

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Economics



Bachelor Thesis

**Inspiration for Czech garden tourism - case studies of
successful garden projects operating on German, Austrian
and Dutch market**

Author: David Brýdl

Supervisor: Ing. Pavel Kotyza, Ph.D.

© 2020 CULS Prague

CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

David Brýdl

Economics and Management

Economics and Management

Thesis title

Inspirace pro českou zahradní turistiku – případové studie úspěšných zahradních projektů na rakouském, německém a nizozemském trhu

Objectives of thesis

This bachelor thesis shall provide specific analysis of selected companies operating on Austrian, German and Dutch market. Gathered findings should serve to senior management of existing company Školky Litomyšl, located in Pardubice region. Thesis should help managers in decision-making process and in conducting potential development project. Thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical – theoretical part focuses on trends and facts defining and shaping the environment of green business as well as garden tourism. Practical part reflects and studies three chosen subjects operating in very specific scope of business: the show gardens. In practical part, reader will also find case studies of selected subjects.

Main aim of my thesis is to discover and map specific scope of business potentially applicable for Czech environment. Studied subjects are monitored in a way to better understand not only internal but also external factors influencing their success in the field.

Partial aim of my work is to conduct a business proposal for the company Školky Litomyšl based on the findings mainly from practical part where I discuss and conclude several principals observed from case studies. Special attention goes also to marketing perspective of selected parks.

Methodology

My Bachelor thesis is supported mainly by qualitative data collection methods – in more detail by semi-structured interviews, observation of parks, online questionnaire, case studies of selected companies and also by literature, brochure and website analysis. While working on practical part of my thesis author had the opportunity to meet people responsible for main business operations within selected companies; not only senior managers or CEOs but also marketing managers or PR & Sales employees. After discussing obtained findings from case studies the theses offers business proposal for real company operating on Czech market.

The proposed extent of the thesis

40-50 pages

Keywords

sustainable business, show gardens, garden tourism, horticulture, parks, services, marketing, regional tourism, visitors

Recommended information sources

Bauer-Krösbacher, C., & Koschitz, S. (2019). Management von Gärten & Parks als Besucherattraktionen.
Benfield, R. (2013). Garden tourism. Boston: CAB International.
Faber, N., Jorna, R., & Van Engelen, J. O. (2010). The sustainability of “sustainability”—A study into the conceptual foundations of the notion of “sustainability”.
Goeldner, C. R., & Ritchie, J. B. (2007). Tourism principles, practices, philosophies. John Wiley & Sons.
Moutinho, L., & Vargas-Sánchez, A. (2018). Strategic Management in Tourism (Tourism Studies) (3rd ed.). Wallingford, UK: CABI.
Taylor, P. (ed.) (2006) The Oxford Companion to the Garden. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
World Tourism Organization (2019), International Tourism Highlights, 2019 Edition, UNWTO, Madrid

Expected date of thesis defence

2019/20 SS – FEM

The Bachelor Thesis Supervisor

Ing. Pavel Kotyza, Ph.D.

Supervising department

Department of Economics

Electronic approval: 3. 3. 2020

prof. Ing. Miroslav Svatoš, CSc.

Head of department

Electronic approval: 4. 3. 2020

Ing. Martin Pelikán, Ph.D.

Dean

Prague on 20. 03. 2020

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled *"Inspiration for Czech garden tourism - case studies of successful garden projects operating on German, Austrian and Dutch market"* by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 23. 3. 2020

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Ing. Pavel Kotyza, Ph.D. for bright insights and great support while working on this thesis. I would also like to thank Ing. Miroslav Nádvořník, Ing. Milan Pavliš and Tomáš Brýdl for their advice and support during my work on this thesis.

Inspiration for Czech garden tourism - case studies of successful garden projects operating on German, Austrian and Dutch market

Abstract

Garden tourism is very specific type of tourism and has many forms – depending very much on location of the park. This bachelor thesis emphasizes mainly so-called show gardens in Germany, Austria and in Netherlands serving as subjects to be closer investigated. Thesis is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. Wherein the theoretical part, chapters like sustainable business, outstanding gardens worldwide, garden management and tourism are defined. Subsequently, practical part offers case studies of selected parks that serve as an inspiration for business proposal for Czech company operating in similar scope of business. Key findings from practical part – such as brighter characteristics of garden visitor, motives to visit a garden, efficient garden facilities, proper short- and long-term marketing conception and business models – are identified. Afterwards, more accurate business proposal containing SWOT analysis, financial plan and more clear conception for building such park in Czech is created. Limitations of this bachelor thesis are protected hard data by private companies that are studied in practical part.

Keywords: sustainable business, show gardens, garden tourism, horticulture, parks, services, marketing, regional tourism, visitors

Inspirace pro českou zahradní turistiku - případové studie úspěšných zahradních projektů na německém, rakouském a nizozemském trhu

Abstrakt

Zahradní turistika je velmi specifická oblast cestovního ruchu a má také mnoho podob. Podobu daných parků či zahrad tvoří zvláště lokalita daného subjektu. Tato bakalářská práce se nicméně zabývá především takzvanými ukázkovými zahradami v Německu, Rakousku či v Nizozemí. Vybrané parky jsou mapovány a blíže studovány v případových studiích. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí: do teoretické a praktické. Teoretická část nabízí definice a řešerší témat, jako jsou například udržitelné podnikání, eminentní světové zahrady, management zahrad či aktuální nahléd na cestovní ruch. Dále v praktické části čtenář nalezne již zmíněné případové studie vybraných parků. Případové studie slouží jako podklad pro podnikatelský návrh a jako inspirace pro českou firmu, která provozuje zahradní centrum a působí na trhu s výrobou zahradnického materiálu. Klíčové výsledky z praktické části jsou sumarizovány v závěru. Mezi signifikantní zjištění patří například přesnější charakteristika návštěvníka zahrad, motivy návštěvy zahrady, oblíbená zahradní zařízení, krátkodobá a dlouhodobá marketingová strategie parku či byznysové koncepty celých zahrad. Na základě těchto zjištění je vytvořen podnikatelský návrh obsahující SWOT analýzu, finanční plán či jasnější koncepci pro vybudování obdobného parku na území ČR. Mezi limity této práce patří zejména ochrana pevných a kvantitativních dat soukromými společnostmi, které jsou rozebírány v praktické části.

Klíčová slova: udržitelné podnikání, ukázkové zahrady, zahradní turistika, školkařství, parky, služby, marketing, regionální turistika, návštěvníci

Table of content

Introduction.....	13
Objectives and Methodology.....	14
1.1 Objectives.....	14
1.2 Methodology	14
Theoretical part.....	16
1.3 Sustainable business.....	16
1.3.1 Green business	17
1.4 Tourism today – new challenges.....	18
1.5 Garden tourism.....	20
1.5.1 Ecotourism	21
1.5.2 Historical perspective of garden tourism.....	21
1.6 Types of Garden Tourist Attractions.....	25
1.6.1 Botanic gardens.....	25
1.6.2 Private gardens.....	26
1.6.3 Retail tourism in gardens and nursery gardens	26
1.6.4 Retail sales in commercial nurseries.....	27
1.6.5 Theme park gardens	27
1.7 Most outstanding gardens worldwide	28
1.7.1 Europe.....	28
1.7.2 North America	30
1.7.3 Central and South America.....	31
1.7.4 Asia	32
1.7.5 Australia.....	33
1.8 Garden management.....	33
1.9 Marketing perspective	36
1.9.1 Entertainment value	36
1.9.2 Demographic segmentation & offer of European gardens	38
Practical part – case studies of selected subjects.....	38
1.10 Die Garten Tulln – brief description	39
1.11 Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten – brief description	41
1.12 De Tuinen van Appeltern – brief description.....	43
Discussion.....	47
Interview summary.....	59

Business proposal for project Floreum	65
Bibliography	70
Appendix.....	73

List of pictures

Picture 1 Venn diagram of sustainable business model.....	16
Picture 2 Park map of the Maxipark Hamm	37
Picture 3 Die Garten Tulln - park plan.....	39
Picture 4 Park plan of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten in Schiltern, Lower Austria.....	42
Picture 5 Park plan of De Tuinen van Appeltern.....	46
Picture 6 Monastic gardens in the centre of town Litomyšl, 2000	73
Picture 7 Possibly first tourists in a garden - Hortus Botanicus Leiden, 1610.	73
Picture 8 Eden Project park in Cornwall, England.....	74
Picture 9 Treetop walkway in Die GartenTulln.....	74
Picture 10 Example of showgarden in the areal of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten	75
Picture 11 Main hall + entrance of De Tuinen van Appeltern.....	75
Picture 12 Aerial look over the urban gardens in De Tuinen van Appeltern.....	76
Picture 13 One of more than 200 idea gardens in Appeltern.....	76
Picture 14 Main page of e-shop of the park De Tuinen van Appeltern	77
Picture 15 E-shop with example of decorations of the park De Tuinen van Appeltern	77
Picture 16 Well-arranged web of De Tuinen van Appeltern + list of garden sketches and products.....	78
Picture 17 Product offered by Mengelmoes as supplier of creative flower bed, example.....	78
Picture 18 Plant Market; opened from April to October.....	79
Picture 19 The Living Gardens, De Tuinen van Appeltern	79
Picture 20 SWOT analysis of free-time family park Floreum.....	82

List of charts

Chart 1 Top 10 destinations by international tourist arrivals, 2018.....	19
Chart 2 Top 10 destinations by international tourism receipts, 2018	19
Chart 3 Mode of transport, 2018 (% share)	20
Chart 4 Proportional expenditures of Eden Project	29
Chart 5 Proportional revenues of Eden Projects	29
Chart 6 Attendance of the park Die Garten Tulln, Lower Austria.....	51
Chart 7 Number of followers per platform in 2019	56
Chart 8 Followers of De Tuinen van appeltern social media by gender, 2019.....	58
Chart 9 Garden facilities in Europe	61
Chart 10 Earnings after tax, first 6 years	81

List of abbreviations

SWOT analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
EU	European Union
Interreg	operational programme of the EU financed by ERDF
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
CMO	Chief marketing officer
EAT	Earnings After Taxes
EBIT	Earnings Before Interest and Taxes

Introduction

“What is a garden if not a miniaturization and celebration, of the place we are in, the universe?”
- Charles Jencks

What are gardens and why do human beings want to explore, observe, visit and cultivate such areas of land? Do we live in an era where days are hectic and people want to slow down and be in touch with nature more than ever? Do humans truly want to come back to the wild nature or do we just want to feel calm when watching thousands of species and observing them from certain distance and safety? Are people able to pay for such experience? Some of the answers for previous questions might be answered after reading this bachelor thesis concerning garden tourism not only in Central Europe, but also worldwide.

Taking globalisation and rapid changes of all industries into account, it might uncover some key elements of today's garden tourism worldwide. European continent has, however, long tradition when talking about gardening and show gardens. With great examples from all over the continents, it will be clearer what gardens really are and how they can attract tourists even with totally different backgrounds. Successful projects will be highlighted and case studies will be conducted.

Mapping and analysing wonderful ideas from United Kingdom, Australia, USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Poland, Austria, Netherlands or Czech Republic will provide clearer picture of what gardens in 21st can look like. Their social and financial impacts will be studied and summarized. After understanding their core businesses better, business proposal for starting Czech project can be developed.

Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Objectives

This bachelor thesis shall provide specific analysis of selected companies operating on Austrian and Dutch market. Gathered findings should serve to senior management of existing company Školky Litomyšl, located in Pardubice region. Thesis should help managers in decision-making process and in conducting potential development project. Author's thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical – theoretical part focuses on trends and facts defining and shaping the environment of green business as well as garden tourism. Practical part reflects and studies three chosen subjects operating in very specific scope of business: the show gardens. In practical part, reader will also find case studies of selected subjects.

Main aim of the thesis is to discover, map and understand specific scope of business potentially applicable for Czech environment. Studied subjects are monitored in a way to better understand not only internal but also external factors influencing their success in the field.

Partial aim of this work is to conduct a business proposal for the company Školky Litomyšl based on the findings mainly from practical part where author discusses and concludes several principles observed from case studies. Special attention goes also to marketing perspective of selected parks.

1.2 Methodology

Author's bachelor thesis is supported mainly by qualitative data collection methods – in more detail by semi-structured interviews, observation of parks on the spot, online questionnaire, case studies of selected companies and also by literature, brochure, flyer and website analysis. While working on practical part of this thesis author had the opportunity to meet people responsible for main business operations within selected companies; not only senior managers or CEOs but also marketing managers or PR & Sales employees. Author himself travelled to Lower Austria twice – in December of 2019 and in January of 2020 and met the CEO of Die Garten Tulln Franz Gruber and also the CMO of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten

Mrs. Elisabeth Winkler. After discussing obtained findings from case studies author offers business proposal for real company operating on Czech market. Methods in business proposal are as follows: SWOT analysis of the project Floreum and financial planning focusing on three segments - 1) Projected cash income and expenses; 2) Annual plan of costs, revenues and profit; 3) Planned cash balance after one year of business. All gathered numbers are projected into EAT graph for 5 years of business operations.

