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## FAIR TRADE IN A TOURIST PRODUCT

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### *FAIR TRADE W PRODUKCIE TURYSTYCZNYM*

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**Summary:** The main purpose of this theoretical and empirical article is to present the concept of Fair Trade and refer it to a tourist product, as well as to characterize the tourism market operating within the Fair Trade certification system. The subject of the analysis is the Fair Trade concept, its goals and principles, and its certification system in the context of a tourist product. The author of the article attempts to answer the question whether the concept of Fair Trade realized in the tourism sector can be helpful in achieving the goals of sustainable tourism, and what is the potential of Fair Trade Tourism in becoming the dominant idea/concept and mainstream in the development of sustainable tourism. The article contains an analysis of selected aspects of Fair Trade Tourism based on annual reports of Fair Trade Tourism South Africa.

**Keywords:** Fair Trade, tourist product, FT certification, Fair Trade Tourism.

**Streszczenie:** Głównym celem niniejszego literaturowo-empirycznego artykułu jest prezentacja koncepcji *Fair Trade* oraz odniesienie jej do produktu turystycznego, a także charakterystyka rynku turystycznego działającego w ramach standardów i systemu certyfikacji *Fair Trade*. Przedmiotem analizy jest koncepcja *Fair Trade*, jej cele i zasady działania oraz jej system certyfikacyjny w kontekście produktu turystycznego. Autorka artykułu podejmuje próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy koncepcja *Fair Trade* implementowana w sektorze turystycznym może być pomocna w osiągnięciu celów turystyki zrównoważonej oraz jaki jest potencjał *Fair Trade Tourism* w staniu się ideą/koncepcją dominującą i głównym nurtem w rozwoju turystyki zrównoważonej. Artykuł zawiera analizę wybranych aspektów działalności *Fair Trade Tourism* na podstawie raportów rocznych Fair Trade Tourism South Africa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Fair Trade*, produkt turystyczny, certyfikacja FT, *Fair Trade Tourism*.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism as a dynamically developing sector of the globalized market can be the key to development, reducing poverty and inequality among the inhabitants of tourist destinations. The question arises: *what model of tourism will lead to sustainable development and fair, non-discriminatory and non-exploitative profit sharing?* To answer this question it will be helpful to characterise the activities of a tourist, who being a key tourism subject and a link in the tourist product value chain, can act individually to improve the conditions in travel destinations by choosing responsible travel organizers to minimize disproportions in profit distribution. Fair Trade in tourism is a model of sustainable tourism, in which profit from tourism is maximized for local entities thanks to mutually beneficial and fair partnerships between national and international entities. This article is an attempt to answer the question whether the concept of Fair Trade in the tourism sector can be helpful in achieving the goals of sustainable tourism and what is its potential in becoming the dominant idea/concept and mainstream in the development of sustainable tourism. For the purposes of the following analysis, the author adopts the following definition of the concept of sustainable tourism as *a way of organising and functioning of the tourism sector as a whole of a hierarchical character, serving to achieve satisfying social and economic goals without disturbing the tourist and natural resources base, integrated with other areas of human activity, which should include all activities carried out as part of the tourist economy, which would be ecologically acceptable, economically justified and socially desirable – from the point of view of tourists, tour operators and local communities* (Dobrzański, Borkowska-Niszczoła, Kiryluk, and Szymańska, 2010, p. 162).

The purpose of this article is to present the concept of Fair Trade and refer it to a tourist product, as well as to characterize the tourist market operating within the Fair Trade certification system. The article is of a theoretical and empirical nature, and in the sphere of research methodology is based on a review of the subject literature and annual reports of Fair Trade Tourism South Africa. Realizing the article's goal was facilitated by the analysis of Fair Trade Tourism activities on the tourist product market mainly in Africa. The article contains a presentation of several ways of understanding and defining the concept of Fair Trade, the characteristics of the objectives and principles of FT<sup>1</sup>, an attempt to define the concept of a tourist product by discussing its components and design, a description of the standards of Fair Trade in tourism and the characteristics of a tourist product in terms of Fair Trade Tourism.

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<sup>1</sup> An abbreviation of Fair Trade.

