horse breeds in Hungary and Slovenia, since these are very important attractions due to their relatively rare occurrence in other European countries except for the Lipica horse, which became a true international variety. Horse breeds cultivated in Hungary and Slovenia are famous far away. Few countries have such excellent varieties and a large number of varieties as Hungary. At the 1878 World Expo in Paris in 1878, the greatest recognition was given by the fast Hungarian carriage-horse, the Hungarian Yuker, and the lightweight Hungarian hussar-horse. The traditional Hungarian and Slovenian horse breeds, created in the state stud farms (Bábolna, Mezőhegyes, Kislér, Szilvásvár, Hortobágy and in the Mura - Dráva Region) with decent and professional breeding work of decades, are our unique cultural heritage. The breeding associations established in the 1990s are responsible for maintaining these species and preserving their values. For the equestrian tourism, all breeds might be

relevant due to their diversity in character, use and appearance.

Hungarian and Slovenian cold-blooded horse breeds

The Hungarian cold-blooded horse or Hungarian Draft and the Mura-horse belong here. Easy to use, good-working cold-blooded horse breeds. Unfortunately, since they are not very utilized in agriculture, their future appeared to be very uncertain. However, the expansion of organic agriculture may have a great potential for the cold-blooded breeds, since they have no adverse environmental impact on agricultural ecosystems and, particularly in small and middle-sized farms, their use is more economical, than the utilisation of heavy agricultural machinery. The rural tourism and village lifestyle facilities and breeding associations and state support policies will further strengthen the economic viability of the preservation of these wonderful animals for future generations, which once made life on the ground much easier. In the cities, they were used to draw beer cars and cold-blooded horses were used to transport fuel.

In the 18th century, the western border population regularly transported cereals and other crops to Austria. Meanwhile, they brought to the country the massive, high-load horse breeds, the Nóri, and Pinzgau horses. These two types of horses created two types of horse breeds of similar origin but different in nature, the Mura horse (Muraközi) - a small but powerful type of workhorse - and the larger Pinkafő horse. In the second half of the 19th century, the country had already recognized cold-blooded cultures, and in 1904 the government had already supplied 140 breeders of cold-blooded stallions. In order to improve and unify the stock, western horses of various breeds were imported from the West, but they did not become a cold-blooded uniform.



Figure 5. The Mura-horse (Muraközi) is now recognized as a regional variety of the Hungarian Cold-blooded Horse.
Source: <http://ligetlovarda.hu/lófajták>

The breeding studies clearly demonstrated the justification of the Mura horse along with the Hungarian cold-blooded horse and the Pinkafő horse. According to recent research, conducted to develop conservation strategies for the valuable genetic stocks, the Hungarian heavy draft counts only 800 mares today, and survives only due to breeding programs; in this way, each haplotype frequency depends on the extent to which mares are involved in the breeding (Csizmár et.al. 2018). Since most of the breeders lack written documentation the present stud book contains unknown individuals in the pedigree. However, the multiple origins in the maternal lineage of domestic horse breeds have been confirmed (Csizmár et.al. 2018; Cieslak et al., 2010).

The Mura horses, since their body weight and their nutrient requirements are lower, are able to carry out of the same difficulty with less feed. They are considered to be faster in carriage, long-lasting, hard-working, and have very good learning ability. Their value, along with their suitability for economic work, their livelier temperament, lower body weight and more elegant appearance make these horses attractive not only as a workhorse but even in suitable tourist attractions such as horseback hiking.

Hungarian and Slovenian warm-blooded horse breeds

The Hutsul (or Hucul)

This horse is often called the "Carpathian Pony". It comes directly from the wild horses: it is considered to be the direct descendant of the *tarpan*.⁸ Extremely persistent packhorse, riding horse and workhorse. The Hucul breed was developed in the East Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe. The indigenous breed was named after the Hutsul people living in the border area of Bukovina, Galicia, and Hungary.



Figure 6. The Hutsul horse.
Source: https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hucul_ló

⁸ The Tarpan (*Equus ferus ferus*) was the Eurasian wilde horse. According to today's opinion, the *Przewalski* horse is one of its subspecies. The last of the species died in 1909 in Moscow.

The Lipizzan horse

Classical-looking Lipizzan horses are very successful in carriage-driving, but at the world-famous horse show in Vienna's Spanish Equestrian School, only these elegant-looking, dance-step horses can be seen. The *Lipica* is a truly international variety, spread all over the world. It has been cultivated purely 400 years ago, except for a single Arabic cross in the early 1800s, a foreign breed, which has never been used in breeding. The Hungarian population has outstanding genetic value. Its breeding organization in Hungary is the *Hungarian Association of Lipica Horse Breeders*. Today, the home of the Lipica breed is situated in Lipica, Slovenia. On the Lipica Stud Farm, the noble white horses known as Lipizzaners have been raised for more than four hundred years, thanks to Charles II, Archduke of Inner Austria (son of Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor) who decided to establish a new stud farm with a Spanish horse, which was considered the ideal horse breed. Because the soil and climate in the Karst region are similar to that of Spain, the Lipica region was chosen as the perfect site for the new farm. Thus, the Lipica stud farm was established in 1580 and the first horses were bought from Spain in 1581 (24 broodmares and six stallions). The farmers living in the area at the time were evicted and resettled in Laže (Savnik, ed.1968).



Figure 7. The Lipica horse. Source: <https://www.haziallat.hu/lovak-lovasok/lofajtak-lotenyesztes/lipicai/2125/>

Nóniusz

With the impressive appearance of the 160-year-old breed *Nóniusz*, which is a curiosity and a success in the world of horse breeds, but at the same time it is also very successful in carriage-driving. At the beginning of the 19th century, during the Napoleonic wars, the Austrians captured a number of young horses from a French stud farm, including a stallion named Nonius, an Anglo-Norman genus, which was assigned to Mezőhegyes in 1816. He became Nonius Senior, the "grandfather" of the breed. He stood for 17 years in breeding, during this time he covered 368 mares of mixed breeds, and 79 stallions and 122 mares were born. Among the mares were Arab thoroughbreds and Spanish-Naples. Nonius Senior was not a remarkably beautiful horse, but with these mares, he succeeded in creating offspring that matched the breeding goal, which was the creation of a strong-bodied military riding horse and harness - horse. Initially, substantial

inbreeding was carried to conserve their qualities. In order to overcome the faults in their appearance, a blood crossing with English thoroughbred stallions was used. By end of the 19th century, the four stallions were used for breeding in Mezőhegyes, which, through their descendants, developed and shaped the breed for several generations. By 1943, the origin of all purebred noniusz stallions can be traced back to the genealogical line of these stallions, which was then called lines A, B, C, and D. With the help of these lines, the risk of further close breeding was successfully eliminated (Mihók, ed. 2011).



Figure 8. The Nóniusz horse. Source: [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nóniusz_\(lófajta\)](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nóniusz_(lófajta))

The shagya-arabian horse

This breed of Bábolna is a noble Arabian horse, which is excellently suited both for riding and carriage-driving (Fig. 8). The shagya-arabian is a native Hungarian horse, which has been declared by the decision No. 32/2004. (IV. 19.) OGY a national treasure. This warm-blooded breed is a further cultivated version of the Arabian horse breed cultivated by the Bábolna and the Radautz stud farms. The development of the recent form of this breed started on 16 March 1816, when the Imperial War Council ordered the mares that already possessed a high percentage of Arabian genes to be bred only with Arabian Thoroughbred stallions to improve endurance and use (Mihók, ed. 2011).



Figure 9. The shagya-arabian horse. Source: <http://kedvencem.hu/blog/a-shagya-arab-lo-kulleme-664>

The extremely tough Shagya Arabs are perfectly suited for long-distance riding. Their body building is suitable for performing well in long-distance races. In many foreign competitions we can meet Shagya Arabs from Bábolna. In addition to horse riding, they perform well in carriage driving races, and there are some gifted shagya arab horses recorded even in dressage. They can easily jump over 120–125 cm high barriers. Nowadays, more and more people use western shagya horses. They turn easily and learn quickly so it's not surprising that western riders liked this breed. With their good nature and learning abilities, they also deserved the respect of traditional horseback archers, as many people hold shagya-arabs, which are also very good horses for inexperienced riders and children.

Furioso-north star

The furioso-north star (or Half-blood of Mezőhegyes), named after the two ancestor English thoroughbreds, is also a favourite of horse riders and fans of recreational riding. The formation of the breed began in 1841 with the establishment of the Imperial and Royal Stud Institute. The goal was to create a strong, robust horse breed that is good for the military, with good working ability, fast and steady. Two founder stallions, *Furioso Senior* and *North Star Senior* contributed to the development of the stud and the development of the breed. In order to create a new bloodline, Furioso, a well-trained stallion with good inheritance, came to the stud and was later referred to as "*Furioso Senior*" by Count György Károlyi. Furioso was a very nice English thoroughbred from the count's stud farm in Derekegyháza, a bit more robust than his breeders, and had a high genetic value, so he was involved in the formation of an English half-blood that meets the military needs. Horses from both the Furioso and North Star lines have achieved very good success at exhibitions and competitions. This has helped to spread the breed, and more private stud farms have emerged. The appearance of the furioso-north star (or the Half-blood of Mezőhegyes), can be calculated as an independent breed from 1867 onwards.



Figure 10. Furioso North Star horse. Source: <https://hu.pinterest.com/pin/543246773774391999/>

Unfortunately, after World Wars I and II, the number of Furioso North Star horses was dramatically reduced, and regeneration of the breed had to rely on only at the cradle of the breed at Mezőhegyes, the breed has not been able to fully recover. Even if after the restructuring of the Mezőhegyes Stud Farm in and after 1961 several foundation mare families were lost, and stallion lines also suffered irremediable losses (Mihók, ed. 2011), there have been successful Furioso North Star horses in recent years proving the genetic value of the breed. After the political changeover in 1989-1990, the whole Hungarian agricultural sector and ownership structures have been reorganised and the state farms and traditional co-operative breeding stocks ceased to exist. Today, there is no state stud farm of this particular breed, however, there are 550 registered mares (Mihók, ed. 2011).