Questionnaires for the interviews were made in a way to cover most practical information about running specific business in a field of garden tourism and also garden business. Author interviewed CEO of the gardens in Tulln by himself on December 11th, 2019. Later, author visited park of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten on January 15th, 2020, also physically and made an interview with CMO of the gardens. Furthermore, author gathered information from Dutch gardens in Appeltern through online communication (mainly due to organisational reasons). Questionnaire template is to be found in Appendix of this thesis.

Author divided his structured interviews into 3 main categories of questions. First part of the questionnaire is dedicated to general information (soft data about each park). In the first part reader should also better understand the business model of the company.

In the second part author focuses on the hard data of the company – for example company's sales from tickets, support in form of grants, operational costs, profit or expenditures. Generally speaking, second part should provide better overview about what makes the company successful.

Third part of the questionnaire is built in a way that it will reflect today's influence of marketing on small and medium sized show gardens. Questions are reflecting how parks are targeting their audience or what kind of short- and long-term marketing do they use. Author was also interested in how the company uses digital marketing.

Theoretical part

1.3 Sustainable business

Sustainability is a concept and a vision for how mankind deals with the resources of planet earth. Although this concept has a basis that is not time-bound, technological opportunities and pressing challenges for achieving a sustainable development change with time.¹

Business strategy and management disciplines are increasingly incorporating sustainable development into their long-established assumptions and frameworks, stimulating rich, new and diverse fields of study.²

Picture 1 Venn diagram of sustainable business model



Source: www.conceptdraw.com, edited by author

¹ L. Bertschinger, R. Baur, C. Carlen, G. Doruchowski (2009)

² Winn, M. I., & Kirchgeorg, M. (2005). The siesta is over: a rude awakening from sustainability myopia. *Corporate environmental strategy and competitive advantage*, 3, 232-258.

Theoretical and practical approaches to sustainability have been proposed with some common properties: improving sustainability often implies change, innovation or adjustment of an entity in relation to its surroundings or supporting environment.³

Regarding the economic value and sustainable business: „economics is not the only lens used to look at the concept of value. Psychology, sociology and ecology also offer perspectives on value, bringing both objective and subjective dimensions, such as belonging, eco-footprint and meaningful life. From a sustainability perspective, a firm's value creation logic should consider the integration of social and environmental goals into a more holistic meaning of value.“⁴

1.3.1 Green business

What is green business and how is it relevant today and for future entrepreneurship in 21st century? After watching green politicians rising and succeeding with their green campaign in European elections in Germany in 2019, One must not forget to mention this large wave of environmentalism. It is of course not a phenomenon of last couple of years. It began taking shape in the western world in the 1970s; since then Green parties have developed and established themselves in many countries around the globe and have achieved some electoral success.⁵

Together with politics, businesses must also adapt themselves for changes coming from climate change, respectively global warming. Demand for green-, eco- or sustainable-products rises in general. Whole topic is quite relevant and people naturally speak about such

³ Faber, N., Jorna, R., & Van Engelen, J. O. (2010). The sustainability of “sustainability”—A study into the conceptual foundations of the notion of “sustainability”. In *Tools, Techniques And Approaches For Sustainability*. (pp. 337-369).

⁴ Den Ouden, E. (2011). *Innovation design: Creating value for people, organizations and society*. Springer Science & Business Media.

⁵ Wall, Derek (2010). *The No-Nonsense Guide to Green Politics*

problematics and challenges. Not only producers or manufacturers but also tertiary sector of the economy is changing.

1.4 Tourism today – new challenges

Following chapters are regarded to garden tourism as one of the most interesting sub-disciplines of tourism at all. Studies at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague naturally lead author to significant interest of such topics like gardens. Nonetheless, it is essential to mention current trends in “classic” tourism in age of most advanced technologies and travelling possibilities. Impact of tourism market is significantly bigger than ever before and most developed and sophisticated countries profit from services. Author will demonstrate some of the key findings of world and European tourism in following paragraphs.

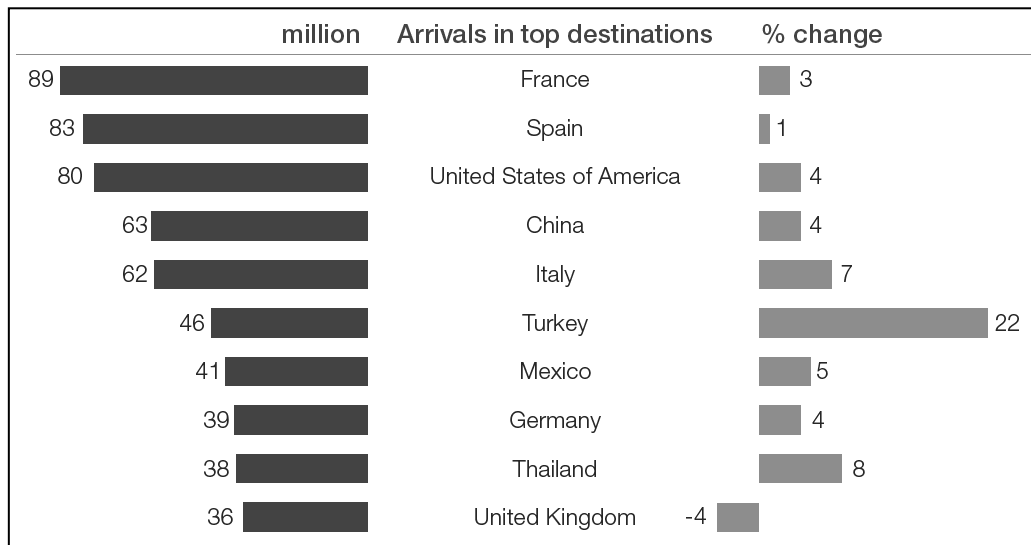
Driven by a relatively strong global economy, a growing middle class in emerging economies, technological advances, new business models, affordable travel costs and visa facilitation, international tourist arrivals grew by 5% in 2018 to 1.4 billion people. This detail was reached two years earlier than UNWTO (United Nation World Tourism Organization) forecasted. At the same time, export earnings generated by tourism have grown to USD 1.7 trillion. This makes the sector a true global force for economic growth and development. ⁶ “...with such growth comes more responsibility in ensuring effective destination management that minimizes any adverse effect of tourism. Managing tourism in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all is more critical than ever...” - says the secretary-general of UNWTO Zurab Pololikashvili in one of UNWTO reports.

What are the top destinations? Who spends the most while travelling? And who is profiting the most from tourism at all? Do people prefer either air or on-surface travelling?

Following top 10 destinations receive 40% of all worldwide arrivals.

⁶ World Tourism Organization (2019), International Tourism Highlights, 2019 Edition, UNWTO, Madrid

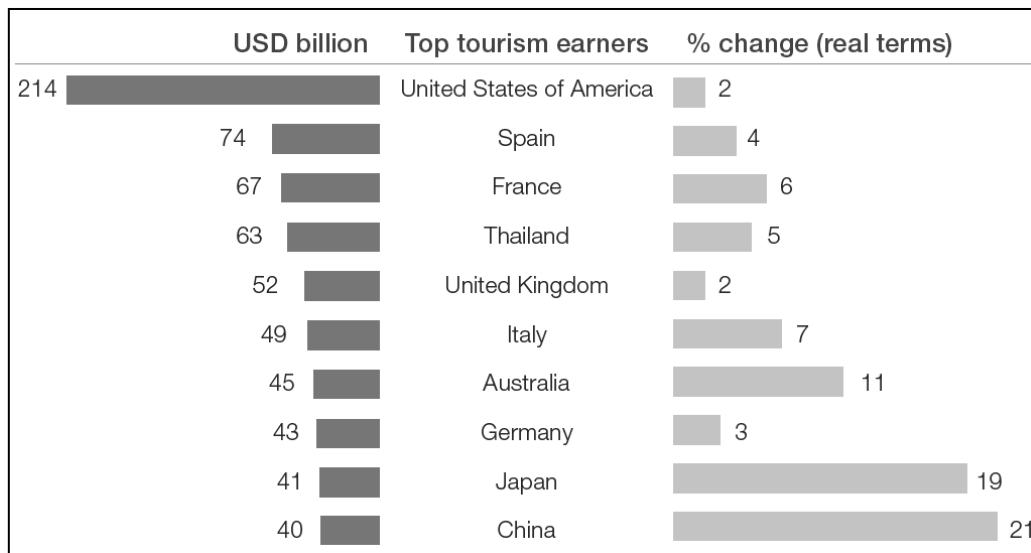
Chart 1 Top 10 destinations by international tourist arrivals, 2018



Source: World Tourism Organisation, edited by author

These top 10 tourism earners account for almost 50% of total tourism receipts

Chart 2 Top 10 destinations by international tourism receipts, 2018

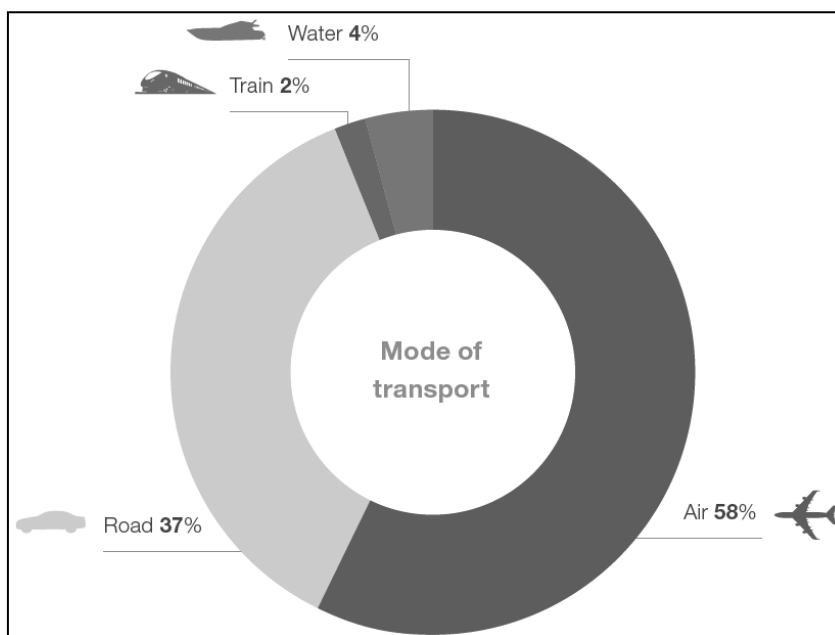


Source: World Tourism Organisation, edited by author

Above we can observe several „curiosities“. Notice that 5 out of 10 top destinations are located in Europe. Next it will be useful to highlight tremendous year-to-year increase (**Chart 1**) of tourism in Turkey. From (**Chart 2**) we can see that USA is the most profitable country

by income from tourism sector. Also big year-to-year changes can be seen in case of Japan or China (**Chart 2**). Also Australia with its 11% change is worth mentioning.

Chart 3 Mode of transport, 2018 (% share)



Source: UNWTO, 2018 highlights, edited by author

The share of air travel has increased from 46% in 2000 to 58% in 2018, while land transport has decreased from 49% to 39% in the exact same period.

1.5 Garden tourism

Based on previous chapter author will provide several definitions of tourism and of garden tourism. “The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited”.⁷

⁷ World Tourism Organization, Tourism Highlights (2008)

What is then garden tourism? Based on previous definition, “a tourist traveling to gardens or traveling for the purposes of undertaking gardening-related activities (festivals, shopping) becomes a major part of the tourist industry.”⁸

Another existing interpretation: “We define garden tourism simply as travel away from one’s normal domicile to purchase, view, or spend reflective or educational time in an area of horticultural creation – in other words garden.”⁹

1.5.1 Ecotourism

Gardens became part of so-called ecotourism mainly in 1990s. Ecotourism started to be relevant mainly thanks to mass tourism as its reaction. Many garden managers tried to attract tourists by doing low impact management of the gardens. In general, it used to be rather niche market within tourism industry. One can say that tourists became aware of sustainability of resources especially in that period.¹⁰

1.5.2 Historical perspective of garden tourism

Egypt

There are several distinct and different eras in the history of gardens that are shaped by different motivations for the establishment of gardens, and thus different garden forms and types of garden visitors through the ages. It is now evident that while the motivations for garden formation have changed dramatically over the last 3000 years, the gardens themselves have continued to be objects of curiosity, which have attracted visitors throughout this long period. The earliest references to extensive formal gardens comes from Egyptian civilization, where extensive evidence on walls and in temple complexes suggests that the garden was an integral part of tombs, funerary and cult temples, and the homes of the elite and that groves of terraced gardens lined routes and temple paths. Egyptian gardens are also the location of the first festivals in which gardens play a significant role.

⁸ Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism., What is Garden Tourism?*, CABI., p.15

⁹ Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism., What is Garden Tourism?*, CABI., p.15

¹⁰ <https://www.intechopen.com/>

Gardens of Babylon

There are also records about Babylonian terrace gardens – unfortunately people do not have as precise knowledge as about Egyptian era – mainly due to lack of archaeological research in that region (currently about 50 km south of Baghdad). There are, indeed, myths about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, but we cannot prove their existence by any legit evidence. Generally, we talk about era about 600 BC.