## 2. Fair Trade – concept, goals and principles

Fair Trade is a multidimensional concept and fairly difficult to define. Most often it is perceived as a trade partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect, aiming at equality in international trade. The FT system brings together producers, ‘middlemen’ and consumers, strives for a fair distribution of profits from commercial operations, emphasizes the role of partnership and sustainable development, and makes it possible to offer more favourable commercial conditions for marginalized producers and employees in the least developed countries of the world (countries of the Poor South<sup>2</sup>). *Fair Trade is a concept<sup>4</sup> of responsible consumption and production. It is a socio-economic development model for companies and families, which gives them the opportunity to meet basic needs, develop and improve their life situation. The goal is to treat producers in developing countries fairly, which is to help them get fair prices for their products. The result should be reduction of poverty, ensuring ethical treatment of employees and farmers* (Janoś-Kresło, 2014, p. 230). Furthermore, S. Lyon and M. Moberg propose to consider Fair Trade in two key approaches: narrow and wide. *In a narrower sense, Fair Trade is a rational consumer choice taken in the realities of the neoliberal economy, which is in a state of crisis and deregulation. However, in a broader sense, it is defined as an alternative to the progressing globalization process, which is based on the belief that consumer purchase decisions can change society and, in a broader perspective, improve the terms of trade in the global market and its ethical pattern of behaviour; putting the doctrine of social solidarity against the liberal assumption of maximizing the economic result* (2010, as cited in Zalega, 2015, p. 86). The Fair Trade definitions correlate directly with the principles underlying CRS, which put emphasis on ensuring that entrepreneurs/producers recognize environmental and social needs and then include them in their activities. FT also fits into the definition of sustainable development because it allows for gradual economic development, equalizing opportunities, counteracting marginalization and discrimination, and caring for the natural environment by complying with the highest standards of agricultural crops and minimizing the negative impact of production and consumption on

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<sup>2</sup> Mexico, the countries of Central and South America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the ‘poor South’, excluding the dynamically developing: Southeast Asian countries, e.g. Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea; the oil countries, e.g. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar; the South American countries, e.g. Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile.

<sup>3</sup> The FINE definition, which includes the four main network organizations working for FT (FLO, IFAT, WFTO, NEWS) and EFTA (the abbreviation FINE comes from the first letters of the names of the organizations that formed the association in 1998. It was an informal group set up to cooperate, coordinate and harmonize activities and lobby for FT. <https://wfto.com/about-us/history-wfto/history-fair-trade>, access 21.03.2018).

<sup>4</sup> Fair Trade’s assignment to a concept, method, technique and management tool has not been clearly determined in the subject literature.

natural resources. The premium obtained from the sale of FT products (estimated to be around 10% of the price) is used for development. The data provided by FT producers shows that as much as 53% of the funds from the premiums (in 2010-2011) was allocated to improve the quality and efficiency of production (Strona Fundacji „Koalicja Sprawiedliwego Handlu” – Fairtrade Polska, n.d.).

In view of the above considerations, the author of the article proposes the following definition of the Fair Trade concept: Fair Trade is a concept of trade in which a person is more important than a profit, realised in the form of activities of various organizations, aimed at including producers from poor countries in functioning on the global market, enabling them to sell their products so that achieved profits guarantee development prospects and at the same time gives employees decent working conditions, allows for the sustainable development of local communities by investing the premiums in social capital.

To understand fully the Fair Trade concept, it is necessary to define its goals and principles. The basic goals of FT include (World Fair Trade Organization, n.d.):

- modifying world trade rules and creating an alternative fairer economic system;
- promoting fairer trade practices – equitable sharing of trade profits between producers, traders and middlemen;
- development assistance to enable participation in global trade;
- creating multilateral networks of connections and cooperation of commercial entities subjected to the certification process and monitoring;
- providing tools leading to independence and further development;
- launching internationally trade products from world regions that are historically economically underdeveloped, which can be sold at a fair price, for the benefit of the producers;
- building lasting and direct relations between the inhabitants of the Poor South and consumers of the Rich North;
- promotion of the FT movement.

In accordance with the basic principles of Fair Trade, producers in the countries of the Poor South have guaranteed minimum prices for their products independent of global market conditions, covering all production costs, owing to which they can better plan and develop their business. Products offered in the FT system are primarily food products, clothing, home furnishings and other industrial goods. A relatively new product is a tourist product certified in the FT system.