The Kisbér Half-blood

This elegant-looking, strong-physique, yet easy-to-walk and well-ridden breed resembles the military riding horses from the second half of the 19th century. The breed gained its name after the town Kisbér in Komárom County, where a famous stud farm of the count Batthyány family was established, which was confiscated by the Habsburg monarchy after the revolution and freedom war in 1848 – 1849. The emperor Franz Joseph I. ordered the establishment of a new stud farm for military purposes in 1853 with a carefully selected breeding stock with Thoroughbred stallions, which had ideal constitutions and excellent performances in all aspects through generations. To improve genetic homogeneity and increase body weight, only crossbred stallions from the best Thoroughbreds were used in breeding involving even some Mezőhegyes crossbred horses in order to increase body weight. Today Kisbér horses have a high percentage of Thoroughbred genes and meet the requirements of modern sport horses besides preserving traditional breeding and genetic values. The Kisbér horses are very popular with equestrian sports, hobby holders and hikers alike. The Kisbér Half-blood horses were the best hussar horses in the last third of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century.



Figure 11. The Kisbér Half-blood horse. Source: <http://www.lovasok.hu/index-archive.php?i=8866>

Gidran

The Gidran or Hungarian Anglo-Arab is a horse breed developed in Hungary from bloodstock that included the Arabian horse. All members of the breed are Chestnut. It is an endangered breed today, with only about 200 living representatives worldwide. The Gidran breed began its development in 1816 at the Mezőhegyes State Stud. The original foundation sire was a desert bred Arabian stallion named Siglavy Gidran. This stallion was crossed on Arabian, Turkish, and Spanish-Naples mares as well as other local mares from eastern Europe. The registration of the Gidran as an independent breed dates back to the reclassification of the stud in 1855 to introduce strain breeding. Thoroughbred bloodlines were introduced to the Gidran at the beginning of 1893 and later, Shagya Arabian breeding was also added (Mihók, 2011).

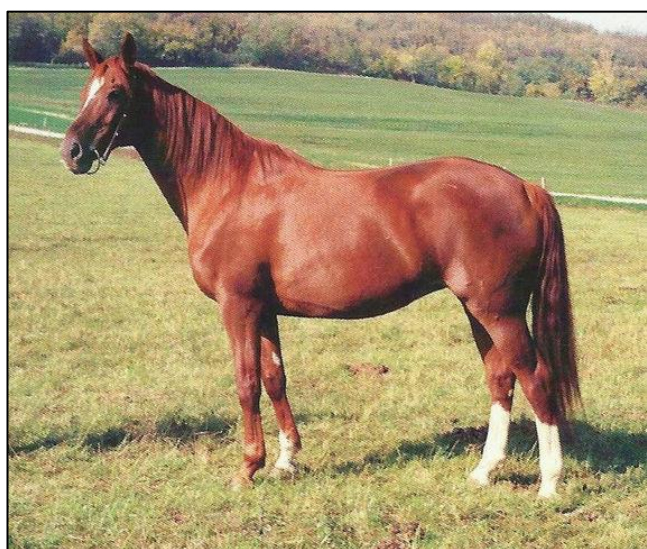


Figure 12. The Gidran horse. Source: <https://en.rimondo.com/horse-details/159121/Gidran-Maxim-I>

The Mezőhegyes sport horse



Figure 13. The Mezőhegyes sport horse. Source: <http://www.lovasok.hu/index-archive.php?i=96489>

The Mezőhegyes sport horse or Hungarian sport horse is the youngest horse breed in Hungary, which is primarily a cross between Hanoverian, Holstein & English Thoroughbred, however, warmbloods from Germany, Holland, Belgium and France made contributions as well. Since 1984, the Mezőhegyes sport horse has been officially recognized. It boasts successful individuals in dressage, jumping and military training.

Quality assurance in the Hungarian equestrian sector: the horseshoe qualification system

The horseshoe qualification system is a quality assurance particularly developed for the equestrian tourism sector. Already to achieve one horseshoe, the providers have to satisfy a whole range of requirements. Main qualification criteria:

1. Environmental aspects

Natural endowments. Landscaping, the order of the environment. The style and condition of the buildings. The suitability and order of the area used for the horse service. Providing hygiene conditions (toilettes, bathrooms, cleaning services, etc.)

2. Considerations regarding the keeping and fitness of horses.

The technological conditions of animal husbandry. The degree of training of the horses. Manageability, ability to establish good contact with people. Suitability for service. Physical condition. Health conditions.

3. Aspects of Horse Services.

The range of horse services. Level: the facility serves the region's tourism services and training of horses in everyday life. Condition and maintenance of tools, an appropriate number of tools, cleanliness, safety, and comfort. The marketing of the site (publication, use of information media, etc.) Value for money services. The five main equestrian services considered in the horseshoe-classification system:

- 1) education and training,
- 2) riding,
- 3) carriage or horse-coach,
- 4) demonstrations and horse shows,
- 5) special services:
 - a. hunting riding,
 - b. therapeutic riding,
 - c. breeding consultation, etc.

4. Personal factors.

Qualification of the equestrian specialists, trainers, guides. Suitability of service personnel. Language skills of personnel – very important, the lack of knowledge of foreign languages is often one of the main weaknesses. Accident prevention, protection, health, and safety requirements.

5. Other programs, options.

Options on the ground. Options outside the farm. Guaranteed permanent events, programs. Quality of meals (locally or nearby). Availability and quality of accommodation (locally or nearby).

Rating Categories:

The scores are evaluated from 1 to 5, and the scores of the main aspects are calculated from the average points of the subcategories. Based on the scores achieved, the facilities were rated from 1 to 5 horseshoes. Facilities that were registered or - because of the low level of service (80%) - were unable to meet the 1 horseshoe level or are newly established or facilities under rebuilding (20%). Highest achievable total score: 25 points (sum of points for the main aspects).

5 horseshoes: 22 – 25 points

4 horseshoes: 19 – 21 points

3 horseshoes: 17 – 20 points

2 horseshoes: 15 – 16 points

1 horseshoe: 12 – 14 points

In the case of fraction scores, considering all the circumstances, you should strive to rank the higher class. The assessment should take into account the environment and, in particular, the condition, keeping, and fitness of the horses. It is not advisable to compromise on these issues.

5 horseshoes can be awarded to the place that has scored 22 points, according to which

- in none of the main aspects, the average score is below 4 points
- there are at least 10 suitable horses and equipment available
- can provide at least three of the 5 horse riding services
- at least one rider/trainer has good skills in one main foreign language

4 horseshoes can be awarded to the place which scored min. 19 points and only one aspect may have an average score of three, but this cannot be the 2nd point (i.e. considerations regarding the keeping and fitness of horses); furthermore:

- the facility has at least 8 suitable horses
- it can provide three horse riding services
- it has a relevant, to the place and activities related equestrian program
- it has one rider/trainer speaking some of the main foreign languages

3 horseshoes are awarded to the place that reaches 17 points, but in the 2nd and 3rd key aspects (i.e. considerations regarding the keeping and fitness of horses and aspects of horse services), the average score cannot be less than 3. Furthermore:

- two of the main subjects of equestrian services are available
- there are related programs
- have at least 5 suitable horses.

2 horseshoes are granted to the place that has scored 15 points, and

- it has at least 4 horses and appropriate equipment
- can provide at least two of the main topics of horse services
- has a related program

1 horseshoe is given to the place that has at least

- 3 suitable horses and appropriate equipment;
- the average score for criteria 2 and 3 must not be less than 3.

Further requirements and considerations for the horseshoe qualification system

There are further requirements regarding the proportion of scores between and within the aspects of horseshoe qualification system:

5 horseshoes: no score below 4 points in any aspect

4 horseshoes: the average score of the 2nd aspect (keeping and fitness of horses) must not be less than four

3, 2, and 1 horseshoes: not less than 3 points average in aspects 2 and 3 (horses, horse services)

To qualify for the five horseshoe ratings, the average score must exceed 4.0 for all major aspects. A further condition is that the number of horses used in equestrian tourism services should be at least 10, and one or more foreign-language equestrian professionals are available. Four horseshoe ratings can be awarded to a place with a lower average score and not having five horseshoe ratings because of the number of horses (but at least 8). Three horseshoes are given to places that can provide two main topics for horse riding services, has a related program and has at least 5 suitable horses. In order to qualify for the two horseshoes, you must have at least 4 horses and two subjects from the riding services. One horseshoe place must have at least 3 suitable horses.

Table 1. Summary of the objective parameters of horseshoe qualification system

Number of horseshoes	Av. score of each of 5 main aspects	Number of horses available for services	Min. number of services	Compuls. skills in foreign languages	Number of points
5	>4.0	>12	>3	+	22-25
4	>3.8	>10	>3	+	19-21
3	>3.4	>8	>2		17-18
2	>3.0	>6	>2		15-16
1	>2.4	>5	>1		12-14

In addition to the qualifying factors that can be specifically defined, such as the number of horses, or the range of equestrian services provided, the average score based on the qualification criteria >determines the rating. Some of the facilities specialize in horse riding demonstrations, a special branch of horse tourism. It is not advisable to place these facilities in the same category as classical equestrian service providers. Most of them do not ride, or only a few horses, but they perform their special activities at the right level and can be recommended to foreign guests. Within the category, the high-quality demonstration venues were awarded a separate qualification degree, the "featured showroom" title.

The horse is a must for rural life. A significant proportion of rural tourism hosts provide horses, horse riding, and horse carriage services for their guests to broaden their product range. For example, because of the low number of horses, you cannot get a horseshoe. These facilities have been classified as "rural tourism" if they have performed equestrian activities

at an acceptable level. Facilities of special cultural heritage, which present the ancient nomad lifestyle of Hungarians, are also excluded from the established conditions, as they do not have a barn, use free-range animal husbandry, and the yurt⁹ for accommodating their guests is also not comparable to traditional accommodation. At the same time, these sites have a significant attraction, the ancient Hungarian equestrian traditions - mostly - a worthy representative, so these facilities are rated "nomad" in the qualifying system. Other categories include "studs" whose main profile is horse breeding, but they also deal with tourism as ancillary activities. Among the services offered is the stud farm, demonstration, but some horses are used for cross-country riding, carriage riding, and if necessary, they can set more than one hundred horses for horseback riding.

The most important equestrian attractions, services and service providers available in the Hungarian part of the project area

1. The equestrian heritage of the Festetics family – a historic attraction

The Festetics Palace in Keszthely was built and owned by the Croatian – Hungarian counts, the Festetics family for 200 years from the mid-18th century. Nowadays it operates under the name Helikon Castle Museum: the Festetics Palace building houses the aristocratic lifestyle exhibition and the Helikon Library. In the castle park, you will find the palm house and the bird park, as well as the former caravan house, which is a place for a carriage exhibition. The interiors of the castle building are presented in an original or a periodically reconstructed form presenting the peculiarities of aristocratic life from the 18th -19th centuries. The equestrian culture and the love of horses of the Festetics family can be seen in several rooms. The Fenékpusztá stud farm, owned by the Festetics family, hosted an excellent stud from 1797. Within the Georgikon, founded by György Festetics I., stud master and groom training took place in 1807, thereby establishing the reputation of the Festetics stud. Unfortunately, today the former stables at Fenékpusztá are in a very bad, deteriorated state, although there are plans to renovate these buildings and their environment.