The gardens of the Persian kings

Another very old gardens come from the Persian era - nowadays Iran. Especially in the area of former Fertile Crescent. Another important fact is that the design of Persian gardens was so influential that many of the Roman gardens were modelled after Persian gardens that were found at the time of conquest. Most of the gardens that remain today in Iran are from the Safavid period (1500-1736 CE).¹¹

Greek gardens

Greek gardens: “Much like the Egyptians, Persians, and Sumerians, the ancient Greeks’ interest in gardens can be found in epigraphic sources and archaeological excavations, but Greece was the first civilization to provide widespread evidence of its interest in gardens through literary sources.”¹² Gardens and flowers were important parts of their lives. They discussed them, wrote about them and most importantly they designed gardens. Among other things, “schools of Plato and Aristotle were surrounded by gardens, which were praised by the Greek writers as integral elements of instruction. Of all the philosophers, Epicurus was associated most closely with the garden, and his school was called: The Garden.”¹³

Roman gardens

Further it is also worth highlighting the Roman gardens. In comparison to previous period of ancient Greece, Roman gardens were much more utilitarian. Gardens at that time were

¹¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/>

¹² Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism*. CABI., p. 32

¹³ Taylor, P. (ed.) (2006) *The Oxford Companion to the Garden*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

designed in a way to find peace and to escape from crowded areas. As very progressive garden of that time is considered co-called Hadrian's villa in Tivoli not that far from Rome. The garden is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and attracts many visitors.¹⁴ What is appropriate to mention is that many sights from Roman Empire are so overcrowded and are not far from getting closed to public. They were simply not built for millions of tourists that are coming every year nowadays.

Byzantine gardens

Byzantine gardens are culturally very important for Islamic people. Surprisingly, there is not much information available about this period. What is, however, important is that prophet Muhammad first worshipped in his garden in Medina city in current Saudi Arabia.

Islamic gardens

The birth of the Prophet Muhammad in 571 CE in Mecca set in motion a period and style of garden building that began during the period when the Islamic conquest spread predominantly through Persia, Northern India, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Northern Africa, and parts of Europe including Spain, and continues today.¹⁵

“Agriculturally and horticulturally, the spread and development of Islamic culture also saw the blending of the Persian gardens’ structural layout with the agricultural skills of the Egyptians, and the experience of the North Africans and Arabs with dry arid farming and irrigation adaptations.”¹⁶

Monastic gardens

¹⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/>

¹⁵ Brookes, J. (1987) *Garden of Paradise: The History and Design of the Great Islamic Gardens*.

¹⁶ Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism*. CABI., p. 33

Monastic gardens still have importance today for leisure purposes.¹⁷ The Benedictine Order is a flourishing religious order with monasteries, abbeys, and priories in 47 countries, many of which provide tours and function as locations for retreats.

Main activities and cultivation work of monks in monastic gardens took approximately 3 hours a day. They also used the land and for planting and for breeding sheep. Most typical were the small monasteries, usually with under 100 monks and with gardens for fruit and vegetables. Most famous monasteries with gardens are located in Britain and Switzerland, but of course in other European countries including Czech lands or France. For instance, monastic gardens in historical yet modern town Litomyšl in Eastern Bohemia can be found. Although they had to be reconstructed and vitalised after Velvet revolution (due to very bad condition), they now serve to many locals and also to foreign incomers as place for enjoyment. This place also represents the town Litomyšl during international music festival. Gardens are also known for its diverse usability – many cultural events take place right there. (See **Picture 2** in appendix.)

Renaissance – first boom of botanic gardens

While the original purpose of the botanic garden was to produce plants for medicinal purposes, as part of the spirit of enquiry that was so vital to the European Renaissance period, plants were also deemed worthy of study for their unique properties and qualities. Many plants were kept and studied.

The Western world's first botanic garden was founded in Pisa, Italy, in 1543. According to David Rae's theory¹⁸, first botanic gardens were built in order to keep plant species systematically side by side. The need for more plants to be studied apparently started the impulse for building facilities like botanic gardens. They (meaning botanists and researchers) could cultivate even wild plants that were very hard to find near universities.

¹⁷ Hales, M. (2000) *Monastic Gardens*. Stewart, Tabori and Chang, New York.

¹⁸ Rae, D.A.H. (1996) *Botanic gardens and their live plant collections: present and future roles*.

The rapid establishment of formal botanic gardens in Europe in the 16th century stimulated not only education and learning but also, for the first time since Egyptian times, tourist visitation.

1.6 Types of Garden Tourist Attractions

One might think that garden tourists would go most likely to botanic garden and have a good time there. It is, however, not only botanic gardens that attract tourists. All over the world – especially in Anglo-Saxon part – people are looking for other types of parks and destinations. Let us now introduce some other attractive facilities that tourists prefer.

1.6.1 Botanic gardens

To distinguish properly each type of garden, couple of definitions will be helpful for any reader of this thesis. According to APGA (American Public Gardens Association), botanic garden is defined as:

1. The garden is open to the public on at least a part-time basis.
2. The garden functions as an aesthetic display, educational display, and or a site for research.
3. The garden maintains plant records.
4. The garden has at least one professional staff member (paid or unpaid).
5. Garden visitors can identify plants through labels, guide maps, or other interpretive materials.

“According to this definition, botanic gardens are distinct from such open spaces as public parks and most privately owned gardens and resort properties.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism*. CABI., p. 57

1.6.2 Private gardens

There are two famously known organisations that preserve and share knowledge about private gardens: in the UK we talk about The National Garden Scheme, whereas in the USA they call themselves The Garden Conservancy. The idea of The National Garden Scheme is to give visitors unique access to over 3700 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales. They also raise quite large amounts of money for charities through admissions. Most recently they raised over £3 million in 2019. The National Garden Scheme doesn't just open wonderful gardens for charity – they are also supporting communities related to gardening projects.

The success of NGS in the UK has been copied in many countries. For example, Scotland established its own garden scheme and nowadays they have opened more than 350 gardens. Followed by Dutch Garden Club – established in 1981 – to restore public gardens, parks and cemeteries. Belgium started similar project in 1994. Furthermore, Japan created its own scheme in 2001. All of these schemes actively promote their tourists to visit garden schemes in the other countries and enhancing international tourism demand.

As mentioned above in first paragraph of this sub-chapter, USA started with similar scheme in 1995. The Garden Conservancy initially opened 110 private gardens to the public. “The mission of the Garden Conservancy is to preserve, share, and celebrate America’s gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public.”²⁰ In 2011, approximately 75000 visitors entered over 300 gardens in 17 states of USA.

1.6.3 Retail tourism in gardens and nursery gardens

It is appropriate to examine the role of retailing and shopping for gardens and the patterns of tourism consumption in retail shops, both centres of commercial garden activity (horticulturalists/nurseries) and commercial shops associated with gardening and arboreta.

²⁰ <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/about>

“Most persons spending on gardening are employed full-time or are retirees. They are 45 years or older. They are usually college graduates and have annual income approximately \$50 000 or more. All data reflects US market.”²¹

1.6.4 Retail sales in commercial nurseries

While the pattern of tourists purchasing items while on vacation is generally acknowledged, it is not generally realized that traveling to gardening retail outlets to observe the merchandise and possibly purchase goods is a major part of garden visiting.

Gardening magazines devote significant space to listing the locations and specialties of regional nurseries, particularly in the spring and summer, and nurseries in turn advertise regionally to attract this excursionist market.²²

In the USA, one can count more than 56 000 nurseries, but most likely over 90% are wholesale growers who do not sell retail to the travelling public.

Elderly citizen coach tours are also big part of the market. The evidence suggests that garden tourists will travel even long distances to visit commercial grower or nursery, and these establishments are relevant tourist destinations.

One of good examples of willingness to come over big distances is the fact that tourists from Bavaria – mainly Munich - are coming to Schiltern bei Langelois in Lower Austria to visit very popular gardens. Even though it is about 4 hours by bus, it seems as no obstacle for organized tours. That could be considered as one of big advantages of attractive place.

1.6.5 Theme park gardens

At first sight, it would seem that gardens and theme parks are at opposite ends of the tourism spectrum. As mentioned above, gardening is dominated by an older demographic, whereas

²¹ National Gardening Association, *National Gardening Survey* (2011)

²² Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism*. CABI., p. 63

theme parks attract mainly families with children. However, gardens and theme parks are closely related. For instance, Tivoli Gardens in the city centre of Copenhagen, Denmark, the third most popular theme park in Europe²³ opened in 1843 as a park made after Vauxhall Gardens in London. At that time more than a hundred species of plants were playing important role of motivational factor for potential visitors. In the USA, famous Cypress Gardens established in 1936, originally cypress swamp area, were finally converted into Legoland in 2009 even after many years of successful seasons. In general, many theme parks are using the image of gardens as an incentive to attract tourists of all ages. Another example can be Busch Gardens Africa in Tampa, Florida, opened in 1959. Main theme of this amusement park is basically Africa - even though there are mostly roller coasters and other attractions. Thanks to thoughtful design of the park, it was rewarded as “The Most Beautiful Theme park in US” for more than 15 years of its existence.²⁴

1.7 Most outstanding gardens worldwide

1.7.1 Europe

United Kingdom

Beginning with United Kingdom, as one of the largest trendsetters in this scope of business, author decided to highlight so-called Eden Project officially starting its business in 2001. Eden Project is indeed unique place located in Cornwall (South West England). It is eco park with educational bias, where artificial biomes are full of plants from around the world. This park is one of the biggest tourist attractions of its kind not only in UK. Visitors are coming from all around the world. Thanks to many areas of interest, sustainability is the core idea to be messaged to all visitors and public.

Financially very succesful business worth mentioning. Combination of profitability and sustainability is not always the easiest way how to do business. This concept is, however, sort of a proof that even this is possible.

²³ Goeldner, C. R., & Ritchie, J. B. (2007). *Tourism principles, practices, philosophies*. John Wiley & Sons.

²⁴ Benfield, R. (2013). *Garden tourism*. CABI.

For better overview, latest financial reports from 2017/2018 are being described below:

„It’s been a good year for the Eden Project. They made a cash surplus from trading of more than £1.6 million in the last financial year. Turnover and visitor numbers also increased significantly during the period.“ „Annual accounts for 2016/17 show that the trading cash surplus of £1,653,000 was down on the previous year’s figure of £1,823,000. However, it is the fourth successive year that Eden has recorded a significant profit.“ „Building on the success of the previous three years, turnover increased for the financial year by more than £1.8 million, mainly due to the increase in visitor numbers. For the first time since 2011, Eden welcomed more than a million visitors in a 12-month period and recorded our highest visitor numbers for December since opening.“

„Any surplus generated from the visitor destination and related income streams is used to support maintenance and investment on our site, educational programmes and financing costs. The surplus is not sufficient to cover all the costs, and like many charities we seek the support of Charitable Trusts, grants and donations to deliver new educational projects in the societal, health and science arenas.“²⁵

Chart 4 Proportional revenues of Eden Projects

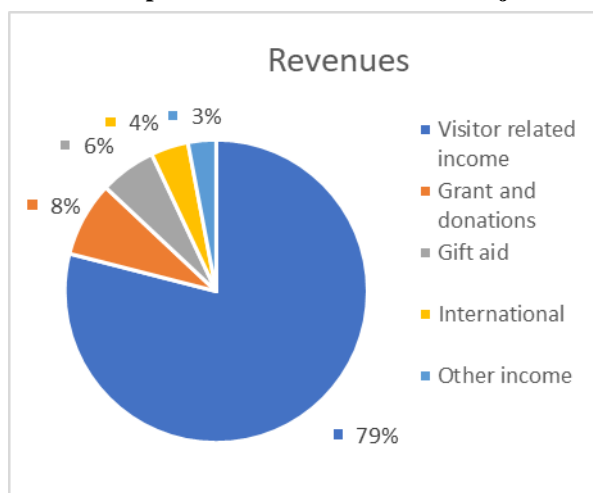
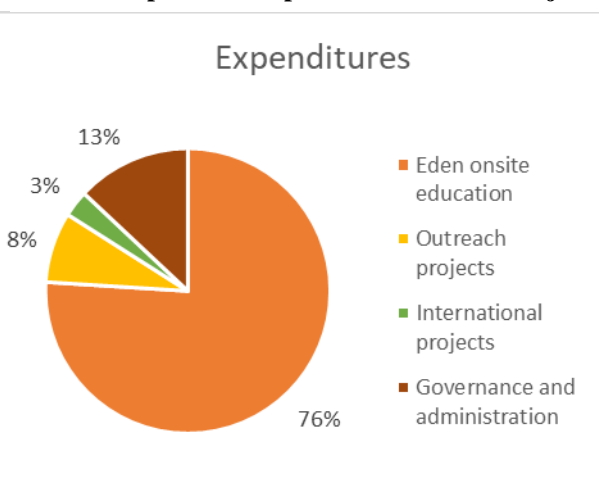


Chart 5 Proportional expenditures of Eden Project



Source: <https://www.edenproject.com/eden-story/about-us/annual-and-sustainability-reports>.