### **3. Tourist product – definition, components, design**

A tourist product is a much more complex product than food or industrial products, therefore it is necessary to define this concept. The multifaceted aspect of a tourist product allows to present it – similarly to Fair Trade – both in a narrow and broad sense. S. Mendlik defines a tourist product in a narrow sense as what a tourist purchases individually (a bus ticket, a meal, etc.) or in the form of a package. In the

broad sense a tourist product can be any activity in which a tourist makes a decision to take part, any service he/she uses during his/her journey, and any element that creates the chosen travel destination. A tourist product in the broad sense is therefore a collection of experiences from the moment a tourist leaves his/her place of residence until he/her returns to it (1995, p. 243). A tourist product can also be defined as presented by J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak and B. Włodarczyk who consider it as a set of expectations, benefits, emotions, adventures and impressions that make up the composition of three types of travel: imagined, experienced and remembered (2005, as cited in Stasiak, 2013, p. 30). A synthetic approach to the tourist product issue can be found in the study of J. Kaczmarek, A. Stasiak and B. Włodarczyk (2002), which shows the permeation of the material and non-material components of a tourist product (Table 1). The material components of the tourist product include the material goods, services and “surroundings”, which together are covered by non-material components in the psychological sphere and idea-organization, as well as the economic sphere.

**Table 1.** Material and non-material components of tourist product

TOURIST PRODUCT		
MATERIAL GOODS	SERVICES	“SURROUNDINGS”
Tourist value	Transport	Weather
Tourist infrastructure	Accommodation	Sociable contacts
Food	Catering	Impressions, emotions
Souvenirs	Pilotage	New experiences
Tourist equipment	Tour guiding	Image of place
IDEA – ORGANISATION		PSYCHOLOGICAL SPHERE
ECONOMICAL SPHERE		

Source: (Kaczmarek, Stasiak, and Włodarczyk, 2002, p. 34).

As can be seen from the above, the subject literature offers many definitions of a tourist product that is multi-component and undergoes constant modifications, and as the needs of its potential buyers, tourists, are subject to modifications and changes. This affects the process of creating and designing a tourist product. Tourists gaining experience in travelling satisfy their ‘novice’ needs and then develop new needs, often becoming tourists with deeper awareness of how their activities affect destinations they visit. A tourist’s needs can be satisfied in various configurations and usually a tourist trip satisfies several of them, so a tourist product is usually complex and is built to meet a set of identified, individual needs. The needs arising from a tourist’s ethical and moral beliefs are gaining more and more importance. Information on how funds allocated by a tourist for the purchase of a tourist product affect the social environment and the natural places where a tourist realizes his/her stay, i.e. how this choice affects the life of a local community, supporting local

population in maintaining their traditional way of life, maintaining a specific culture or customs, and what is his/her contribution to the conservation of the natural environment, the well-being of flora and fauna, can be an important element in the process of creating a tourist product. Today's tourists are more aware of the impact they have on their travel destinations, they are more than ever interested in authentic experiences and personalized tourist products that meet certain standards. A tourist product is part of the development of modern *experience economy*, in which the products are the emotions, experiences and adventures of customers. Internal sensations, emotions, mental satisfaction resulting from staying in a given place, participation in something unique become more significant factors than the standard of the provided tourist services (Stasiak, 2013, pp. 29, 30). Finally, a tourist product is a realization of *many diverse tourist needs that are not homogeneous, which means that it takes a complex form as a conglomerate of several utilities, a package that is composed to satisfy them* (Olearnik, 2016, p. 11).

Defining the tourist product concept is an ongoing process. The practical side of creating and designing a tourist product involves the participation of tourists as key stakeholders, presenting their specific goals and expectations as to the components of the tourist product offer. A tourist's expectations enter a deeper layer of his/her experiences. The aspect of the moral choice of a tourist product is increasingly becoming a permanent component of its characteristics. Creating direct emotional ties with the place that is the source of a tourist product, with the local community surrounding it, is one of the basic functions that a tourist product should perform. An experienced (lived-through) tourist product forms part of the customer's life experience.

#### 4. Fair Trade Tourism

Meeting the needs of a tourist arising from his/her emotional, ethical and moral beliefs comes with Fair Trade Tourism, which is the realization of the FT assumptions in the process of designing, creating and selling a tourist product. FTT<sup>5</sup> emphasizes the positive impact that fair and sustainable tourism can have on local communities and aims to intensify tourists' experience by creating truly innovative tourism options for both tourism companies and tourists. By choosing good practices, travellers directly contribute to a fair, equitable income for everyone involved in their journey, from employees who work at accommodation sites, members of their families and the communities that support them, to suppliers who provide travellers with services. A tourist product that complies with FT principles can make a real and lasting difference in the well-being of local communities and environmental protection. Fair Trade Tourism offers an opportunity to extend ethical shopping decisions

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<sup>5</sup> An abbreviation of Fair Trade Tourism.

beyond everyday products such as coffee, tea and fruit, to buy a tourist product that guarantees a better life for people in Africa and beyond.

The analysis of the main principles of FTT shows that this concept has the potential to become an inspiration for a tourism model based on sustainable development and the fair distribution of profits. The main principles underlying the operation of Fair Trade Tourism are: fair distribution, democracy, respect, reliability, transparency and sustainable development (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (1), n.d.).