The building of the coach and carriage exhibition was built between 1883 and 1887 on the order of Tasziló Festetics II. The stables and the caravan-house had an important function in the life of the aristocratic family, as horse-drawn carriages and caravans that were indispensable for the lifestyle of that time, were placed here as well as those horses, which were kept for everyday use such as riding. The coach and carriage exhibition opened in January 2004 for visitors. In the building beautifully renovated, and restored wagons, carriages and

sleds and the equestrian tools and objects can be seen from the 18th to the 19th century. The walls of the exhibition halls are decorated with old riding photographs, descriptions and drawings, which are worthy of careful study.



Figure 14. The entrance of the coach and carriage museum in the Festetics Palace. Source:

<https://www.utisugo.hu/kastelyhotel/a-hintomuzeum-32932.html>

The purpose of the exhibition is not only to present the wagons and coaches used in the given age but also to provide an insight into the entire vertical culture of that time.



Fig. 15. Exhibition in the Coach and Carriage Museum.

Source: <http://helikonkastely.hu/hu/kiallitasok/allando-kiallitasok/hintokiallitas1/>

From this diverse range of services, it offers an interesting program for visitors who have not been close to the riding lifestyle so far, but it is also a special experience for those who are well acquainted with riding and the equestrian

⁹ A traditional yurt (from the Turkic languages) or ger (Mongolian) is a portable, round tent covered with skins or felt and used as a dwelling by nomads in the steppes of Central Asia. The structure comprises an angled assembly or latticework of pieces of wood or bamboo for walls, a door frame, ribs (poles, rafters), and a wheel

(crown, compression ring) possibly steam-bent. The roof structure is often self-supporting, but large yurts may have interior posts supporting the crown. The top of the wall of self-supporting yurts is prevented from spreading by means of a tension band which opposes the force of the roof ribs.

culture. The exhibition is complemented by a dynamic series of drawings and paintings by István Csengery, pre-World War I artist, about horses and races.

2. The Equital guest house and ranch in Nemesvita

The village of Nemesvita, which is situated in the Keszthely Mountains, not only favours the riders, but also the fans of active tourism, families with children, and guests wishing to retreat from the world. The view from the garden of the Equital quest house is dominated by volcanic mountains of the Balaton Uplands. Lake Balaton is only 3 km away. Tourist attractions such as Badacsony, Szigliget, Keszthely, Tapolca are within 15 kilometres. Facilities in the Equital: swimming pool, sauna, sunbathing terrace, large garden, playground, sand volleyball and soccer field, a full-day restaurant. There are a number of options for active holidays: cycling and hiking trails, water sports, golf, cave tours, sightseeing tours, wine tourism, producer markets and horse riding.



Figure 16. The Equital guest house and horse ranch in Nemesvita. Source: <https://www.szallasvadasz.hu/equital-panzio-nemesvita/>

Cross country riding

Equital is located in the middle of a national park. In almost any direction you can start off in the virtually untouched wildlife-rich terrain. The average age of their horses is around 10 years. Most of their lives are spent on their nearly 15 hectares of pasture with their breeders, which is much closer to their natural needs than any luxury boxing or barn. Their behaviour is closer to the natural, more energetic, more temperamental character. Cross country riding tours are launched all year round (subject to weather conditions) according to guest's needs. All tours are arranged with their guests, organized according to their individual needs, mood, condition, and current weather.

Horseback riding stables

Horseback riding stables - riding every season. The size of their riding stables is 51x33 metres. The size of the riding track is 24x43 metres. In the new facility there are 10 English boxes for prospective wage keepers. Men's and women's dressing rooms (with showers and sinks) are available in the building. The stand, which accommodates up to 100 people, serves the comfort of the viewers. The ground of the track is mixed with sand. In the daytime, natural light is provided by polycarbonate overhead lights placed along the entire length

of the riding hall, 8 metres wide. In the absence of natural light, a light output of 8,000 W ensures smooth, shadow-free lighting.



Figure 17. The Equital covered horseback riding hall. Source: www.lovarda.lovassok.hu

Hire horse-keeping

Hire horse-keeping includes grazing, feeding and indoor and outdoor use. Veterinary supervision and care of horses are also solved. The qualified horsemen also pay great attention to the guest-horses. The horses are fed twice daily with fibre and grain feed and, depending on the weather conditions, spend as much time as possible on pasture.

Equestrian education



Figure 18. Riding school at Equital. Source: www.iranyimagyarorszag.hu

On the field, the rider who is sure to control and rule the horse in all three modes will go. Not because the horse will be disobedient, but because of the nature of the landscape,

unexpected situations may occur, from the sudden appearance of wildlife to extreme road conditions.

3. Zala Equestrian Centre – Hotel and stable – Zala Horseman Ltd (Zalai Lovas Kft.) Classification: 5 horseshoes

The largest equestrian centre in the region is located in the immediate vicinity of the thermal baths of Zalaszentgrót and Kehidakustány, 25 km from Keszthely and 15 km from Hévíz. their 35 well-trained horses, their skilled staff guarantee an unforgettable and borderless riding experience for beginners and advanced riders.

Equestrian services

Riding

Sunny rides on picnic

Multi-day riding in untouched nature

Carriage to the nearby wine cellars, wine tasting on request

Equestrian training for beginners and advanced learners:

- Lunging¹⁰
- Dressage
- Jumping
- Carriage driving training
- Theoretical and practical courses with your own horse or with the host's horses
- Parelli¹¹
- Horse homeopathy
- Tellington¹²
- Natural hoof care without horseshoes
- Theoretical courses on own or with a host for a suitable number of staff at a pre-agreed time.

Hire horse-keeping

They provide horses with excellent conditions. The available pen-system - in an area of 50 hectares - and their professional treatment are the guarantee of nature-close horse-keeping. Continuous veterinary inspection, worm-control, salt-lollipop, horse care, hoof care, horseback riding, use of riding stables, and horse liability insurance are included in the price of the maintenance.

Horse therapy

The concept of equestrian therapy: "Movement therapy based on a neurophysiological basis on a medical proposal with a horse. The specialty of the treatment is that the movement of the horse is used for healing. For a lay viewer it may appear as a simple riding, but in fact it is a complex treatment that can affect the nervous system, the physique, the psyche and the senses at the same time. The movement of the back of the horse acts primarily on the patient's basin, and this exterior

develops and spreads to the periphery. This pattern of motion is the same as the pattern of human walking. The rhythmic movement of the patient, which is caused by a horse, cannot be replaced by any other physiotherapeutic exercise. There is a special dialogue between the horse and the rider, reconciling the tiny movements that are transferred at a mechanical pace.

Horse therapy is recommended primarily for children or adults who have some traumatic, nervous or muscle injury. In addition, equestrian therapy provides relaxation even for people who are sitting, standing and have no problems with their health.

Hotel, hospitality and restaurant services

The 19 guest rooms of the guest house are equipped with a toilet and shower. In the restaurant, the guests will find the flavours of international cuisine along with the original Hungarian specialties. Dishes from the famous, indigenous Hungarian mangalica pig and cattle colour the program - and the menu. As far as possible, they use local products in their food and beverage assortment.



Figure 19. Carriage excursions at the equestrian centre.
Source: <http://reithof.hu/hu/zalai-lovas/kedvezmenyes-arak>

4. Abbazia Country Club Superior, Nemesnép

The Abbazia Country Club Superior is an equestrian centre and hotel in the immediate vicinity of the Hungarian – Slovenian border and the Őrség National park. The hotel's equestrian complex offers an ideal location for all horse sports. Their 20 x 40-meter indoor riding hall, the grassy pens provide an ideal venue for individual, group and runner-riding training every season. Well-trained equestrian trainers, in a professional environment, beginners and advanced riders can spend useful hours learning and perfecting their

¹⁰ When you lunge a horse, it moves around you in a circle on the end of a lunge line. Lunging is a useful exercise for both horse and handler. It is a way to let your horse safely burn off extra energy without you riding it and can help when teaching a horse obedience.

¹¹ Parelli Natural Horsemanship states its core principle as "Horsemanship can be obtained naturally through communication, understanding and psychology, versus mechanics, fear and intimidation." Parelli's methods were first publicized by Robert M.

Miller in a series of articles in Western Horseman magazine in 1983 and 1984. In 1993, Parelli published his first book, Natural Horse-Man-Ship, co-authored by Kathy Kadash Swan and with photography by Parelli's first wife, Karen

¹² Developed by internationally recognized animal expert Linda Tellington-Jones, Tellington Touch® Training is a specialized approach to the care and training of our companion animals, horses and exotic animals, as well as for the physical and emotional well-being of humans.

knowledge. With the help of the experienced guides, the guests can discover the beauty of the Őrség National Park and the hilly area on an adventure riding experience.

If anybody want to entrust the care of their favourite horse to professionals and want to ride in an exciting and beautiful environment in winter and summer, then the available stabling facilities are the perfect place to satisfy these needs. The Country Club also provides spacious, well-kept window boxes for guest horses, their excellent horsemen are dedicated to taking care even of guest horses living in the stables. Equestrian tourists have the opportunity to discover some of the natural wonders of the Őrség - Raab - Goricko Nature Park in their familiar saddle, with their favourite horse on the well - known hiking trails.



Figure 20. Abbazia Country Club in Nemesnép. Source: http://www.belfoldiszallasok.hu/abbazia_country_club_nemesnep_nemesnep

5. Georgikon Equestrian School, Keszthely. Grading: Three horseshoes



The traditions of horse breeding and horse riding were followed by the University's training farm after the Second World War, the backbone of which was the Festetics estate in Keszthely. At this time, the current riding school began to build up. The revival of breeding began with Danish import

mares and then, from the 50s onwards, Noniusz mares were paired with trotting stallions. In 1963 the horse stock was expanded with the best specimens of the half-blooded culture of Bakonypölöske. In 1970, a farm of 30 mares received a charter, the main purpose of breeding was to produce excellent sports horses.