²⁵ Annual Review of Eden Project (2017-18) / <https://www.edenproject.com/eden-story/about-us/annual-and-sustainability-reports>. Accessed: 19th of January 2020

Italy

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff is part of South Tyrol's leading agricultural research facility: Laimburg Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry; it was, in fact, built by Laimburg Estate Management. As a province-owned botanical garden, Trauttmansdorff is managed as a recreational attraction with a great deal of team spirit and in accordance with principles of modern corporate governance. The gardens opened in 2001 after seven years of construction; since 2002, entrances fees have covered operating costs and a portion of new investments. The gardens recorded almost 428,000 visitors in 2011 during the season, which lasts from 1 April to 15 November – so is only 7.5 months long. The average number of visitors was 1,867 per day. Trauttmansdorff has thus evolved into South Tyrol's No. 1 tourist attraction and a one-of-a-kind recreational facility.²⁶

France

In Angers, the plant-themed amusement park Terra Botanica reveals the secrets of six centuries of history, beginning with King René and his famous floral gardens. Gaze upon the riches of Anjou, the plant capital and the ancestral homeland of multiple cultures, and visitors can discover the world through the 275,000 plant species and exceptional collections of orchids, roses, palm trees, etc. From giant greenhouses to lush gardens, paddy fields to marshes, generous kitchen gardens to dark primary forests, Mediterranean scenery to Oriental lands. Terra Botanica offers playground full of games and entertainment: the Elves' Island with its hanging towers, dynamic 4D film screenings, rides in a tethered balloon or up in the treetops, scenic boat rides and many more. Between fun adventures and botanical discoveries, with family or friends, children and grownups alike will find plenty to enjoy at the first theme park in Europe devoted to plant life.²⁷

1.7.2 North America

USA

²⁶ <https://www.trauttmansdorff.it/en/the-gardens/history/concept-and-philosophy>.

²⁷ <https://www.terrabotanica.fr/en/>

Since the Garden opened its doors in 1976, it has become one of the highlights of Atlanta culture. The Garden is an ever-evolving destination where the horticulturally-minded, nature-inspired and fun-seeking families. Renowned plant collections, remarkable displays and spectacular exhibitions make the Atlanta Botanical Garden the loveliest place in the city to visit. An urban oasis in the heart of Midtown, the Garden includes 30 acres of outdoor gardens, an award-winning Children's Garden, the serene Storza Woods highlighted by a unique Canopy Walk, and the picturesque Skyline Garden. The Gainesville location, opened in 2015, celebrates years of planning and development of one of North Georgia's most beautiful landscapes aimed at connecting visitors with both the natural world and cultural amenities. It is home to the largest conservation nursery in the Southeast of USA.²⁸

Canada

The Butchart Gardens is a group of floral display gardens in Brentwood Bay, British Columbia, Canada, located near Victoria on Vancouver Island.²⁹ Now let us see Gardens by numbers: Over a million visitors annually; over 600 staff during peak season; 290 staff during off season; 50 full-time gardeners; 20 seasonal gardeners; 26 greenhouses; 110 million litres of non-municipal water; used from their reservoirs.³⁰ The gardens have also been designated a National Historic Site of Canada. Together with Montreal Botanical Gardens – these two are extraordinary and very renowned points of interest for many visitors.

1.7.3 Central and South America

Mexico

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is a 26ha botanical garden at 400 m above sea level, near Puerto Vallarta. The garden was founded in 2004 and has been open to the public since 2005. The collections showcase plants of the Tropical Dry Forest Biome, native to the region around Puerto Vallarta and in which the Gardens are located, as well as exotics from around

²⁸ <https://atlantabg.org/about-the-garden/>

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butchart_Gardens

³⁰ <https://www.butchartgardens.com/media/>

the world. Orchid conservation and propagation are important focus of the garden's mission. The Vallarta Botanical Gardens actively participates in public environmental education through tours and classes. The Vallarta Botanical Gardens were selected in 2013 as one of the "Top 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For" by the North American Garden Tourism Conference's International Tourism Award Jury.³¹

Brazil

Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro: The Botanical Garden shows the diversity of Brazilian and foreign flora. There are around 6,500 species distributed throughout an area of 54 hectares, and there are numerous greenhouses. The garden also houses monuments of historical, artistic and archaeological significance. There is an important research center, which includes the most complete library in the country specializing in botany with over 32,000 volumes.³²

Argentina

One can or maybe should find Palermo's rose gardens when visiting Buenos Aires. In the heart of Parque Tres de Febrero is a garden with more than 18,000 roses and unique scenery - scenic park with sprawling rose gardens, plus statues of famous poets & a lake with a quaint bridge. Park was created in 1914 by the famous landscape architect Charles Thays, there and 1,189 different rose species were planted which gave origin to 14,600 rosebushes, that cause an explosion of flowers every spring. It occupies 34,000 square metres³³.

1.7.4 Asia

Japan

Based on Monty Don's experience and knowledge of the world's most exceptional gardens, author decided to get inspiration from the documentary *Around the World in 80 Gardens*. There are, indeed, very interesting and trustworthy ideas of the greatest gardens in the world.

³¹ <https://www.vbgardens.org/>

³² <http://www.jbrj.gov.br/>

³³ <http://www.buenosaires.travel/en/el-rosedal-palermo/>

It should not be forgotten to add that the selection of the specific gardens is different from author's selection and reflect different approach to what actually is impressive garden. That depends strongly on our points of views and also how humans perceive space and beauty. Finally, author decided to mention Totekiko stone garden: one of the five gardens at the Ryōgen-in sub-temple of the Daitoku-ji Buddhist complex in Kita-ku, Kyoto, Japan. It was laid out by Nabeshima Gakusho in 1958 and is claimed to be the smallest Japanese rock garden.³⁴

China

The Humble Administrator's Garden is a Chinese garden in Suzhou, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most famous of the gardens of Suzhou. At 5,2ha, it is the largest garden in Suzhou and is considered by some to be the finest garden in all of southern China.³⁵ There are three parts within the whole complex named as Eastern, Central and Western Gardens. Although „western part“ is small, it is planned with enormous care and precision.

1.7.5 Australia

In terms of tourism icon, the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney is certainly the biggest in Australia and may be the biggest in the world. In countless brochures and photographs, the view across Sydney harbour, taking in the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, is symbolic of Australia. The Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney dates back to 1788, when Governor Phillip set aside land as his private reserve for farming purposes. Nowadays The botanic garden covers 30 ha.³⁶

1.8 Garden management

In general, while some of the financial sources of funds for gardens come from foundations, grants, and donations, most gardens must try to diversify fiscal sources of funding, and

³⁴ Treib, M., & Herman, R. (2003). *A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto* (Revised ed.). New York, New York: Kodansha USA.

³⁵ Lou, Q. (2011). *Chinese Gardens*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

³⁶ <https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>

therefore need visitation to ensure earned money. In consequence of that garden managers must make sure to maximise visitor revenue, numbers and satisfaction. These goals must be often integrated with other parts of their mission – normally conservation and education and other social responsibilities.

There are usually five major organizational and management areas that enterprise can monitor for best results:

1. Visitation or attendance
2. Financial management (revenues, expenses)
3. Organizational management (human resources, memberships, volunteerism)
4. Marketing and communications
5. Community outreach (i.e.: education)

Visitation

In gardens where annual budget is less than US\$ 2 000 000 ~ (50 000 000 CZK), visitation averages approx. 50 000 visitors/year. Larger gardens attract on average 150 000 visitors/year, whereas small gardens usually receive around 40 000 visitors/year.

Within the different types of garden, display gardens attract the largest number of visitors – on average 121 000 a year. While college or university gardens may attract only 40 000 visitors/year. From geographical perspective, gardens in smaller cities may be better at establishing outreach links with their community than larger (over 1.5 mil/persons) urban areas.

For gardens with annual budget over 63 000 000 CZK, the annual average attendance is 304 000 visitors. Biggest gardens with budgets over 250 000 000 CZK had median value of 700 000 visitors.³⁷

Finance

In this subchapter of garden management, author will provide general information about managing gardens mainly in the USA (due to availability of data). Furthermore, in the

³⁷ Benfield, R. (2013). Garden tourism., *Managing the Garden, Visitation*, CABI., p. 142

practical part (case studies), reader will also find relevant information about enterprises where research has been done. Generally speaking, it is good to stress key obstacles or opportunities connected with the management of gardens of many types.

“In discussions with garden managers on the major challenges they face in operating a garden, the issue of financial viability comes always up.”³⁸ The situation of gardens in the USA is as follows:

Independent and non-profit gardens work with the smallest budgets with average revenue of less than US\$ 500 000 ~ (11 250 000 CZK). Whereas largest private/public partnership SMG's (small or medium-sized gardens) dispose with average revenue over US\$ 700 000 ~ (15 750 000 CZK). Regarding the source of revenues, vast majority of gardens have income from public funding proportionally by 34%, private funding by 32% and earned income by 34%. Earned income comes usually from tickets/entrance fees and memberships. What are the expenditures then? SMG's spend the most on: administration (26,5%), horticulture (19%), and operations (18.7%) => 64,2% of total expenses. Followed by visitor services (10%), education (6,6%) are another three biggest areas of outcome.

Gardens spend also on important categories of expenses like marketing, publications, science, IT or contracted services. These data do not highlight the limited amount of finance available for garden marketing to attract more tourists. The average sum available at SMG's is under US\$ 15 000 ~ (340 000 CZK). Moreover, many small gardens work with marketing expenses of less than US\$ 9 000 ~ (200 000 CZK). “Perhaps even more indicative of the difficulty in marketing smaller tourist gardens is the fact that the average amount expended for publications alone is less than US\$ 1000 ~ (22 500 CZK).”³⁹ All in all, vast majority of SMG's spend on marketing only about 4% of all outcomes. Another important fact is that some SMG's considered as “show gardens” seem to have a bit more finance for marketing their product, although less than US\$ 50 000 ~ (1 125 000 CZK). At the biggest gardens the expenditures for marketing and PR are much larger – sometimes even more than US\$ 1 000 000 ~ (22 500 000 CZK).

³⁸ Benfield, R. (2013). Garden tourism. CABI., p. 142

³⁹ Benfield, R. (2013). Garden tourism., *Financial management*, CABI., p. 143

Organizational management

This paragraph reflects more general information about human resources in the area of garden management. In most larger gardens, costs related to workforce account for more than 60% of all expenditure. Specialised gardeners are very valuable asset for most gardens. For example, the model gardens in Tulln (in Lower Austria) are highly dependent on specific knowledge of 10-12 gardeners who are skilled in organic gardening. They must take care of the gardens most of the time and the company cannot afford to do mistakes like hiring external workforce with poor know-how.

Generally speaking, botanic gardens or non-profit subjects that are not so reliant on specific know-how or technology like gardens in private sector. Nevertheless, some of the large gardens need extra workforce in form of volunteers. Fortunately for managers of such organisation, meaning non-profit or government-controlled businesses, quite often it is so that volunteers want to work in such surroundings so they do not have to worry about lack of people on the market.

1.9 Marketing perspective

With slightly more focus on marketing author will support some of his arguments with real responses and experience of existing private gardens in Netherlands, Austria, Germany or Czech Republic.

1.9.1 Entertainment value

To demonstrate entertainment value of show-garden parks, author took an example of Maximilianpark Hamm because it is special example of how it could look like everywhere. For better understanding of what is going on, author will briefly introduce this interesting model of tourist attraction. The park was built in 1984 on the area of the former coal mine on the occasion of the first regional horticultural show (located in North Rhein-Westphalia, Germany). The widely visible glass elephant is the emblem of the city of Hamm. A group of artists transformed the former coal mine into a sculpture around which you can walk today. However, the Maximilianpark has far more to its *350 000 visitors a year*. Regarding the facilities that attract people: the park has large *children's playground, water elements, 6*

kilometres of walking trails through gardens made by first-class landscape architect Piet Oudolf, butterfly house, music and comedy events, art exhibitions, festivals and markets or light exhibitions & workshops. You can even rent one of 4 available *barbecue houses* for the amount €45 per night + entrance ticket. As we can see, the park offers space for varied cultural programme. All in all, mentioned combination of facilities makes unique entertainment value for both youth (including families) and elderly people.⁴⁰

Regarding the marketing mix, it is important to stress promotion part of the 4 P's. Park promotes own activities via social media, such as *Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or YouTube channel*. Park has also quite smoothly running *web pages* that also look aesthetic. Furthermore, park operates on *TripAdvisor* and has its own *newsletter*. Park is constantly part of *news and gardening magazines*. Last but not least, this park has its own *interactive mobile app* where they promote their activities by easy access to videos on their YouTube channel or to photos or calendar of upcoming events.

Picture 2 Park map of the Maximilianpark Hamm



Source: <https://www.maximilianpark.de/parkplan/>

⁴⁰ Hamm, M. (2020, February 7th). <https://www.maximilianpark.de/en/attraktion/der-park/>. Retrieved from <https://www.maximilianpark.de/en/>.