All entities designing and creating tourist products in the spirit of the Fair Trade concept must sign the Fair Trade Code of Conduct, which obliges any enterprise to comply with fair, transparent and sustainable business practices, fair relations with suppliers, transparency in contacts with clients and the active support of any actions in the scope of FT. FTT promotes fair and sustainable tourism enterprises with strong links to local communities and suppliers, focusing on: socio-economic development of rural areas; work place creation; improving food security; creating sustainable agricultural systems; improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene; improving access to renewable energy (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (2), n.d.).

Fair Trade Tourism pays special attention to a company's code of conduct in personnel matters and in the process of concluding employment contracts. The employment of indigenous peoples is promoted by providing them with an opportunity to undergo training enabling them to raise their qualifications and, in the longer term, to take managerial positions. Corrupt practices, violations of environmental standards and health and safety regulations at work, cannot have a place in certified enterprises (Tewes-Grادل, van Gaalen, and Pirzer, n.d.).

A tourist product seeking to obtain a FT certificate must be assessed for compliance with the criteria developed for a tourist product that result from tourist product certification standards. The compliance criteria for tourist products fall into the following categories: business practices and HR, community resources, cultural heritage; environmental practice (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (3), n.d.). The Fair Trade Tourism Certificate is available for the following categories of tourist products: accommodation, tourist facilities, food services, activities, attractions, volunteer programs (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (6), n.d.).

Fair Trade Tourism has the potential to become a strategic tool that will reduce the poverty level in marginalized economies by introducing them to the globalized market of the tourism industry. The realization of FTT assumptions, apart from material and economic benefits, also includes many intangible benefits, such as capacity building, skills (training), empowerment, harmony with the natural environment, and the conservation of unique cultural resources.

## 5. Fair Trade Tourism against the background of the tourist product market in Africa and the world

The tourist product market is growing globally. The number of tourist visits from 1950 to 2016 increased fortyfold, from 25 million to 1.2 billion per year (Roser, 2018). The tourist market in Africa has also increased. In the period from 1995 to 2014 there was an average annual increase of 6% in the number of international tourist visits, in 2011-2014 the average number of tourists increased annually by 56 million. Tourism has great potential as a source of employment and budget revenue. In 2011-2014, tourism in Africa created on average over 21 million jobs, which translates into 7.1% of all jobs. The average share of tourism revenues in GDP increased from \$69 billion in 1995-1998 to \$166 billion in 2011-2014, an increase from 6.8% of GDP to 8.5% (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2017).

Fair Trade Tourism product is a recent trend which appeared at the beginning of the 21st century as a manifestation of sustainable tourism (Tourism Concern, n.d.). Fair Trade Tourism is developing the fastest in Africa. In 2001, Fair Trade Tourism South Africa (FTTSA<sup>6</sup>) (*International Union...*, n.d.) was created under the auspices of IUCN-South Africa as a pioneering non-profit organization promoting good practices of responsible tourism in Africa. It has been operating as an independent organization since 2004. It develops awareness of responsible tourism in Africa and helps tourism companies operate in a more sustainable way through membership and certification programs. FTT supports the activities of the tourism industry in South Africa, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and has entered into formal partnership agreements for the recognition of comparable certification programs in Namibia, Seychelles, Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania.

Fair Trade Tourism South Africa runs the world's first and currently the only FTT certification program. The program has been operating since 2003. It became the first tourism certification program in Africa, which was recognized by the Global Council for Sustainable Tourism. Tourist companies wishing to obtain a FTT certificate apply for an on-site audit by a professional auditing company set up by Fair Trade Tourism to carry out audits according to FTT standards. During the on-site audit, the auditors check compliance with a number of criteria relating to business practices and HR, community resources, cultural heritage and environmental practice. Once all mandatory compliance areas have been met, the Fair Trade Tourism certificate is awarded. Enterprises with FTT certification are required to report online annually, sending a number of supporting documents. An on-the-spot check takes place every three years (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (4), n.d.). The number of tourist products that obtained FTTSA certification in 2018 (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (raport za rok 2017/2018, n.d.)) was 85 entities in South Africa, 8 in Madagascar and 6 in Mozambique which adds up to 99. The number of tourist products that obtain

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<sup>6</sup> An abbreviation of Fair Trade Tourism South Africa.

Fair Trade Tourism certification increases year by year, although this increase is not very great. The following table (Table 2) presents the number of enterprises (tourism products) certified by FTTSA and the number of applications for the certification procedure in 2008-2018.