From 1974, after merging the farm in Baki with the Keszthely Farm, it became possible for the foals bred in Keszthely to spend their first years on the hills of Rádiház, thereby gaining the right muscle structure and toughness. This stance remained with Rádiházi Stud until the mid-1980s. In the sporting breeding of Keszthely, among the famous stallions of the last century, among others, the most known names of

famous horses are *Pálfa Maxim*, *Ramszesz*, *Bűvölő*, *Aldató*. Horseback riding, equestrian training for the young people in the area, as well as for university students, was provided by the equestrian school of the University in the 1950s and 1960s. Many domestic and foreign riders have welcomed the facility. The real recovery of tourism was in the early 1970s. The stable, the buildings and tracks were renovated, thus increasing the comfort of the visitors. In the early years of the 1980s, the riding horses took part in a number of successful tours in Hungary. The most popular of these tours were the several-day Balaton tours. In the early 1990s, there was a downturn in both horse riding and riding school life, many horses and equipment were sold, and breeding was also pushed back.



Figure 21. Training at the Georgikon Equestrian School. Source: www.georgikon.hu

In 1996, the University was forced to rent riding stables, resulting in a further deterioration of the facility. Since April 2003, the equestrian school has been in the management of the Farm, today it operates under the name of Georgikon Riding School. Thanks to the serious professional work and the sacrificial help of the University and the guests, they managed to rebuild the riding hall, fill it with life. In March 2005, the riding school was awarded 3 horseshoes from the Hungarian Equestrian Tourist Association. Their goal is to continue the work begun, to further modernize the facility and to improve its reputation.

The main activities of the Equestrian School include the theoretical and practical training of the students of the Georgikon faculty, the continuation of Georgikon's horse traditions. Currently, learners can get acquainted with the practical basics of riding within the framework of specialized riding. The theoretical training is provided by the subjects "Horse Breeding", "Horse Feeding and Horse Keeping Technology" and "Horse Riding". From 2008, the stud farmer can acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge of horse riding, equine breeding within the framework of advanced vocational training.

Another important task of the facility is to provide equestrian training and horse riding for the general public, to serve the equestrian tourism. Over the last two years, the number of their guests has increased significantly, partly due to the good

relationship with the local media and partly due to the teaching work. In the riding hall, riding all year round is provided from beginner to advanced level. The comfort of their guests is provided by a heated dressing room, riding and running ramps. The former Festetics estate offers excellent riding and carriage opportunities. During the summer months, children can learn about horseback riding, grooming horses, horse riding traditions and sports within the framework of day-care and boarding horse camps.

Since 2008, the Equestrian School is the practical base for the higher education of the stud farmer. The needs of nearly 120 full-time and correspondent students are ensured by the renovated barn and the four-season riding pen built in September 2010.

Equestrian attractions, services and service providers available in the Slovenian part of the project area – some internationally recognised examples

Slovenia is a very popular tourist region. Its cities evoke the architectural style of Monarchy, while the Alps offer a range of activities, typical for the mountainous regions. Maribor has become the cultural capital of 2012, and it proves that the country is becoming increasingly popular with a culture-loving public, but typically the more adventurous tourists come back year after year. In winter, skiers and lovers of snow are filling the hotels, while in summer, in the mountains, those who love extreme sports can find the appropriate touristic services. Thanks to the bicycle services that will be developed and the cycling network that develops it, the countryside can also be easily visited from the saddle. Horse tourism, fishing, rafting, hiking and climbing, caving and golf are booming. Equestrianism and horseback riding in Slovenia have a centuries-old tradition thanks to the Lipica Stud Farm, the cradle of the world-famous Lipizzaner horses. Numerous equestrian centres, tourist farms and ranches offer the experience of Slovenia in the saddle. Visitors can go horseback riding in the fenced areas of farms, or guides can take them to meadows and forests. Cross country riding and equestrian hiking in the landscape of nature parks and in the Triglav National Park enrich the range of attractions. Apart from the beauties of nature, the country offers excellent cuisine and wine and diverse and countless opportunities for horseback riding. Slovenia offers excellent trail riding for beginners and experienced riders.

1. Lipica Stud Farm - Kobilarna Lipica

The Lipica stud farm was established in 1580 and the first horses were bought from Spain in 1581 (24 broodmares and six stallions). The farmers living in the area at the time were evicted and resettled in Laže. The Lipizzan breed as known today was fully developed in the time of Maria Theresa of Austria, whose husband was greatly interested in horse-breeding. During the Napoleonic wars, the stud farm was relocated to Székesfehérvár. In 1802, an earthquake struck Lipica, killing large numbers of horses. The stud farm was relocated to Đakovo in 1805, to Pecica (near Mezöhegyes) in 1809, to Laxenburg during the First World War, and then to Kladruby nad Labem.

After the First World War, when Lipica was awarded to Italy, most of the horses were returned to Lipica. On 16 October 1943, the stud farm and 178 horses were relocated to Hostouň. After the Second World War, the farm had only 11 horses; all of the others had been confiscated by the Germans during the war. In the 1960s, Lipica was opened to tourists and new development began. In 1996, Lipica became a public institution that is owned by the Republic of Slovenia and has made significant progress since then.

Queen Elizabeth II visited Lipica and its stud farm on 22 October 2008 and was presented with a Lipizzan horse as a gift from the Slovenian people. The queen's horse remains at the Lipica Stud Farm because it was requested that the farm care for it on her behalf. Today the Lipica Stud Farm is fully functional and breeds the finest horses for haute-école riding. The stud farm now also includes a hotel and leisure complex with a golf course, as well as the Lipikum Museum dedicated to various aspects of the stud and the Lipizzan breed, including guided tours of the stud farm. The farm has developed a complex touristic product range. Already from admission to the farm, the following attractions are included in the admission fee:

- 1) Guided or independent tour
- 2) Unlimited access to the grounds of the stud farm during the opening hours
- 3) Visit to the oldest stable – Velbanca where representatives of all the classical lines of Lipizzaner stallions can be seen
- 4) Visit to the Lipikum Museum
- 5) Visit to the Museum of Carriages
- 6) Visit to the Avgust Černigoj Art Gallery
- 7) Access to the historic centre with the Manor
- 8) Access to the Karst House
- 9) Access to the Valley of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Chapel of St. Anthony of Padua
- 10) Access to the pastures, tree avenues, parks and walking paths (about 5 km long)
- 11) Access to other natural and historic highlights of Lipica (the pond, ice-pit, well, dry stone wall...).

Equestrian training facilities

The Lipica Stud Farm offers several equestrian training facilities such as riding school, shorter trial riding programmes, dressage, horse handling and horse keeping theoretical and practical training, “horse whisperer” - a new product, encouraging direct contact with horses in order to teach horse psychology, the contact between humans and horses.

Dressage

The Lipica Stud Farm teaches dressage following the principles of classical dressage, which developed in the past centuries based on dressage of horses for battle purposes. For the rider in the battlefield, a horse with a good command of pirouettes, change of gallop, side passes and other elements is sometimes of vital importance. The fighting skill on specially trained horses has developed to the greatest extent in Spain. Hence the name “Spanish Riding School”. The basis of the classical dressage is the natural capability of an animal.

The basis and aim of classical dressage are the preparation of a horse and a rider in psychophysical and technical sense to perform harmonised moves performed by horses also in a free movement without force and at the highest level of concentration.



Figure 22. Riding school at Lipica Stud Farm

Source: <http://www.lipica.org/en/what-to-do/riding-school>

Weekly riding programme at Lipica Stud Farm

Complex equestrian programme is offered, which includes not only riding and use of horses but even teaching of basic skills in horse care and handling

The package includes:

- 1) Riding lessons (10 lessons of 45 min each, divided into 5 riding days).
- 2) Morning duties in the stables – horse grooming.
- 3) Guided or independent tour of the stud farm.
- 4) Unlimited access to the grounds of the stud farm during the opening hours.
- 5) Unlimited access to the highlights of the stud farm during the opening hours.
- 6) Presentation of the classical riding school (on schedule from April till the end of October).
- 7) Visit of Ravne, dislocated unit for young Lipizzaner stallions up to 4 years old.
- 8) Certificate of participation.

Trail riding at Lipica Stud Farm

Shorter programme for experienced riders to discover Lipica and the Karst while riding on horseback.

- 1) the trail rides are suitable only for experienced riders,
- 2) the participants must be at least 15 years old,
- 3) confirmed booking from the Stud Farm is needed to attend the trail ride,
- 4) the participants should be in Lipica at least 30 minutes before the agreed beginning of the trail ride. Before going out on the trail ride, participants will be tested in order to check their riding knowledge and ability.

Horse whisperer

A new product, encouraging direct contact with horses in order to teach horse psychology, the contact between humans and horses.¹³ The unique experience in a heated riding hall begins with the display of the "Liberty" performance, followed by a brief and illustrative explanation by the expert - horse whisperer, and then you will be invited to the manage where you will become a horse whisperer during the Direct Contact with friendly Lipizzan horses.

1. "Liberty" performance
2. Psychology of work with Lipizzan horses, as a basis of classical dressage
3. Direct Contact:
 - Running with horses
 - Getting to know any playing with horses
 - Communication and building of trust
 - Horses trust you
4. Photographs
5. Answers to questions and conclusion

2. "Mrcina" Ranch (Studor)

The ranch is a small enterprise. The people of the ranch are a group of enthusiastic horse lovers, riders and instructors who are involved with breeding Icelandic horses. Their riding centre at "Mrcina" Ranch has been organising riding tours since 1999 and offers a wide range of horse trails for beginners and experienced riders through the unspoiled nature of the Triglav national park. Their Icelandic horses, with their calm nature, together with specially equipped saddles, means that even very young rider will be able to have a walk around the training ring or be taken out into the surrounding nature by the qualified guides. The animal family on "Mrcina" ranch not only includes Icelandic horses, but also Lippizaner, Arabic and other mixed breeds and even cats, a dog, and a little pig. Here and there the family is joined by one of the world's smallest horses, Falabella, some goats and others.



Figure 23. Bohinj trek in April - "Mrcina" Ranch (Studor)

Source: www.tripadvisor.com

¹³ Only children from 10 years onwards accompanied by an adult - a parent or caretaker can be a part of the experience.