1.9.2 Demographic segmentation & offer of European gardens

The benchmarking study of IMC Krems in the framework of the project Interreg Europe examined target groups, garden elements, visitor facilities, events and sustainability. The results are presented below and are based on the study carried out by Glaninger (2018). The results show that the most important target groups include group travel (91%), garden enthusiasts (75%), families (62%), hobby gardeners (38%) and business travelers (25%). As for the garden elements of these gardens and parks, it is striking that works of art and sculptures in particular can often be found in the gardens (70%). Water elements (67%) and special garden areas such as pavilions, architectural elements, special plant and flower collections or themed gardens (68%) are further characteristic features of these gardens and parks.⁴¹ Gardens and parks in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, France, Ireland and Great Britain were examined. Number of gardens; n=126.

Practical part – case studies of selected subjects

In practical part of the thesis, author took a closer look at three individual parks/gardens. Namely at the Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten and Die Garten Tulln – both located in Lower Austria and at De Tuinen Van Appeltern situated in The Netherlands in the area between Utrecht and Nijmegen (province Gelderland). Author conducted and then used structured interview questionnaires where he was able to gather essential data, information and knowledge about specific subjects. Questionnaires are made in a way to cover most practical information about running specific business in a field of garden tourism and also garden business. Author interviewed CEO of the gardens in Tulln by himself on December 11th, 2019. Later, author visited park of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten on January 15th, 2020, also physically and made an interview with CMO (chief marketing officer) of the gardens. Last but not least, author gathered information from Dutch gardens in Appeltern through online communication (mainly due to organisational reasons). Questionnaire template is to be found

⁴¹ Bauer-Krösbacher, C., & Koschitz, S. (2019). Management von Gärten & Parks als Besucherattraktionen. Handbuch. Erstellt im Rahmen des Interreg Projekts „Grünraum ATCZ71“, Krems: IMC Fachhochschule Krems.

in Appendix of this thesis. Before starting the analysis of mentioned parks, author will introduce each of them with brief characteristics and bio of each.

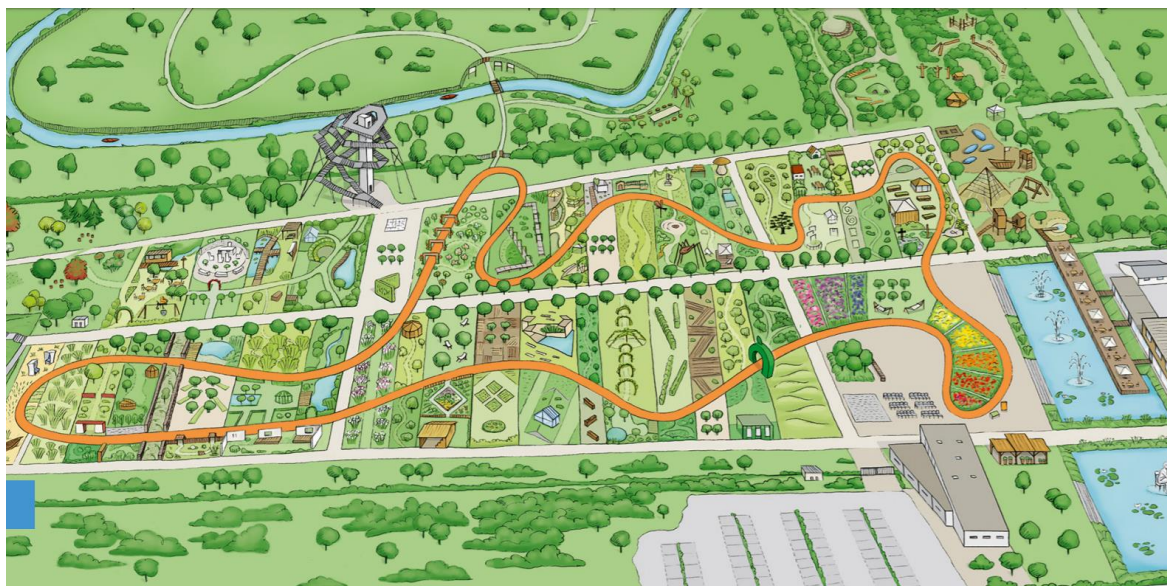
1.10 Die Garten Tulln – brief description

History

“Die Garten Tulln, permanent exhibition and showcase project for sustainable and ecological gardening, is Europe`s first ecological garden show, established to the stipulations of the Lower Austrian "Natur im Garten" campaign. Die Garten Tulln was set up as a permanent exhibition in 2008 and has already counted more than 2,5 million visitors. More than 65 ecologically tended show gardens, a 30-metre high treetop walkway, Lower Austria`s largest adventure and nature playground, and lots of events promise a fun-filled day out. Every year approximately 150 different eco-educational workshops for children take place.”⁴² Since 2014, Die Garten Tulln has also been approved as a botanical garden.

Highlights

Picture 3 Die Garten Tulln - park plan



Source: <https://www.diegartentulln.at/en/the-garden/gallery>

⁴² Die Garten Tulln. (2020, January). <https://www.diegartentulln.at/en/the-mission/the-history>.

Stretching out high above the tops of the mighty trees is the 30-metre high treetop walkway. It enables breathtaking views over the show gardens. The lift, also suitable for wheelchairs, offers access to the treetop walkway until the uppermost platform. (See **Picture 9** in appendix).

Mission

Since its creation, Die Garten Tulln has evolved into a showcase project like no other in Europe. The strictly way in which the grounds are cared for has become an example for many other garden festivals in Austria and abroad.

No pesticides, no synthetic fertilisers and no synthetic peat: since Die Garten Tulln was opened, its gardeners and partners have closely adhered to the stipulations of the Lower Austrian "Natur im Garten" campaign. This makes the garden experience unique in terms of its ecological and sustainable management.

Site-appropriate and varied vegetation, natural fertilisers, beneficial organisms and biological agents for plant strengthening are the cornerstone to interaction with the environment in sustainable and resource-conserving manner.⁴³

Environmental management

From the beginning the environment played an important role in the gardens in Tulln near Danube. The strict consideration of the "Natur im Garten" criteria - no synthetic pesticides, no synthetic fertilisers and no peat - is and was self-evidently. As Europe`s first ecological garden show Die Garten Tulln demonstrates how ecological gardening works on a long-term. Because of the sensitivity towards the ecology the company launched an environmental management system.

Since 2014, company is EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) certified. EMAS is a voluntary instrument of the European Union, which supports the continuous improvement of the environmental performance. The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance. EMAS

⁴³ Tulln, D. G. (2020, February 10th). Retrieved from <https://www.diegartentulln.at/en/the-mission/our-mission>.

is open to every type of organisation eager to improve its environmental performance. It spans all economic and service sectors and is applicable worldwide.⁴⁴

1.11 Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten – brief description

History

In the summer of 1982, Reinhard Kittenberg started the first sale of plants in a garden shop in Schiltern, Lower Austria - the present location. In 1990, the first expansion plans are already done and the nursery was expanded. Years of construction, expansion, rising sales, but also the first setbacks follow.

At the beginning of 1996 he undertakes a study trip to Holland and England with his new partner and collaborators, where he discovers the system of show gardens, gardens for grabbing and looking and thus the first show garden – the *Waldviertler Heidegarten* – was created in August 1996. An ORF TV team films this garden and it is presented on "Lower Austria Today". The next day more than 600 calls are received, where is this garden, when can you visit this garden, how much does it cost to enter? – This was the birth of garden tourism in the Kittenberg adventure gardens.

Thanks to the garden festival in the Kamptal, 2006 brings the first visitor records: more than 65 000 visitors to the adventure gardens in one year. From this year on, Reinhard Kittenberger's promise to open a new garden every year will be fulfilled, gradually increasing the area and number of gardens. The number of visitors varies between 45-65 000 visitors during this time and the awareness of the Kittenberg adventure gardens is excellent beyond the borders of Lower Austria.

The ever-increasing number of visitors, at the end of 2010 at more than 70 000 per year, is seen as an order to continuously develop the adventure gardens, to make the offer even more colourful and to offer visitors unique experience. Therefore, a master plan for the expansion of the gardens was drawn up in 2010 and the construction of 9 000 m² of new gardens began in 2011. The attractive garden restaurant Glass Haus was also built in record time and has been an indispensable highlight in the Kittenberg adventure gardens ever since.

⁴⁴ EMAS, E. C. (2020, February 10th). *Environment*. Retrieved from Eco-Management and Audit Scheme: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

The year 2014 was also used to develop the master plan until 2020. In January 2015 the groundbreaking ceremony for the new 13 000 m² adventure took place. A slide tower with 2 adrenaline slides was built, water fun with raft ride, a climbing wall, a skill course and above all the animal farmers. Garden with alpacas, ponies, dwarf goats, etc. The garden year 2016 was a great success for the team, as 167 000 visitors were welcomed in the adventure gardens for the first time. Latest data from 2019 says that there were more than 180 000 visitors throughout the season.

Picture 4 Park plan of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten in Schiltern, Lower Austria



Source: Brochure of Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten, edited by author

Highlights

When writing about adventure/disply gardens in Schiltern it is not easy to choose several highlights. Whole areal offers more than 40 different gardens. However, it was decided to highlight 8 most relevant places to go. Author worked with brochure translated into Czech and following highlights are: Garden of Pure Water; Garden of Relax, Adventure Garden for Kids, Family Garden, Garden of Desires, Garden for Ageless, Summer Garden with Atelier and The Wellness Garden. One can also plan his own marriage for extra fee in the gardens. This type of marriage is getting very popular throughout many existing gardens.

All of these gardens are available in the main season – from March till October. After main season, gardens also offer special Advent programme for 8 weeks. One of the must-see events is Garden full of Lights where more than 450 000 lights are shining at the gardens. This artistic event attracts many visitors throughout cold months.

Mission

After having nice interview with marketer of the gardens, Mrs. Elisabeth Winkler, the main and partial mission of these show gardens became much clearer. As written above, gardens are constructed and displayed as one large showroom/portfolio of the company. Main business of the company is to build private gardens at people's backyards. One could say that the CEO and the father of these gardens, Mr. Reinhard Kittenberg, is the initiator and the driving force for the whole project of making gardens. As we could see in the part of history of the gardens, the display gardens became naturally point of interest for people after opening its gates for free. As time went by, the company made clever decision from business point of view – they started charging entrance fees for the display gardens. Since then it has been very good source of cashflow for all types of investment. However, the main source of income is made through designing and completing the gardens.

1.12 De Tuinen van Appeltern – brief description

History

The Appeltern gardens were established in 1988. The first gardens were made by professional gardener Ben van Ooyen. Although he always had a love for plants and gardens, his main

desire was to remain in the area where he was born. To gain new clients for his garden business, he thought it would be a good idea to design a variety of demonstration gardens so he asked a number of *wholesale dealers* if he could use their products, and subsequently, many contracts followed. Producers thought this was an appealing way to give their products greater attention. One of the products which Ben began to make use of was the typical ‘Dutch brick’ and soon private garden owners discovered how attractive and appealing these were to have.⁴⁵

To feel further inspired, Ben visited numerous gardens in the Netherlands and also in the United Kingdom. He became even more creative and distinctive in his design after visiting the *RHS Wisley Gardens* and *Great Dixter*. Ben continues to visit world renowned gardens, to keep informed about green developments and international trends. Due to his dedication and hard work, there are now around 200 gardens to visit at Appeltern and this number is still growing.

Nowadays the gardens are completely different from the first gardens that were inspired by Ben. In the beginning, professional landscape architects who first heard about Ben’s contracts with other architects and designers did not like this new initiative at all, as he was not given any specific architectural approval for the designs in his gardens. Ben remained unphased and carried on with his creations.

Today, a growing number of his gardens have been established by landscape architects and as a result, people are less enthused about visiting early, unassuming and simple gardens and have developed a taste for the complexities of modern designs.

In addition to the display of bricks and tiles found in the gardens, guests can also observe numerous botanical collections. Furthermore, there are a number of innovative themed flower and Eastern gardens that have been created with the assistance of renown designers and architects, keen to display their originality. As well as visiting the expansive gardens, visitors

⁴⁵ Appeltern, D. T. (2020, February 14th). *The Appeltern gardens in Netherlands*. Retrieved from History of the Appeltern gardens: https://appeltern.nl/en/visit_our_park/history/

can view the great variety of garden material and furniture on show, allowing an opportunity to search for the perfect garden solution.

Highlights

For better overview of what can be done in Appeltern gardens, here is list of main activities: The Wilde Weelde Wereld Garden, The Living Garden, Garden Expert Desk (for designing gardens), The National Fixed Plants Garden, Architects' Gardens, Lounge Gardens, The Plant Market, Decoration events, theme events, Restaurant and outdoor café, Childrens' Playground and finally the The Appeltern online guided Tour.