**Table 2.** The number of enterprises (products) certified by FTTSA and the number of applications for the certification procedure in 2008-2018

Year	The number of enterprises (products) certified by FTTSA	The number of applications for the FTTSA certification procedure in 2008-2018.
2008/09	45	11
2009/10	65	27
2010/11	64	12
2011/12	64	No data
2012/13	64	11
2013/14	68	8
2014/15	(plus Madagascar and Mozambique) $67 + 6 + 4 = 77$	No data
2015/16	(plus Madagascar and Mozambique) $61 + 8 + 6 = 75$	No data
2016/17	(plus Madagascar and Mozambique) $66 + 8 + 7 = 81$	No data
2017/18	(plus Madagascar and Mozambique) $85 + 8 + 6 = 99$	No data

Source: the author's own study based on FTTSA annual reports.

When analyzing products certified by FTTSA, one can notice a large variety, even though the offer seems to be small. Among the accommodation there is a range of tents, summer houses, villas and hotels. The form of catering ranges from self-catering with access to a shared kitchen and facilities for preparing and storing food, through meals prepared by local people to exclusive dishes cooked by professional chefs. Catering services are provided by a wide range of restaurants with different levels of exclusivity and service prices. Activities include interactive environment projects, training projects, and courses focusing on cultural education, nature heritage and the environment. Activities are realised in the form of trips to places where one can observe cultural events, visit centres of traditional crafts, places of political and social change. Attractions include botanical gardens, aqua parks, sports activities such as surfing, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing; the organization of wedding receptions and weddings as well as volunteer programs. Tourist facilities include spa and conference rooms, and high standard conference centres (Fair Trade Tourism Organization (5), n.d.). The above analysis of the diversity of the range of FTTSA certified tourist products allows each customer to make a choice to meet his/her needs.

However, considering the amount of FTTSA products, their share in the global tourism market is small. Moreover, FTTSA product range is a very small part of the product offer of the global tour operators. The table below (Table 3) shows

the number of tour operators offering FTTSA products. The certification of tour operators is a new phenomenon and a significant increase in their number occurred in recent years (2015-2018).

**Table 3.** Number of tour operators certified by FTTSA

Year	Number of tour operators	
	Operating on the internal market	Operating on the external market
2012	No data	
2013	No data	
2014	6	5
2015	6	5
2016	20	10
2017	29	14
2018	58	

Source: the author's own study based on FTTSA annual reports.

Well-known global brands such as Tui Netherlands appear among the tour operators operating on external markets. Increasing the number of tour operators certified by Fair Trade Tourism, especially those operating on external markets, is one of the necessary conditions that should be met to increase the efficiency of the tourist product model in terms of the Fair Trade concept.

The Fair Trade Tourism concept requires a broad information campaign to reach the widest range of tourists with its message which is a time consuming process. Marketing activities can lead to a more informed purchase of tourist products and services. The unique and virgin natural and cultural resources of the Poor South countries can be their main element of competitive advantage. FTT gives local communities the opportunity to decide on the direction of tourism development of their homeland. Local communities want to cooperate with the global tourism industry on a partnership basis and as economically weaker entities need technical and organizational support. Fair Trade Tourism is the answer to these needs.

## 6. Conclusion

The Fair Trade concept in tourism seeks to empower tourist destination inhabitants. It prioritizes local communities in areas where they have not previously had their say in decision-making on tourism matters. By realising the idea of sustainable relationships, local communities have greater opportunities to decide on the further development of tourism in their areas and the direction in which this development is to progress. Fair Trade Tourism strives to increase economic benefits by creating business opportunities, expanding employment, increasing collective or community

income and access to infrastructure and basic services. The 10-year period of operation and development of the tourism model in the spirit of the Fair Trade concept shows that despite many initiatives and continuous dynamic development of this idea, the tourist market and its clients – tourists – still need many years of intensified efforts for FT to become a global trend in the tourism industry.

The Fair Trade concept in the tourism sector can be helpful in achieving the sustainable tourism goals. This is due to its objectives, principles and certification standards. Tourist products designed and created in the spirit of the Fair Trade Tourism concept can gain a greater share in the tourist product market because they meet the needs of tourists arising from their emotional, ethical and moral beliefs. Therefore, the potential of Fair Trade Tourism to become the dominant idea/concept and mainstream in the development of sustainable tourism is significant.

In the sphere of further research, there is a need to carry out a broader analysis of the factors affecting the effectiveness of actions taken by FT organizations in the tourism sector, and there is a need for an in-depth analysis of the demand for FTT products and its supply chain.

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