3. Posestvo Blata (Blat Estate)



In the unspoiled nature of the valley of the Soča River lies the village Žaga. In the immediate vicinity of the village, there is the Blace Estate, whose main activity is horseback riding. The idyll offered by the environment can be a real experience from the horse's back. The owner of the facility, Greta Štor from Vipava started to work with horses 7 years ago. At that time, under the guidance of Kristina Naglost, she learned all the basics of classical riding and later became enthusiastic about jumping barriers. Under the watchful eye, Barbara Koron progressed and joined the Sežana Horse Club at the time of high school. She conducted the exam for the competition license, followed by a period of successful competitive seasons in jumping hurdles with horses, under the patronage of Zoran Zečević. At the end of the high school, her desire for equestrian skills only grew and she passed the exam at the time she studied in Koper, which was named as the main school for instructors of riding.

There are various activities with horses on the Blat Estate:

- Possibility to take courses "Rider 1 in 2"
- Pony riding for children
- Field riding
- All-day hanging out with horses



Figure 24. Riding at Posestvo Blata. Source:

<http://www.posestvoblata-bovec.com/>

Complex product development linking equestrian tourism to other programmes, eco-tourism, agritourism and other categories of rural tourism

Tourism acts as a factor stimulating the development of the economy, determining people's will to spend their free time in quiet places in nature, visiting cities and villages or taking care of their health. Equestrian tourism is a new form of tourism practiced worldwide, with great chances of

development for the region, which for many Westerners is considered an ideal place for refuge; moreover, it is accessible for all age categories, with relaxation and therapeutic effect. As mentioned earlier, access to free riding trails is much better in Hungary and Slovenia than in many other European countries. Equestrian tourism can become an important factor increasing the attractiveness of the tourist destinations in the region, because the number of horse-loving tourists is increasing, and the geographic features facilitate the development of this touristic product category. Among the positive effects of the new age tourism-development by equestrian tourism the following factors can be considered as most important:

- environmental sustainability;
- a particularly valuable cultural heritage both for Hungarians and Slovenians;
- the creation of jobs in areas whose economic and social development is lagging behind;
- increased competitiveness of the tourist products on the present and potential external markets; increase of the State and regional budget, by the possibility of taxing prosperous economic activities through the development of equestrian tourism;
- promotion of the image of certain areas of the region both nationally and internationally
- development of the local traditional activities by the increase of the revenues in the zones where this type of tourism is practiced, generated by the valorisation of the local touristic and agri-food resources, increasing the economic viability of agricultural enterprises as profitable augmented or ancillary services.

There are numerous possibilities to integrate equestrian tourism into touristic packages in a logical, attractive and economically viable way, when equestrian tourism can be linked to already existing tourist attractions either as an additional service or an integrated part of the enterprise as an augmented service to fully utilize the business potential of the company in a sustainable manner. Since equestrian tourism is practised predominantly in rural areas and in smaller extent in peri-urban environments, the connection to agritourism and ecotourism appears to be natural.

It is also important to emphasize, that the demand, behaviour and expectation of the modern tourists have gone through tremendous changes. The new-age tourists have in mind the authenticity and originality of the places they visit, the return to nature, themed or active holidays, they are craving new experiences. Involving the tourist in the online environment has meant a substantial change in the market of tourism services which must be aligned with the digital environment. Tourist behaviour in the online environment starts with his basic needs, they want to find complete offers "just in time" available to give much data regarding the chosen destinations and how to purchase tickets at discounted prices.

The future of tourism according to estimates made by the main players on the tourism market, will belong entirely to

the internet, online companies will be the majority on the market and tourism will become the largest industry on the Internet. The new tourist generation-specific of the digital age (people born between 1980-2000) that will represent over the next five years over half of the world's workforce, determine the change of requirements in tourism services. The basic characteristic of the new generation is the need for permanent connection with those around them; they are more educated, impatient and put more value on teamwork. The new generation of the Information Society and / or knowledge society will have a profound impact on our culture, because it frequently travels and explores more destinations, spends more on holidays, being in a permanent search of new thrills. The equestrian tourism sector must respond to the new requirements, regarding the facilities and the development of new touristic products not neglecting the aforementioned important aspects of sustainability concerning the environmental, the social and economic carrying capacity of touristic destinations. It is important to offer modern tourist applications that provide the possibility to book directly from the Smartphone, access reservation directly from the tablet, extensive loyalty programs on a commission basis that extend your stay and, of course, an intense presence on social networks. Even in the equestrian tourism sector, e-tourism clients search for opinions and personal experiences of other tourists on specialized forums or blogs and social networks and they are less interested in following certain pre-organized excursions and they desire much more to make their own itinerary depending on their wishes. In the digital age, the choices of independent destinations are multiplying than those of organized ones.

Linking equestrian touristic products and services to wine tourism – wine routes on horseback

There are several branches of agritourism, however, in this particular case, one of the most complex category of agritourism is the wine tourism or oeno-tourism. It is not difficult to understand, why this is the most complex direction, which is incorporating potentially a great deal of the agricultural sector.



Figure 25. The Balaton Wine Region. Source: www.balatontipp.hu

Wine is linked to gastronomy, the *terroir* defines the character of viticultural landscapes, viticulture and wine production is intimately connected to the built heritage and the intangible heritage of both the Hungarian and Slovenian areas. From the Hungarian side, the wine districts of the western part of the Balaton Wine Region are the most relevant (Figure 25).

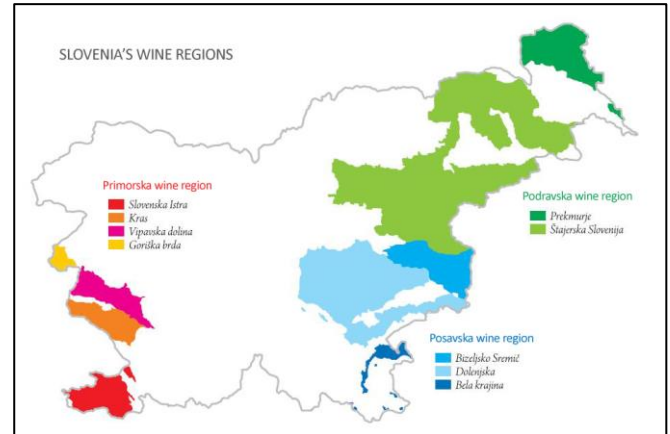


Figure 26. The wine regions of Slovenia. Bordering Croatia and Hungary in the east, Podravje is Slovenia's largest wine region covering some 9,650 ha and is famous for its sparkling wines and world-class dessert wines.

On the Slovenian side, Podravje is the largest wine region. The wines from this region are amongst Slovenia's most prestigious, with wine being known of in this area since prehistoric times. Almost 97% of the wine produced here is white wine. Officially two major areas, these are broken down into 7 smaller districts.

Oenotourism (or wine tourism) is much more than “traveling for food and drink” linked to some other leisure activities and utilizing the usual touristic service facilities of a particular locality or region (e.g. equestrian touristic services, traditional crafts and trades, gastronomy, etc.). Wine tourism is a very complex business, a unique variety of special interest tourism comprising a whole system of touristic products ranging from wine appreciation and gastronomy to the cultural heritage of a wine region. Due to its complexity and cultural context, wine tourism has a number of formal and informal educational elements providing hereby valuable means for the protection, development and revival of viticultural landscapes and their cultural heritage. Differentiating a particular viticultural area and emphasizing its uniqueness can be achieved through the diversity and quality of its grape varieties and wines, wine-related products, the land where they are grown and the built and intangible heritage of the territory. Therefore, the experiences of wine tourism must also include the natural beauty of the landscape and the rural enclaves among its attractions. The main attractions of wine tourism are the quality and uniqueness of wines, the famous brands, the complex product structure of the winery, the gastronomy, the *terroir* and the viticultural landscapes, the cultural heritage of the wine region, other touristic attractions, which can be included in programme packages (e.g. wellness recreation, health tourism, etc.), wine routes, accessibility, infrastructure and

the quality and style of accommodation and other services, such as wine tasting courses, practical training: “make your wine”, personal repository of wines, etc. Wine tourism is therefore very beneficial not only for a number of individual wineries to sell their wines directly to the consumer but at the same time improving the overall economy and infrastructure of an entire region. According to Byrd et. al (2016) there are three groups of touristic services/products in a wine region: the “core product” refers to the wine itself, “augmented services” include all services and activities within the control of the winery, such as vineyard and winemaking activities, customer service, and social or wine club events, and finally, the “ancillary services” refers to services and activities that are mostly out of control of the winery, including other regional tourist activities, local entertainment, lodging, and transportation.

Wine routes are also a type of promotion tools for wine tourism. Wine routes are touring routes taking in several wine service providers which are open to the public for wine tasting and the sale of wine. Wine routes have three different types: classic wine routes are the traditional trails which can be followed by tourists. Thematic wine routes have a certain topic which is linked with wine (like gastronomy, nature or culture) while open wine routes are a network of different places related to wine (Bujdosó & Dávid, 2007). These wine routes can be accessible for equestrian tourism, since connections between oeno-tourism and horse-based tourism are easy to find:

- Riding trails on wine routes – wineries equipped for equestrian tourists
- Visiting organic vineyards, where horses are used instead of heavy agricultural machines
- Visiting world-heritage viticultural landscapes on horseback
- Horse carriage transport on wine festivals and related cultural events
- Due to the ecological sustainability of equestrian tourism, valuable viticultural landscapes are not exposed to the adverse environmental impact from heavy vehicles
- Combination of wine festivals with horse shows of various types

Summary of strategic development needs of equestrian tourism in the Hungarian – Slovenian cross-boundary region

The vast majority of equestrian tourism services are in Europe. The major entry countries, i.e. the rivals of the Hungarian equestrian tourism: Spain, Ireland, Portugal and Great Britain. The users of their services are mainly Germany, Switzerland and England, but to a smaller extent, there is increasing interest in Sweden and Finland. Although it has a solvent demand, it is hardly the case in Norway, Denmark or America. The Arab countries also represent a new entry to the market with their desert riding tours, South America (Argentina) with pampa-riding, Chile with cowboy camping, and (Ecuador) riding tours in the Andes and special tours to the volcanoes. It is also worth to notice, that they offer western saddle and its classic version, the so-called ‘Vaquero’

can also be ordered. In addition, Australia is also on the market with horse riding tours. Thus, the countries of Eastern Europe should realize, that the competition on the international equestrian tourism market is going to increase. Therefore, the services of the equestrian tourism sector should be made much more compatible with the international market, not only in excellent quality of the already existing services, but even in branding and marketing.