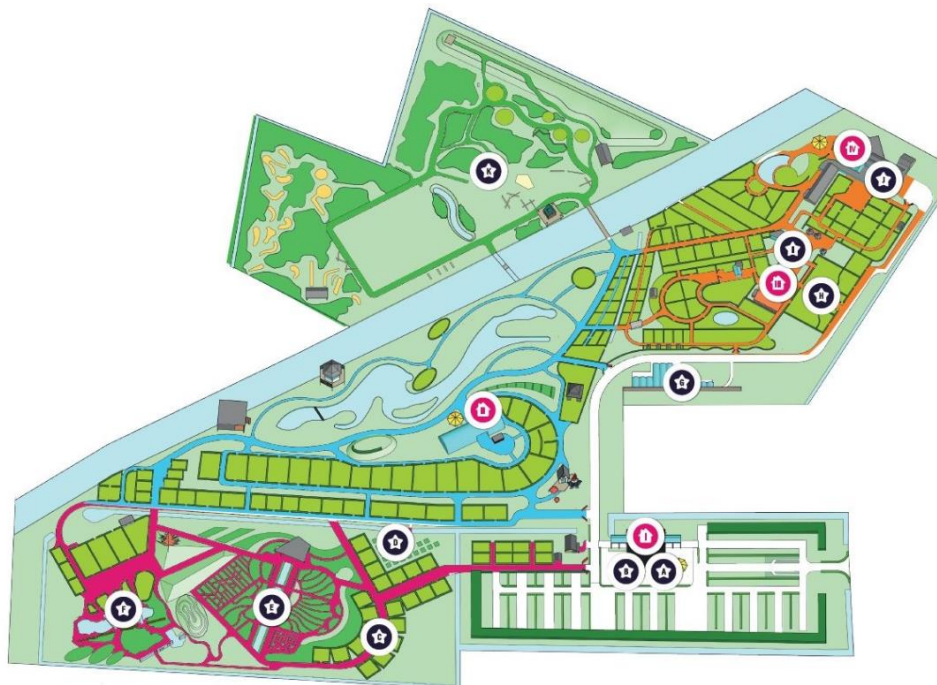
Mission

Company states that earning money was never the primary reason to start this enterprise. The model for owner Ben van Ooyen was not simply to profit and capitalize, but to own and create a collection of the best gardens possible, unique to anywhere else. Each year, the gardens bring many new surprises. The estate covers more than 22 hectares and is completely exclusive in style and diversity. Appeltern Gardens have been transformed from one individual's initiative, into a thriving *family business*. Ben's brother Toon, a creative artist, has been active for many years to assist and his creations can be viewed in several of the gardens. In addition, Ben's wife helps him with the administration and *event planning* in the office and his oldest son is also learning the ropes.

As one can see mission of an enterprise from different points of view, other formulation of the mission of the gardens in Appeltern can be viewed as to inform and inspire as many people as possible to experience the added value of a garden in practice through example gardens, so that everyone can create the good feeling of this in their own environment.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ https://appeltern.nl/nl/park_bezoeken/historie/

Picture 5 Park plan of De Tuinen van Appelterm



Source: https://appeltern.nl/en/visit_our_park/map/, edited by author

Discussion

In following part of the thesis, author will discuss both similarities and differences between selected subjects. The reason why author chose these particular parks is the most possible utility coming out of the final conclusion extracted from structured interviews' results. Those results will be both important for better understanding of all processes and for the higher management of the company Školky Litomyšl – for whom it is mainly conducted.

Author divided his structured interviews into 3 main categories of questions. First part of the questionnaire is dedicated to general information (soft data about each park). In the first part reader should also better understand the business model of the company.

In the second part author focuses on the hard data of the company – for example company's sales from tickets, support in form of grants, operational costs, profit or expenditures. Generally speaking, second part should provide better overview about what makes the company successful.

Third part of the questionnaire is built in a way that it will reflect today's influence of marketing on small and medium sized show gardens. Questions are reflecting how parks are targeting their audience or what kind of short- and long-term marketing do they use. Author was also interested in how the company uses digital marketing.

For clearer imagination of how author drafted his questionnaires, structured interview templates are enclosed in the part of appendices.

Let us begin with the very first question regarding the reason why people visit such parks:

PART I:

- 1) What is the reason why people come to your park?**
 - a) Family trip
 - b) People's interest in gardening
 - c) Only going through the area

- d) Business trip
- e) Different reason, please specify

Surprisingly, the answer was the same in all three cases of show garden parks => a) and b). As marketer from Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten, Mrs. Elisabeth Winkler said, they have strong focus point on spending time together with family. They do offer programmes for families but also for children in form of playground. *“It is important to state that the tourism part is secondary for us. Primarily we are doing gardens. We are planning, building and constructing gardens – that is our main business.”*⁴⁷

Answer from the CEO of Die Garten Tulln, Franz Gruber, was: *“We have a lot of gardeners that are interested in gardening and are coming to the park because of their interest. But if we focus only on this target group, it would not be enough”*.⁴⁸ The company needs also tourists, broad public (including families), schools and special interest groups to come as well.

The last park – De Tuinen van Appeltern from Netherlands – stated that the families and especially people with interest in gardening are very important for their business.

2) How many people are taking care of the gardens throughout the season? Are they regular employees of the company or do you have to hire extra forces?

“We have about 10-12 people. We have our own gardeners and we do not work with external firms. We had only some extra forces last summer when it was hot...,” said Mr. Gruber. Whereas in Kittenberger gardens the situation is as follows: *“We do have fixed companies – it’s around 15 people doing really the gardening. All in all, with the offices and restaurant, it’s approx. 40,”* said Mrs. Winkler. In the areal of Appeltern show gardens, 8 gardeners work regularly. They have to, however, hire extra people in the summer period.

⁴⁷ Winkler, E. (2020, January 15). (D. Brýdl, Interviewer)

⁴⁸ Gruber, F. (2019, December 11). MsC. (D. Brýdl, Interviewer)

3) What is the proportion of people doing marketing compared to the rest of all workers/staff?

“We divide touristic marketing, development and event management. We do have cooperation with association Natur im Garten so we have let’s say 4 people doing marketing. Which is 20% of the main power,” says the CEO of Die Garten Tulln.

Interesting point of view was provided by Mrs. Winkler from Kittenberger gardens. The company employs 3 real marketers. One doing graphics, another one doing sales and marketing and the last person working as CMO and coordinating the others in marketing department. They have to, however, hire another marketer who will help mainly with organizing events for the main season. *“We hire extra person because it’s intense work. We have show gardens, weddings and events almost every weekend, so we really need some support.”* Except of that, Mrs. Winkler added information about online platforms: *“About a year ago we started using Instagram and we also plan YouTube. Now we do mainly word-of-mouth propaganda but it’s really time consuming.”*

Besides these two answers, the gardens in Appeltern just highlighted the importance of marketing as part of the management process within the company and did not provide more information.

4) What is the conception of short-term and long-term marketing strategy?

Die Garten Tulln comment on this question is quite clear: *“We have a long-term strategy with clear philosophy: the only and the biggest European 100% organic show garden. In 2008 the Die Garten Tulln was established as organic gardening.”*

Talking about the second Austrian show garden park, Mrs. Winkler shared with author that: *“We could say on short term we focus on digital marketing and at the individual guests in the park, where main topics are relaxing, having nice time with family, etc. For example, during Christmas we have XXL Christmas calendar (for 7 weeks in total) which has 52 doors (days)*

so we have to start with decoration. In general, we start our Christmas season at the beginning of November. Behind the doors are tickets, tips&tricks and other surprises.”

“We also do offline marketing: focusing on groups, bus groups and many more. We are in touch also with other countries. Lot of Czechs are coming (catchment area of 2.5 hrs by car). We also work with farmer groups. That all is part of long-term strategy. We are stressing of course sustainability. We are trying to make people come again, not just once.”

Marketing department in Netherlands mentioned that both short- and long-term strategies are to make people feel happy and comfortable in the areal as well as in their designed gardens by De Tuinen van Appeltern garden architects.

5) How often do you organise events for private persons and for public?

Starting with De Tuinen van Appeltern, they organize such events every week throughout the season. The reality is quite the same in Die Garten Tull where they organize events almost permanently. There are some events for families and children every weekend. Together with their partners, they organize weddings, celebrations, birthday parties for private people but also gardening events for gardeners from the region of Lower Austria. *“We are mainly targeting Lower Austria region. Most recently we conducted Advent market.”*, said Mr. Gruber in the middle of December 2019.

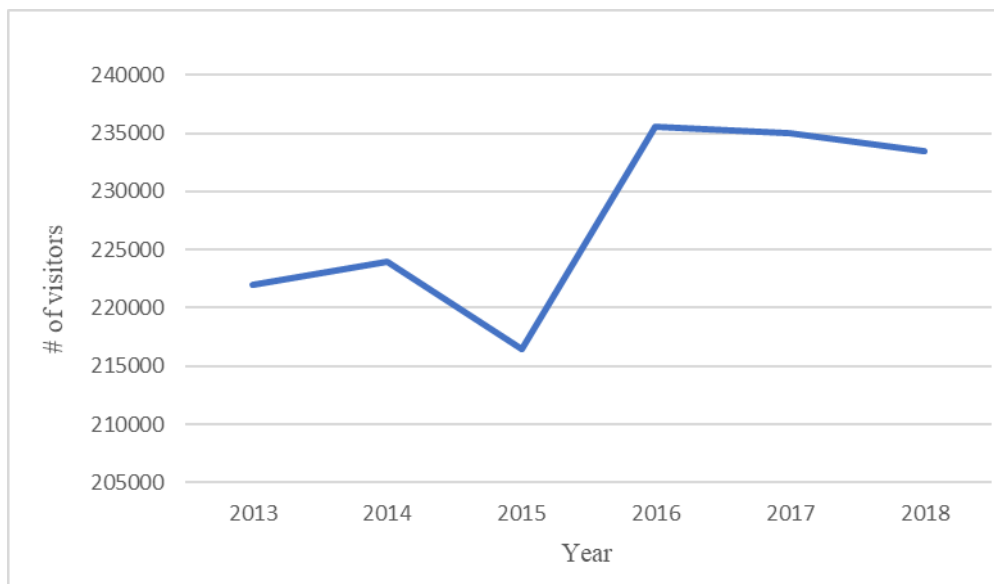
In the case of Kittenberg gardens and the “private persons”, there are weddings organized for locals (Austrians) almost 30 times a year. That is additional to their regular events. Regarding the public events, they have several big events fixed and listed in their whole-year brochures. For example, from November till December they organize daily concerts with acrobats and fire shows. Once they develop one event, they keep it going smoothly. Further they organize clown and puppet shows and they have quite good reputation. Generally – weekends are filled with kid’s programme where they can do crafts together with make-up professionals.

6) What is the seasonal or monthly attendance of the gardens/garden centre? Is the season long enough to cover all costs connected with maintenance of the park?

Regarding the attendance in Kittenberger show gardens they count around 180 000 visitors every year throughout the main season from March till the end of December. Monthly attendance is, indeed, quite volatile mainly thanks to the weather conditions. Both managers and gardeners have to adapt for hot but also rainy months and they need practical places where people can hide in the shadow or cover themselves against rain – otherwise they lose attendance and logically nobody wants that to happen. After evaluating last two seasons (2018 and 2019), September in 2019 was really good for the company. Some weeks were only 2 days without any events. The rest was quite busy.

In case of gardens in Tulln, author collected available data about the attendance from six consecutive years. As being shown in the graph, the attendance reached its peak in 2016. Compared to the previous year, 2015, one can observe increase by 19 000 visitors. Remaining years are relatively stable.

Chart 6 Attendance of the park Die Garten Tulln, Lower Austria



Source: Umwelterklärung 2019, annual statement, edited by author

As Franz Gruber also added, their park is opened longer than expected. Here is the reason why: *“...that does not depend only at the season because if we were only opened from June to September (main season) it would make more sense from economic point of view. We have our gates opened until the end of October. Even autumn is important period of the season*

(although it is not that profitable), especially for children. We also consider educational aspects of our work, not only profits.”

Interesting fact is that De Tuinen van Appeltern in Netherlands have their gates opened until November – mainly due to climate reasons such as mild winter. Regarding the number of visitors: they count around 100 000 visitors a year. Their activities connected with designing the gardens are predominant compared to the tourism point of view.

PART II:

1) How much are the total sales of tickets and of goods from garden centre? Including food, drinks and other items?

Starting with Kittenberg gardens - Mrs. Winkler was not allowed to provide an answer for this question. The reason is that the company is private and they are not obliged to share that valuable information for the thesis. What Mrs. Winkler did mention is that the company is continuously growing and profiting usually below the level of 10%.

Concerning the park in Tulln, Mr. Gruber said that they are covering most of their costs by sales from tickets. Furthermore, their small shop and the restaurant (run by partner, therefore income from rent) are another partial sources of income. He also added that: *“We could make money also by the restaurant but it’s neither our goal nor our scope of business. The shop is, however, entirely our business.”*

In third place, De Tuinen van Appeltern park also did not want to answer this question. They simply keep this information confidential.

2) Is there any support from EU or state or regional government in form of grants?

Let author begin with De Tuinen van Appeltern where there is no support from any mentioned form of government.

Similarly, Kittenberg gardens also do not intentionally focus on the support from government – they are not publicly funded. They are, however, sometimes part of so-called Interreg operational programme of EU. That support is temporary and not crucial for the core activities of the whole business model. They also cooperate with the initiative Natur im Garten as well as Die Garten Tulln (both located in Lower Austria).

Nevertheless, one shall describe the situation in Die Garten Tulln a little bit better because they are supported by the region Lower Austria. As Mr. Gruber said, it is only the federal initiative, not state. Regarding further co-operation, they are partners with Czech initiative Veronika (branch of CBCSD organisation). Consequently, they co-operate also with partners from Germany or Italy. They exchange know-how about organic gardening with gardens in Bad Zwischenahn and with Trauttmansorff Castle located in South Tirol.

3) What is the total number of people involved in the project?

Let us start with Dutch project. De Tuinen van Appeltern has totally 50 employees from which 25 are working full-time. According to the number of show gardens, they have more than 200 partners like gardeners and suppliers of garden tools.

Quite similar number of employees can be found in Die Garten Tulln where there are totally 50 people including the restaurant. Number of fully employed people is around 20. Some external forces are coming from already mentioned initiative - Natur im Garten.

Concerning the employees in Kittenberg gardens, the situation is slightly different. As Mrs. Winkler mentioned in the interview, the entire company including garden designing and constructing the gardens, altogether it counts for 120 people. About 80 are away on the construction side and planning and doing the gardens at people's houses. Approximately 40 are in Schiltern and are working in the office, in the garden centre, in restaurant and in the gardens. Moreover, all garden designers are employed in the company.

4) What are the maintenance and operational costs of gardens per year or per season?

Gathering answers for this question was not easy. Two subjects did not want to provide any figures at all and only Die Garten Tulln provided estimate number. Franz Gruber says: *“It is not easy to say. We cover only the maintenance costs - we do not do the investments. We spend around €1 million for employees, material and fixed costs each year.”*

5) How much are the profits and costs?

“Throughout last 10 years there has been a growth every year and also profit. It is always around 8%.” said Mrs. Winkler from Kittenberg gardens. Unfortunately, remaining two parks decided not to share these figures.

6) Who are the managers of the company? Are they educated in the field of garden tourism?

Let author start with Kittenberg gardens – *“Reinhard Kittenberger, the CEO, is educated in gardening and did his master in gardening. For example, tourism naturally became relevant for us and we had to learn it by doing. We keep on educating ourselves by courses and so forth.”* said Mrs. Winkler.

Franz Gruber from Tulln says: *“I personally am skilled in garden tourism and I have been working in the field for 13 years. There are, however, no programmes of garden tourism at the universities. On the continent, there are not so many people who do garden tourism. Situation in UK is a little bit different. It is relatively new filed of the business.”* Mr. Gruber also says that it is important that the projects is linked to the idea of ecology. They have also the responsibility to take actual climate change into account. They have powerful tools how to raise the awareness of topics connected to this phenomenon. He also adds: *“...our success comes from intense dialog, discussions with people working in the gardens but also ecologists. In the past I was working for regional tourist organizations.”*

Professional gardener Ben van Ooyen obviously comes from the field. Mr. Ooyen continues to visit world renowned gardens to keep informed about green developments and international trends. Ben’s brother Toon, a creative artist, has been active for many years to

assist and his creations can be viewed in several of the gardens. In addition, Ben's wife helps him with the administration and event planning in the office and his oldest son is also learning.

7) Do partners or gardeners pay any license or any fees for having their brand promoted?

This question was targeted exclusively to the CEO of Die Garten Tulln because of specific business model of the park. Mr. Gruber said, that: *„They do not pay fees but they have to pay the investments for the show gardens. There is actually demand for new partners. Approximately 3 new projects every year. In the future we do not plan any enlargements of our gardens so far. We are rather focusing on the quality. We could have more gardens but 65 are in my opinion enough.“* He also added that those garden companies who promote their products have to also reinvest extra money when needed.

PART III:

1) What kind of advertising do you use the most?

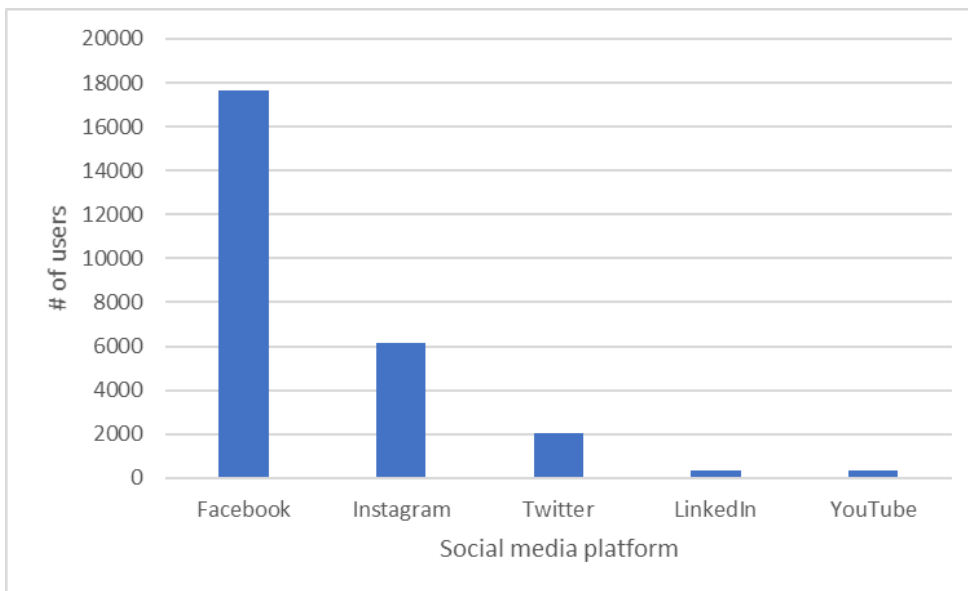
Most detailed information comes from Kittenberg gardens mainly because the interviewee, Mrs. Winkler, is responsible for marketing in their company and knows the problematics very well. This is her answer for 1) question: *“I would say we are still more into offline strategy – we try to get as personal as possible. That means we have to travel and to reach new customers. We also have to do sales trips and have to offer our services. We must not forget that we have to write newsletters etc. but the personal contact is still more efficient.”*

She further describes that: *“We do have lot of print material. Even though everything is on the internet we try to balance it by 50:50 ratio. Nonetheless, we do have FB page (around 16 000 followers). We do also have Instagram with approx. 1500 followers just for year 2019. That was one of the No. 1 goals for 2019 and we want to have the pages and tags attractive. We want to get more into YT channel – so far it is not very appealing and people who click on our channel already know us so it is not that they would have found us by the attractiveness of our videos.”*

Again, response from De Tuinen van Appeltern was not so developed, but author found in company’s annual statement that they are using different communication channels. They support their marketing activities with Facebook and Pinterest. The company also uses LinkedIn and Instagram. YouTube channel is appealing with short and directs clips. Company’s website counts for more than 2,1 million visitors per year.

Below you can find several data from annual statement (2019) of De Tuinen van Appeltern:

Chart 7 Number of followers per platform in 2019



Source: Jaarverslag 2019, annual statement, transformed by author

2) How do you target your audience? Is, for instance, branding important?

Firstly, Mrs. Winkler’s response from Kittengerg gardens is as follows: *“Very large group are pensioners (50 or 60 years). They, for example, do not want their phones and are rather conservative when it comes to online/offline marketing. They are not as active as young mothers at their smartphones.”*

“Regarding the branding – it is very important. It is who we are. When I am on the road and I say Kittenberger Erlebnissgärten, people know who we are, what we do and what we stand for. Even in the western part of Austria people can associate our gardens with the logo or have heard of us at least once. In a way we try to build brand like Kitzbühel (famous Austrian ski resort) as an example. We consider that as very important part of our business,” says Mrs. Winkler with confidence.

Whereas Kittenberg situation is as described, people in De Tuinen van Appeltern outsource their activities to Google Analytics that can also measure complex elements of their website.

3) Do you see any benefits in digital marketing in your scope of business?

“Actually yes, especially Instagram. It is always a question of time. We live by creating emotions, by showing what we have. Basically, making people want to come and visit. We have to show them the hammock and the swimming pool where they can lie and just relax. For us I think it is very beneficial because you can add many images or videos from the park. It is doing a lot for us and you can even be quite creative,” says Mrs. Winkler.

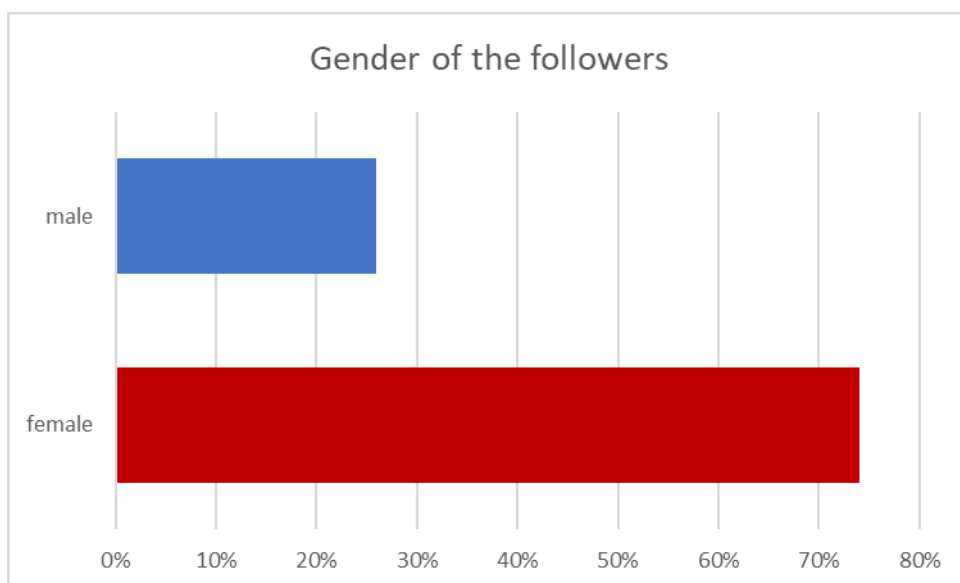
Last but not least, she highlights the importance of right mix of online platforms in their scope of business: *“The only problem is digital marketing by now is not anymore just taking a picture and putting it online. You need a strategy behind it – and that is really time consuming. We also think about starting TikTok or Snapchat because people use it. Like with the Instagram – we had around 1000 posts even before we officially started Instagram. People simply managed to share the ideas. So, there is huge potential but it takes time to do it well. FB, Instagram and YT remain essential for us.”*

Contact person from De Tuinen van Appeltern, Mrs. Marian Drost, unfortunately did not develop her answer very much but she clearly agreed and confirmed the benefits of online marketing in their business.

4) Do you do PR by yourself or do you work with any agency?

Last question is dedicated only to Dutch gardens. Mrs. Drost (also responsible for PR & Communications) answered that they do PR mostly by themselves. They use, however, Dutch website built for collecting and sharing reviews about vacation destinations – called Zoover. Zoover is a review site for commercial purposes and the reviews are submitted by users who have been at the destination (user-generated content).⁴⁹

Chart 8 Followers of De Tuinen van appeltern social media by gender, 2019



Source: Jaarverslag 2019, annual statement of DTVA, transformed by author

⁴⁹ Globrands. (2020, February 25th). Zoover - international name for website. Retrieved from Globrands website: <https://www.globrands.com/en/cases/zoover-2/>

Interview summary

In upcoming part of the interview summary, author will stress some of the key findings made out of the discussion. To upgrade and to enhance conclusions, author decided to compare them with very useful study made by University of Applied Sciences – Krems, Austria (IMC Krems). The paper is called “Management of gardens and parks as visitor attractions” and was carried out by Prof. Mag. Claudia Bauer-Krösbacher, PhD and by Sophie Koschitz, MA. This publication was created within the Interreg project of the EU and completed in August 2019. Cooperation between regions South Moravia and Vysočina in the Czech Republic and Lower Austria in Austria created together unique perspective of garden/park tourism. The paper should, however, serve as a basis for readers to better understand the wishes and needs of visitors and to better position entrepreneur’s own gardens or parks.

Characteristics of garden visitor

Within the research, totally 784 questionnaires were filled in by garden and park visitors independently in Lower Austria whereas in South Moravia and Vysočina there were 360. Based on results from these questionnaires, so-called factsheet was created. Factsheet reflects and describes typical characteristics of garden visitation:

- The typical garden visitor is predominantly female, well-educated and has an average age of 41 or 51 years.
- The visitors come mainly with the (marriage) partner, or children and friends as a companion.
- The visitors in Lower Austria come mainly from the countryside, in South Moravia and Vysočina they come mainly from the city and come from the region.
- Visitors have a specific or general interest in gardens / parks.
- The proportion of repeat visitors is high in both regions.
- The majority of the visitors are so-called frequent visitors, cultivate a garden themselves and, depending on the size of the garden / park, stay for 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Spontaneous visits and recommendations from friends and families predominate in the information sources. Websites and social media are becoming increasingly important.

- The visit takes place mainly as part of a day trip.
- The journey takes place mainly by car and takes about 1 hour.