Horizontal strategic objectives in the implementation of cross-border Hungarian-Slovenian joint development strategy of Equestrian tourism

1. Maximising cross-border effects in the Programme through creating joint structures or strengthening the co-operation ties over the Hungarian-Slovenian border.
2. Principles of land use which apply to ensure environmentally sustainable development of land use during and after the implementation of the Programme.
3. Promoting Hungarian-Slovenian bilingualism which is identified as a basic cultural condition of closer co-operation.
4. Ensuring equal opportunities in a comprehensive manner throughout in the Programme. The projects, in accordance with the principles of the EU, must demonstrate their proven efforts to create equal opportunities for genders, ethnicities and people with disabilities.
5. Ensuring sustainability in a natural and sensitive border environment. The overall strategic goals and the areas of intervention as well as all projects to be funded by the Programme are to be fully in line with the principle of sustainability as outlined in the Gothenburg Strategy of the EU.

A vision of the equestrian tourism in the region

The partners will develop Equestrian Tourism, which encourages relationships, exchanges between riders and the populations that they meet along the way as well as the discovery of local and regional cultural heritage, the joint cultural heritage of people on both sides of the border. Equestrian tourism is one of the best ways to develop horse-riding by making it more accessible to a wider range of people through education, public information, supporting relevant entrepreneurship and creating a sustainable society. The tourism strategy values, focused on nature, human relationships, and a different way of using horses, appeal to many. It offers rural areas a way to regenerate, diversify their activities, and open up to new perspectives. Requiring appropriate infrastructures for traveling, it contributes to protect the environment and to preserve and maintain natural leisure areas.

SWOT analyses were carried out for both the Hungarian and the Slovenian part of the project area in order to evaluate the recent situation and assess the possible scenarios in the future through which the necessary strategic actions might be planned and implemented.

I. SWOT Analysis for Hungary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable geographical situation • Variety and beauty of the landscape • Better horseback riding opportunities in Hungary than in the West due to access to free space • Unique natural resources such as thermal waters, natural mineral water springs, unique flora and fauna • Good soil quality • For now, free use of forest and land roads • The Hungarian as "horse" nation, good reputation even in horse sports • Rich built and intangible cultural heritage • Increasing interest in horses and riding both in Hungary and abroad • Increasing demand for spending leisure time in a natural environment • Price level of goods and services is much lower than in west European countries • Excellent price-quality ratio • The endurance of horses due to excellent breeds, ability, professional knowledge • Well skilled professional staff apart from minor deficiencies • Famous Hungarian breeds and, for foreign tourists, exotic breeds, which are not available elsewhere • Wide range of touristic services, which can be linked to equestrian tourism in order to create complex packages • Famous cuisine and wine regions with good international reputation • Hungary's image for foreigners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of or absent guest relations in riding facilities (briefing, information boards, diverse program opportunities, adequate price information) • Lodging conditions (nursing, barn environment) • Lack of tourism and marketing expertise • Niche marketing product • Lack of language skills • Insurances are not solved • Lack of professional collaboration • Lack of additional programs and complex programme packages • Lack of central support or insufficient and illogical management of existing applications • National riding tours are missing • Lack of route/trail maps, where service providers are marked • Non-market-oriented product range and development, bad communication • Inadequate communication abroad • Due to financial difficulties lack of equipment of horses • Professions belonging to or connected with horse tourism (e.g. blacksmith, belt manufacturer, saddle maker, etc.) are going extinct • Shortcomings in organized education in all levels • Educated and well skilled staff often migrates abroad due to better wages • Not sufficiently utilized IT services
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a longer tourist season • Equestrian services coupled with other tourist products offer packages to increase the length of stay • The opportunity to familiarize yourself with rural life • Organic agriculture is increasing, where the use of horses will be a sustainable option – this will create a new touristic product within agritourism • Support for conservation of cultural heritage • A missing product across Europe, so the country can be a market leader with conscious marketing work • Boosting domestic tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry of foreign competitors with stronger financial capacity • Unsuitable legal constructions of forest and nature protection law • Isolation of service providers - without the unification and collaboration of the equestrian profession it is not possible to create a unified supply of equestrian touristic products • Private forests and land areas, which restrict access to valuable landscape areas • Changes in land use – green areas might be turned into brown areas and industrial development sites or housing areas • Current VAT rates put companies that offer equestrian touristic services at a disadvantage

II. SWOT Analysis for Slovenia

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable geographical situation • Variety and beauty of the landscape • Better horseback riding opportunities in Slovenia (similarly as in Hungary) than in the West due to access to free space • For now, free use of forest and land roads • Rich in natural and historical heritage, sacred architecture, wine traditions, archaeological sites and artefacts of national importance, local crafts, folk customs • A large number of undiscovered / unknown / unpublished, hidden natural and cultural heritage • Favourable climate or terrain and natural conditions • The product of the project is unique, there is no competition • Equestrian tourism is a missing product across Europe, so the country can be one of the market leaders with conscious marketing work • Increasing domestic tourism and tourism from the neighbouring countries • Proximity to large generating markets: the area's location is close to large domestic (e.g. capital and larger cities) and foreign generating markets (e.g. Austria, Italy, Germany, Czech Republic) • Growing political interest in tourism development in the area: tourism is increasingly seen and supported as an important additional economic activity • Traditional hospitality of the local population: the traditional hospitality and welcoming culture of local communities is an asset in services- and tourism development. • Positive attitude of local communities towards tourism: there is a general positive attitude towards services and particularly tourism, being perceived to be a welcome additional source of income • Strong and positive image on the domestic markets: the area has a clear and overall positive image on the domestic markets, being perceived as traditional, self-sufficient, hospitable, green and natural, a place of good home-made food and good wine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete absence or diffuse presence of tourist offers • Underdeveloped area, highest unemployment rate • Missing service providers database • Lack of complex services offered to families • Lack of tourist services for special needs • Lack of professionals providing such services • Marketing communications of service providers, poor awareness • Lack of complex equestrian program packages and services • Lack of professional knowledge and special knowledge necessary for the management of an equestrian company • Little number of equestrian trainers to implement the appropriate services • No designated horse-riding routes • Lack of enthusiasm at local service providers • Lack of equestrian tourism packages; there are some programs that are not connected • Complete lack of tourist packages with horseback riding / horse-drawn carriage • No map of eastern Slovenia or even the whole of Slovenia, which would designate horse-riding routes and riding places • No information on tourist destinations to be visited and / or that riding tourism packages are suitable for accommodating guests with special needs • Lack of linking of tourist destinations (eastern Slovenia), lack of cooperation among local service providers • Lack of national and international representation of horse tourism • Lack of a national and European list of horse-hiking trails • Lack of a list of hiking trails, which would indicate the difficulty level of each hiking trail • Lack of travel agents specializing in equestrian tourism (no more than 50 specialized tour operators exist in the world - none in Slovenia) • Lack of common promotional platforms to promote Slovenian riding tourism • Slovenian riding tourism is not commercially well-known and has no appreciation • Lack of language skills at service providers, some of them do not have even a home page in English

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing demand for hiking and ecotourism • Horse tourism would contribute to the development of the countryside and would complement the services of local rural tourism • Using ecological means of transport for the conservation and management of nature. Protected areas are also becoming accessible A new business model • An increase in the number of guest nights in the region • The possibilities for the development of horse-riding routes and horse-drawn carriages are favourable, as the closed areas do not hinder the possibilities of expansion • Strengthening cooperation between small businesses / local businesses in the region • Special needs, such as therapeutic riding services • Possibility of product connection, e.g. for the supply of thermal baths • Reduction of seasonal character • Building of non-traditional tourist destinations or supplementation of traditional destinations • Creation of a common promotion platform for the promotion of Slovenian horse tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry of foreign competitors with stronger financial capacity • Unsuitable legal constructions of forest and nature protection law • Isolation of service providers - without the unification and collaboration of the equestrian profession it is not possible to create a unified supply of equestrian touristic products • Increasing number of private forests and land areas, which might restrict access to valuable landscape areas • Changes in land use – green areas might be turned into brown areas and industrial development sites or housing areas • Due to lack of international legal representation, marketing and promotion, apart from touristic products linked to the famous Lipizaner breed, Slovenia's equestrian tourism might be marginalized • Poverty hinders attraction development and use: poverty and the resulting social problems in rural areas may hinder tourism development as other development objectives might be ranked higher. • Stacked cross-border and interregional co-operation: too strong local and sub-regional interests may become barriers to cross-border and interregional cooperation.

Human-oriented and long-term profitable development of the equestrian sector

The issue of riding education in schools

The educational program should take into account the fact that training of service users is of paramount importance. For decades in Hungary it was impossible to use the equestrian school services widely, and then there was no clientele that would have been looking for services that required higher riding skills. The development of this customer base is a new task. Today, in horse tourism, it is now seen that domestic demand for horse riders is 90% of total demand. It is also well known that the demand of domestic guests is primarily aimed at gaining riding skills, so it should be noted that the construction of the domestic market can only be continued if riding is already loved in school age. There are different ways to do this:

Caring for the equestrian culture and equestrian traditions is an extremely important issue in the field of equestrian tourism. In this question, we should not only focus primarily on teaching the technique of riding but on all the subjects that are part of the equestrian culture and the tradition of horse riding. Thus, the area can be divided into two:

1. the way of teaching the riding technique, and
2. the teaching of the history and culture of horse and horse.

We can talk about a much broader area in this circle, because here the biological, ethological, anatomical knowledge of the horse in biology classes, the historical traditions can be taught

in history lessons, the connection of the horse to art, music, culture, literature and fine arts can also be widely taught in primary school. It is necessary to write such a note or a textbook. This is an easier task in this situation. The way in which horse riding is taught is conceivable in many ways, regardless of the fact that, due to the strict stipulation of the National Fund Curriculum, there is no hope of introducing riding education in primary schools, there is still a need to learn how to integrate riding into education on elementary school level. This can be done primarily in areas where a contractual relationship between a primary school and a riding school in the neighbourhood can be established. Support for these courses can be set on a normative basis in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

A further way of teaching riding in the *forest school system* is optional and can be implemented in a *modular* basis, of course, only in places where the equestrian professional background is provided. The riding of school-age children cannot be solved solely by the parents; the economic conditions of their equestrian education should be provided. This is not normative support because it may not give results. Different levels of knowledge are required to create equestrian camps with multiple degrees, and after completing these degrees, normative support can be provided. For example, we do not expect anything else from a child in the camp in the first grade than acquire basic knowledge about the horse, or to feed, drink, and nurture. At the end of a one-week camp, a child can probably sit on the horse and ride

around on a running line. The degrees of the requirements of the following camps obviously exceed that. In any case, the camp must end with an exam. We also need to find service providers who are able to teach school-age children to ride. It should be possible for teachers or college students who are keen to teach children to learn the basics of equestrian education on appropriate courses. Of course, during the initial period, the use of equestrian professionals is also necessary, but here we encounter the problem that the equestrian professional does not have any or has only limited pedagogical sense.

Improving the conditions of tourist reception

Today in Hungary and Slovenia, horse service providers operate in isolation. The most important prerequisite for a tourist reception would be to transform them into a cooperative network offering complex equestrian tourism products, which requires the following steps:

- Establishment of complex multi-service equestrian centres
- Planning and tendering should not be ad hoc but recommended by a professional committee
- Facilities be able to offer other programs to the visiting guests
- There is a recommendation based on which the entrepreneur can implement his / her vision in a region and do this functionally. The use of the plan is free for everyone, and recommendations can be based on the plan on how to create, renovate and, most importantly, operate this type of facility most economically and efficiently.
- This idea should be harmonized with the applications and legal provisions of other authorities

Providing riding opportunities independent of weather

Hungary and Slovenia are still characterized by the seasonal nature of horse tourism. In order to eliminate seasonality, equestrian service providers should be able to carry out horse riding services independently of the weather. This is partly due to the construction of higher-cost riding halls or lower cost roof-covered riding grounds. Considering that the Hungarian equestrian guests arrive from home, the programs related to the riding education of the school-age children can be practiced outside of the classical equestrian tourism season (October-April). The viability of equestrian tourism businesses can only be maintained if the strong seasonal nature ceases.

Development of equestrian touristic attractions

Riding tours and equestrian hiking

The most well-known horse-riding touristic product of Hungary and Slovenia is the riding tour. Hungarian equestrian tourism started with this product in the 1960s and gained a worldwide reputation. Nowhere in the world is there any possibility of free riding as in Hungary, and nowhere else were horse riding trips organized so well as in Hungary. Despite the fact that equestrian hiking is a qualitatively leading element of the riding tourism product range, its profitability has been reduced because of the different costs of eating and lodging during the trekking tours. There are

several variations in terms of duration: we can offer half-day, one day, several-day and weekly tours. The most common is a 2-3-hour tour, a day-rest, picnic, and a gastronomic service of a catering unit (tavern) that can be added to the tour program. Only a well-trained horse-riding guest can take part in a horse ride on a 3 – 4 – 5 hours ride. Until then, a novice rider can take part in a field tour, and we have won the circle of permanent potential guests of horse riding. This is one of the most lucrative branches of the equestrian industry. Multi-day tours can be star-trips as they start from the starting base and arrive back in the evening. The round trips depart from the starting base and return after a few days or a week. On a hiking trip, on a specific route, riders are riding in the evenings, stopping in the evenings, or sleeping in tents (which are becoming more and rarer today), or resting at nearby hotels. Today, it is increasingly difficult to organize tours, though it is the most popular and most unique service offered for foreigners. Here is the general misconception that riding tourism is a riding tour for the guest. It is evident from the list of horse-drawn tourism products that horse-riding itself gives only a small slice of riding tourism services. Preparing for horseback riding requires a thoroughly professional work for both the horse and the rider, the succession of the routes, the hotels, the full range of related services is well organized. Excellent teamwork, well-endured, tough and intelligent, well-trained horses require a great deal of practice from a rider on an 8-10-day-long hiking trip, who also has the same responsibility as the crew riding the horses. The staffing needs of such trips are significantly higher, as it has to take 1-2 horsemen, auxiliary cars, a driver and a tour guide, starting from the premises of the service provider. In addition to its seemingly high prices, the riding tour is accompanied by enormous costs. The usual number of riders is 10-12 people, the larger the number of horses it is difficult to move together. You should always carry a spare horse, a horse carrier, unless the horse rides are classified as nomadic and the horse can easily be changed in the area. Horse hikers can do 35 – 40 km a day, in two portions, 2 to 2.5 hours in the morning, followed by a 1-1.5 hours rest, followed by 2 to 2.5 hours of afternoon riding. It is not advisable to do more because of the fatigue of the guests. Well trained horses are able to keep this load constantly and for a long time. Preparing horses at some points differs from other services. Horses used for horseback riding should be trained for riding tours with serious endurance training, the methodology of which is roughly the same as preparing for the 'military' discipline. There are also different conditions for stabling, so many horses are unable to take part in these tours because they cannot adapt to the changing conditions of each day (other stalls, other hay). The planned length of the one-week riding tour is 240-300 km. A healthy and well-prepared horse can easily reach this distance, as it is getting used to it in the most natural way.

Hunting Riding

Hunting riding today does not mean a real hunting, only teaching the riding skills for the one-time practiced hunting with horses. Hunting riding was based on English tradition, and of course it meant hunting for live animals (foxes, deer in France). Today, hunting for the animal is not common; in England and Ireland, hunting for live wildlife has recently

been banned. In France, hunting for deer is no longer possible. The stylized form of the horseracing product range is hunting riding, which, as a quality product, is at the top of horse-riding services. Excellently trained horses, experienced riders, cautious pathway construction, and all-encompassing thorough organization are required to make hunting riding as a riding tourist product. Hunting rides are based on a specific choreography. 20-25 riders form the hunting riding team. The essence of hunting riding today is that the hunting team is hunting for a symbolic "wild animal" in difficult terrain with barriers, which must be built in many cases. Obstacle building is the field of professionals. Hunting starts with a master, usually on a bugle call. Riders arriving in the field after a short warm-up (in which the team is doing step, trot, and gallop), a suddenly appearing rider, symbolizing the fox, will be pursued under the guidance of the master. The "fox" invites them to the obstacle stages built by the organizing team with due care, and here runners overcome the obstacles. It is also possible to pass by obstacles.

Thus, the obstacles must be built so that riders who for some reason cannot take over the obstacles have the opportunity to avoid them. Full-service rider staff must have a well-grounded riding knowledge and extensive experience. Hunting riding can only be organized in a milieu that maintains the sense of illusion associated with hunting riding. Major-style castles, mansions, clean, nicely furnished farmhouses built in a romantic natural environment, hunting houses can be considered as accommodation.

Recreation with horseback riding

It is one of the main sources of income for riding courts and camps. Improving holiday conditions and accentuated marketing activities can greatly improve the utilization of the services. Domestic use of the former one-two-week camps shifted towards weekend riding holidays. This is the main source of revenue for some 120 of the 160 service providers.

Carriage driving and driving training

For decades, Hungary has been the driving force of carriage driving. Many of Hungarian Olympic and world champions are known worldwide. The visibility of existing carriage-driving schools should be further enhanced for both foreign and domestic guests. The revenue of driving courses is high for a number of reasons, partly because the guest is usually tied to a place while resolving accommodation and meals, can significantly improve the profitability of the driving course, and the guest's stay is relatively long, as mastering the basics of driving takes several days, it can even take weeks. This type of equestrian attraction is less damaging to the horses because here the horse / horses are driven by professionals. Prices are extremely variable. There are no mass-driving courses in the country, despite the fact that Hungary is well equipped to provide driving courses required for the quality of equestrian tourism. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for several riding schools to deal with this activity, as it is still a relatively white spot on the riding tourism market.

Special carriage-tours must be offered and organized. This is how the passive guest who does not want to learn the

technical elements of carriage driving but wants an equestrian experience can be involved. The development of this branch of equestrian tourism is also warranted because the great international driving competitions of previous years proved that this sport is very popular at the spectator level.

Horse riding services

Horse riding services are characterized by the fact that it is used mainly and for the most part by domestic guests at the moment, especially by a number of young riders. Horseback riding has not spread in Hungary for decades, and so did not develop a riding layer that knew the joy of riding from a young age and learned its basics. This is the task for the next period. In order to make horse riding even more popular and customary, it is important to promote the horse and riding experience on television, radio and educational films. We should be aware that in the early years riders will first of all meet with more experienced riders, so it is advisable to create complex equestrian bases in the outskirts of big cities that are suitable not only for riding education but also for other leisure activities. It is necessary to ensure that these sites operate independently of the weather, to increase the comfort of the guest with a catering unit, changing rooms, showers and a heated lounge. Such equestrian bases are especially needed in larger cities, where today this issue is not solved (2-3 larger riding stables). Besides all this, it is important to have at least one equestrian multi-function leisure centre in each region, whose buildings are also suitable for organizing other events. The area where such a site exists is not to start with greenfield investments, but to modernize and expand the existing site. An interesting initiative may be to install rural, seasonally unused high-quality equestrian capacity from November to April in newly established complexes so that the inhabitants of big cities and the surrounding area can exercise sports with these service providers.

Horse therapy or equine-assisted therapy

An overall term that encompasses all forms of equine therapy is Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAAT). Various therapies that involve interactions with horses and other equines are used for individuals with and without special needs, including those with physical, cognitive and emotional issues. Terminology within the field is not standardized, and the lack of clear definitions and common terminology presents problems in reviewing medical literature. Within that framework, the more common therapies and terminology used to describe them are:

Therapeutic horseback riding uses a therapeutic team, usually including a certified therapeutic riding instructor, two or more volunteers, and a horse, to help an individual ride a horse and work with it on the ground.

Hippotherapy involves an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, or a speech and language therapist working with a client and a horse. Different movements of the horse present challenges to the client to promote different postural responses of the client by the horse influencing the client rather than the client controlling the horse. The word

"Hippotherapy" is also used in some contexts to refer to a broader realm of equine therapies.

Equine-assisted learning (EAL) is described as an "experiential learning approach that promotes the development of life skills ... through equine-assisted activities."

Equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP) does not necessarily involve riding but may include grooming, feeding and ground exercises. Mental health professionals work with one or more clients and one or more horses in an experiential manner to help the clients learn about themselves and others, while processing or discussing the client's feelings, behaviours, and patterns.

Interactive vaulting involves vaulting activities in a therapeutic milieu. Therapeutic carriage driving involves controlling a horse while driving from a carriage seat or from a carriage modified to accommodate the wheelchair.

Equine-Assisted Activities (EAA) incorporates all of the above activities plus horse grooming, and stable management, shows, parades, demonstrations, and the like.

Horseback or equestrian archery

The barely introduced products include equestrian archery, which in the future can also be considered as a riding tourism service, especially because of its Hungarian origin, and its specificity associated with the name of the Hungarians. It presents a specific way of life and history. Like nomadic, hussar, or other military traditions, equestrian archery is a unique Hungarian product, with national features that have no roots elsewhere in the world. Curiosity, exoticism, this is usually typical of world tourism today, and guests want to find unique curiosities and local specialties. The equestrian archery is taught in some places in Hungary, and the extension and expansion of this product is a huge opportunity.

Organization of carriage driving tours

Like riding tours, carriage driving tours are also on the scenario. Although there are several ways to do carriage driving, today the only type in Hungary is known as the Gypsy Carriage Program in Kiskunság. Its essence: a converted caravan is rented with 1-2 horses, and the guests travel independently on a certain route without an escort. In addition to the earlier popularity of the gypsy carriage program, it also raises a number of problems, often hiring horses with professionally unfounded knowledge. Nor is the issue of responsibility sufficiently clear. In addition to horse riding, the use of wagons is also known on a few occasions, but it is not always possible to ride the horses in the carriage. In flat areas, however, the rider and the carriage team can be well complemented with proper organization. It is especially recommended for companies that wish to take part in the tour together with active riders and passive (riding) friends and family. It is extremely difficult to organize, as accommodation for 30-35 people in the countryside under proper conditions in Hungary. It is worthwhile to prioritize

the development of the product because it is worth "better fate".

Horse shows

One of the characteristics of horse riding in Hungary is that the horse tradition is presented in a horse show where guests receive basic catering. Larger sites also accommodate tens of thousands of people each year, and although not the main source of revenue from riding services, these events are definitely suitable to draw attention to the importance of Hungarian equestrian culture and heritage conservation. In addition to well-thought-out and meaningful presentations, however, there are many low-quality services available. It is important that the presentations of the Hungarian equestrian traditions and the regular inspection of the demonstration venues are actually organized to represent the value. Particularly important is to provide the future generation of potential riders with the right knowledge, to introduce them to the Hungarian equestrian traditions, to tune to horse riding, to increase their national consciousness, and thus to organize a children's riding by meeting regularly at several locations every year. The visiting young generation can be orientated to domestic tourism along with the love of horses. In the case of major events, particular attention should be paid to the annual renewal of the content of the events alongside the permanent elements. Efforts should be made to bring the equestrian tourism on these events. The organizers should strive to ensure that these national events are repeated in the same period as much as possible each year. Part of the necessary financial framework could also be created from the European Union interregional framework. The open riding school program that has started so far can continue. It is advisable to introduce other programs to promote riding, e.g. child riding membership card, coupled with a variety of discounts and field riding tests.

Human Resource Development

Training according to market needs is vital for equestrian tourism. The educational program must, in any case, be divided into two parts: partly for the training of trainers, and partly for the training of riders of school age. Horse tourism is characterized by the fact that in recent decades, from its inception to the present day, horse riding services can be performed without any professional competence. No professional conditions, only the general business conditions had to be met. It is not permissible to operate a riding stables without adequate equestrian skills, according to a high-risk plant. Rapid and fast regulation of the area is required.

- The operation of equestrian schools must be subject to official authorization (personal, professional, material, financial).
- Professional, personal conditions must be met riding is only to be conducted by trained personnel. Such professional training has not been in the past decades. Horse riders have a special need for the equestrian instructor and rider-driver to have riding skills in every respect, but need to know the tourist aspects (guides, etiquette protocol rules, language

skills, etc.) and apply pedagogical tools (you can pass on your knowledge, your communication skills are good, patient, enthusiastic, etc.).

None of the current training forms is listed in the education chapter fully meet these expectations. Education in equestrian training for agricultural secondary schools and secondary and higher education are not appropriate. In secondary education, the acquisition of tourism knowledge is considered important, with few equestrian backgrounds. If the main element of the regulatory system is the training of the equestrian instructor, then it must be ensured in the future that all those who wish to acquire such qualifications can do so properly. It is advisable to grant a grace period of 2 years from the date of the law to obtain these exams. However, after the end of the grace period, the non-qualified riding school can no longer operate. As a professional coordination organization, the expert committee invited by the Hungarian Equestrian Tourism Association (MLTSZ) can rely on this area. The most urgent tasks of equestrian tourism include training and retraining of staff involved in equestrian tourism and ancillary services, including the training of all grooms, equestrian instructors and persons with higher education who, both in the field of equestrian tourism and in the field of equestrian tourism, you already have some knowledge of the tourist area.

The appearance of riding in the region's strategy and further product and service development

The tourism industry of the region, among others, must improve the quality of the tourism products of the region. Equestrian tourism was at the 19th place in the 24-member field. The strategy shall define the development of active tourism as a "relative competitive advantage", and the following development tools shall be provided for equestrian tourism:

Service development of already operating riding bases, construction of covered riding stables
development of horse-riding routes, development of hiking facilities

A comprehensive application of the horseshoe certification system of the Hungarian Horse-riding Association, which demanding Hiking Trails in the Region. Here, the emphasis should be on presenting the values of National Parks, Nature Parks, and protected areas. In addition, it should be considered to connect riding hiking trails to thematic roads.

On the Hungarian market, a horse-riding tour of the West-Transdanubian castles and mansions of the Great Age of Reformation can be a success, of course, from the castle of the Hungarian introduction of horse racing, the Széchenyi Castle in Nagycenk, but it could touch the Batthyány Castle in Zalacsány and the Deák mansion in Kehidakustány.

Postage Carriage

In the Western Transdanubia region, several service providers and organizations are also involved in the market launch of a special riding-related product, postcard. For example, you can visit the nearby sights of Sárvár, Kőszeg (this was once a serious post station, with the memory of a privately owned

post museum operating here). The Keszthely Castle is working on the development and operation of a Keszthely-Lipica (Slovenia) postage route.

Lake Balaton

Conditions for tourist reception

It is important for the lengthening of the season to establish indoor riding stables with horse riding facilities throughout the year, where both child and youth equestrian training can be solved (even within the framework of physical education classes). Equestrian offers should appear with images, descriptions, and options in several languages. Only active horse-riding facilities certified by MLTSZ should be included. Human Resources: The region lacks equestrian trainers and tour guides with the right knowledge. Statistical data show that a high percentage of guests arriving at Lake Balaton ride almost no time or only occasionally. This certainly supports the need for qualified professionals. In 2005, the Lake Balaton Development Council, as well as the Southern, Central and Western Transdanubian Regional Development Council, launched a joint call for proposals "To support the training of trainers for horse-riding tourist destinations. At the Georgikon Faculty of the University of Pannonia, 11 persons obtained a license for horse riding.

Quality of services

The region is characterized by a lack of facilities providing complex services. This is demonstrated by MLTSZ's 2005 certification, with no horse-riding stables in the region. The relationship of equestrian tourism with other professional fields is also not sufficiently organized but has great potential as explained above. Equestrian tourism and the connection of wine and gastronomy are important, both are demanding guests. This provides a good opportunity for the active and passive riders to relax together. The wine cellars and restaurants around Lake Balaton are an excellent venue for tasting wines and food. Wine and gastronomy are also important for familiarizing the background of the Balaton region. The legal environment for equestrian tourism shall ensure to create and retain free riding opportunities, which are essential for the development of equestrian tourism. Cooperation between the Balaton Uplands National Park, forests, municipalities, tourism organizations and equestrian service providers is necessary to achieve this, as the diverse terrain of the region, the multitude of sights and natural beauties make cross-country riding a pleasure.

Conclusions

Based on the vision, the strategic goal of equestrian tourism in the region the creation of a rider friendly tourist destination is imperative. This can be achieved through interventions (measures) in the following areas:

- a) people-centred and long-term profitable development,
- b) improvement of tourism reception conditions
- c) attraction development
- d) human resource development
- e) PR and marketing

f) regulatory interventions / measures, which can be effective if they work closely with businesses, NGOs and the public sector (municipalities, government agencies).

In the case of the tools, the developers of the program need to indicate those participating or potential partners who may have a decisive, proactive role in the implementation. If the objectives outlined in the strategy are met, the following results can be predicted:

1. The Region will become an equestrian tourist power centre, worthy of its historical, cultural spirit and traditions.
2. Income from tourism continues to rise, with the spread of horse tourism.
3. the development of the domestic/regional/cross border markets and the attention of foreign riders who are potentially interested in equestrian tourism services are increasing to this region of Hungary and Slovenia
4. In some product groups (e.g. horseback riding), the number of guests with high specific spending increases, for example in other product groups – e.g. school children riding - increasing mass-selling.
5. As a result of the increase in the number of facilities with covered riding stables/riding halls, the tourist season will be extended.
6. The high degree of territorial concentration currently experienced in tourism (Larger cities and Balaton) is decreasing.
7. There is a regulated equestrian tourism service system with a network of equivalent quality standards that meets the needs of a real market.
8. A unique and internationally competitive tourism product.
9. The image of the guests from both countries is positive, and the image of the rural area is improving.
10. The recovery of the rural area / micro-region (job creation, regional income growth) is increasing.
11. Attention is drawn to other tourist values in Hungary and Slovenia
12. The lifestyle of the population changes favourably, and their standard of living improves.

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The Horse Based Tourism – HBT project was made in Slovenian-Hungarian cross border region with the support of Slovenian – Hungarian Interreg program (Project number: SIHU145). The main element of the project was the developing of 15 horse carriage routes with natural and cultural touristic attractions and the building 3 new (different) innovative horse carriage models for the realization of the touristic programmes. The HBT project was carried out in cooperation of 4 project partners:

1. Zavod Nazaj na konja (<http://nakonju.si>)
2. RIS Dvorec Rakičan (<http://www.ris-dr.si>)
3. Pannon University Faculty of Georgikon (www.georgikon.hu)

4. Helikon Castle Museum, Keszthely
(<http://www.helikonkastely.hu>)

The project responds to challenges of the programme area, as the main objective represents the creation of an attractive and recognizable cross-border tour destination that offers high-quality products, which invite tourists to embark on a new adventure with the innovative concept of the HBT project. Thus, a tourist from already existing tour magnets will venture to new sights of natural and cultural heritage in the cross-border area. The innovative HBT concept has great potential because in contrast to classical equestrian tourism, it is appealing for broader tourist target groups (children, families, bigger groups, people with special needs as well as “incentive “and “team-building” activities).

The horse carriage programmes will start in the spring of 2020 in 3 places (RIS Dvorec Rakičan, Murska Sobota, Zavod Nazaj na konja, Kidričevo (Slovenia); Helikon Castle Museum, Keszthely (Hungary). All the information about the horse carriage trips can be seen on HBT website: www.horsebasedtourism.com.

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