As observed from author's questionnaires, visitors of such parks are mostly families with interest in gardening, but also young pupils or gardeners. Visitors are often people with higher degree of education. People come of course not only from educative reasons but also to simply enjoy outdoor beauty of such gardens/parks. Based on this, event organizers or marketers can aim their target groups much more precisely.

Motives to visit a garden

What are the motives of people visiting gardens and parks according to the IMC paper?

Main motives factsheet is as follows:

- Enjoy the garden and have a good time
- Be outside and go for a walk
- Relax and find peace
- Change of scenery, discovering / experiencing something new
- Spend time together
- Learn
- Entertainment

Key takeaways regarding the motivation of people visiting gardens are very similar in both author's research and IMC study. Especially question 5) from author's questionnaire PART I reflects the needs of people quite well. In order to attract visitors and to make them come again, all three parks have to organize exceptional events in all forms weekly – sometimes in main season daily. For better idea, 6 key event-activities are highlighted below:

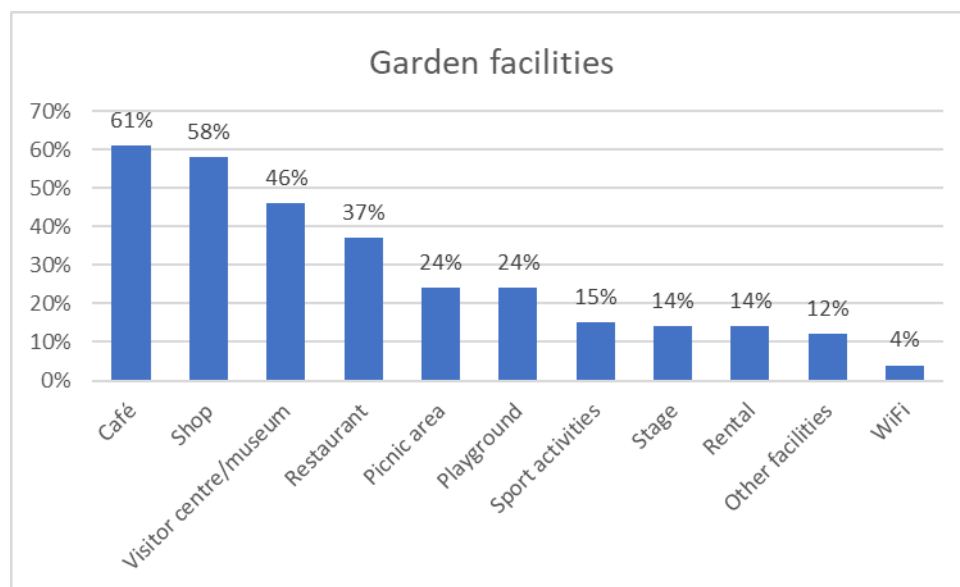
- Weddings
- Celebrations
- Picnics
- Concerts
- Children's programme
- Thematic exhibitions

Garden facilities

Between September 2017 and May 2018, totally 126 gardens and parks in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, France, Ireland and Great Britain were examined in a benchmarking study. It might be valuable inspiration when building or financing new projects anywhere else.

First of all, selected garden experts in Europe were asked to select from a predefined garden or park list of the respective country those that they considered the best in terms of the offer for visitors. In addition, they were also able to propose gardens / park that they consider to be benchmarks. These selected gardens and parks resulted in a final list of 126 gardens and

Chart 9 Garden facilities in Europe



Source: Offer of european gardens and parks, ICM study, edited by author

parks in Europe that were rated as the best. The websites and offers of these gardens and parks were then statistically recorded and analysed in a comprehensive content analysis.

With regard to specific facilities, visitor information centers or museums, restaurants, cafés and shops for plants and souvenirs count as standard facilities in the gardens and parks examined. Sports facilities and rentals for, for example, bicycles, boats, segways or other sports equipment are less common. This opens up opportunities to develop offers and attract

new visitors to gardens and parks. Around a quarter of the gardens and parks allow picnics in the green area.

In some gardens and parks, cafes and restaurants also offer picnic baskets to visitors. **Chart 9** also shows that Internet and WIFI connections are currently hardly found in the gardens and parks. In addition, few encourage their visitors to share pictures and snapshots of their visit to social networks. Although families are an important target group for the gardens and parks examined, playgrounds or educational opportunities for children can only be found in 24% of the green areas.

Target groups according to IMC paper findings are:

- Families and kids
- Group tours – mainly elderly people
- Young people – generation Y (born between years 1981- 2000)
- Hedonists and gourmets – especially wine-lovers
- People with special needs – people with mental and physical disabilities

To find most important findings from this discussion, author decided to conclude concrete conceptions of marketing and the overall business model of all three parks.

Marketing conception

Based on PART I (questions 3) and 4)) outcomes, marketing plays significantly important role in all three parks. About 10% of all workforce in Kittenberg gardens are doing marketing. In Die Garten Tulln it is even more and 20% of workforce are working in marketing department. De Tuinen van Appeltern stated the importance of marketing as very high but did not specify the exact number.

Regarding the short- and long-term strategy, all of the parks have clear idea of how marketing strategy should be. Die Garten Tulln have their clear philosophy about organic gardening and therefore right and adjusted marketing strategy. In Kittenberg gardens is the situation also quite clear: Mrs. Winkler specified very clearly what is their strategy with real examples. De Tuinen van Appeltern are adapting their marketing strategy in a way to fulfil customer's

needs about the comfort both in the show garden park and also in the designed gardens by the garden designers employed in the company. They also target their audience very precisely.

Based on PART III answers, it can be deduced that online and offline marketing have to be balanced. In the example of Kittenberg gardens, they try to have 50:50 online vs. offline marketing. Both types are beneficial for the gardens. Interesting is how De Tuinen van Appeltern are using their online marketing – in form of very successful Pinterest and Instagram pages they target their audience via these platforms. Facebook and YouTube channel are also their important. There is obviously lot of effort behind these pages. Answers for question 2) in PART III indicates that it is also possible to create renowned brand out of show gardens and of landscape designers. Both De Tuinen van Appeltern and Kittenberg gardens are very successful in making gardens and people in both countries know the brand very well. Regarding the online marketing in scope of business like this, Mrs. Winkler sees great potential. She also adds that without strategy taking and sharing pictures of the park is not enough. PR and Communication is very important for all three parks – tourist portals and review sites help these parks in terms of tourism. It keeps certain quality and standard. People often rely on such sites (i.e. Trip Advisor, Kudy z nudy or Zoover). The rest of any reflection can be found question by question in the discussion part.

Business models

Although parks chosen for case studies are sort of connected with gardens and sustainability, their organizational structure and business models are slightly different. Whereas Die Garten Tulln park is co-funded by region Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), Kittenberg gardens and De Tuinen van Appeltern are private companies. For better overview of what are the differences, question 2) from PART I will help us. Questions 2), 3), 6) and 7) from PART II are relevant too.

Thanks to federal initiative a project like Die Garten Tulln can exist. It is as if, for example, Pardubice region, Czech Republic, funded similar park or gardens and helped to create new job opportunities. Very important aspect of whole project is supportive initiative called Natur im Garten. In Czech there is no exact analogous of such initiative. What would be more similar to Natur im Garten is ASSZ (Asociace zahradnických a zemědělských společenstev),

but that produces almost no activity compared to Natur im Garten. Therefore, Die Garten Tulln is much more dependent on public funding compared to other two private owned companies.

In terms of the size of the business, let author start with De Tuinen van Appeltern where they fully-employ 25 people. Situation is similar in Die Garten Tulln where there are 20 people working full-time. Whereas these two parks employ around 20-25 people, Kittenberger gardens are around 40 fully employed employees. That says clear story of how much they spend on salaries. In terms of profits – based on questionnaires – both Kittenberger gardens and Die Garten Tulln are in positive numbers. Unfortunately, it cannot be quantified that De Tuinen van Appeltern profit as well (there is no direct evidence).

While both Kittenberg gardens and De Tuinen van Appeltern have relatively long history and roots in gardening, garden designing or horiculture, the project Die Garten Tulln was built after several number of flower exhibitions in the region. Die Garten Tulln also works as research hub and cooperates with University of Applied Sciences, Krems. In general, Die Garten Tulln is not as business oriented as De Tuinen van Appeltern or Kittenberg gardens. They use their show gardens as one large showroom for any products.

It is also important to mention how exactly the business model of Die Garten Tulln looks like. To demonstrate such model, author asked explicitly Mr. Gruber how it works and who pays for what: *„They (partners/companies presenting themselves) do not pay fees but they have to pay the investments for the show gardens. There is actually demand for new partners. Approximately 3 new projects every year. In the future we do not plan any enlargements of our gardens so far. We are rather focusing on the quality. We could have more gardens but 65 are in my opinion enough.”* He also added that those garden companies who promote their products have to reinvest extra money when needed.

Business proposal for project Floreum

First, one shall mention that the company Školky Litomyšl already prepared rough estimations for the development project “Floreum park – okrasné zahrady”. When writing about estimated funding, two scenarios were taken into account: 1) financing the project with dotation 2) financing without dotation. Project is outlined into two implementation phases. Regarding the facilities of the ecological park, phase one should involve: horticultural museum, educative activities, family activities, thematic/sales exhibitions, biotope, training centre, etc. In theory, following phase two should consist of: family area enlargement, free-time area development, mini farm area, community gardening, organic gardens area, greenhouse, etc. Project counts with building possible parking slots (possibly for buses) surrounded by natural elements, i.e. trees, bushes or by flower beds. Whole project has its potential to become first unique low-carbon SME in the Svitavy district in the Pardubice region, potentially in Czech Republic.

Following business proposal’s structure is based on template made by Česká spořitelna bank and fulfils certain criteria not only to get specific bank loan but also to summarize future business model. As important part of the business proposal, author will conduct SWOT analysis.

I. Title page and intro of the company

Name: Floreum Park

Headquarters: Litomyšl, Pardubice region, Czech Republic

Company ID: 08066752

ZIP code: 570 01

Address: T. G. Masaryka 506

Free-time family park Floreum shall provide all sorts of attractive services to wide public. Its unique services should be attractive enough to make people come and buy several products/services offered by the company even from distances more than 80 kilometers away. Right mix of activities and facilities should ensure that park will be running with no financial difficulties. Park will be for broad public – specifically for families with children, young partners, students, schools, specific target groups and for elderly people. Gardeners and people interested in cultivating nature will be good example of target group. Park will be also suitable for people who like exhibitions, art and latest gardening trends.

II. Summary

One of many goals of the project Floreum is to build unique free-time park with elements of nature full of inspiration. Together with renaissance chateau visit, people might want to see more from Litomyšl and town's surroundings. Floreum could be the must-see for vast majority of incomers to the town. First of all, project must be attractive for people to think about the trip and finally to come. Visitors could spend up to 6 hours in the park and their kids would, of course, have place to be and play. One of possible attractions can be lookout tower because of the company's location (on top of the hill). There is, however, great need for precise financial and development plan of the current land. Restoration of the area is more than needed. Project Floreum can be one of the possible transformation ideas to implement.

Project could possibly attract more than 50 000 visitors a year. Realistic estimations of visitors for the first years of operation are around 10 000 per year. In the future even numbers like 100 000 visitors are reachable. What this project stands for is not supporting overtourism, rather giving people the opportunity to experience wonderful time and unique leisure time with their closest ones in beautiful town Litomyšl in Eastern Bohemia.

III. Description of an enterprise

Form of the business will ideally stay the same as it was created – private limited company (LTD \approx s. r. o. in Czech Republic) - until extraordinary changes happen. This form of business might ensure that all organisational processes are balanced and harmonized. Ideally, number of employees should not exceed 20 people. Mainly due to operational-costs reasons.

IV. Business Opportunity

Every project can be seen as two-sided coin when talking about business opportunities. On one hand, there are many new customers/visitors of the park. Regional visitors but also customers from abroad – especially potential tourists from Slovakia, Germany, Poland, China or USA – countries representing top 5 foreign tourists of Czech accommodation/hospitality sector. On the other hand, one must think about latest trends in tourism industry. Latest forecasts and data are showing that so-called overtourism is and will be serious problem in many European destinations. Relevant for the project might be the fact that Pardubice region is statistically poorest region of Czech Republic with regards to number of nights spent. The numbers are the lowest from the whole country and makes the region truly perspective in the area of tourism. We should also not forget that potential investment and cultivation of the area would help the place aesthetically. That would be dramatic change and could raise good portion of people's awareness.

Regarding the location of the project Floreum, Litomyšl town has been profiting from UNESCO Chateau for the past couple of years - with averaged attendance of 50 000 visitors per year. Yet modern and historical town has much to offer. If every visitor of the renaissance Chateau came also to the gardens, park can count with solid attendance creating interesting sales, eventually profits.

V. Description of product/service

Concerning products and services of the park, there is very broad space for creating attractive services for all above-mentioned potential target groups. Beginning with playful corners of the land, continuing with inspirational and leisure areas ending with educative facilities like museum of horticulture and so forth.

Regarding the competitive advantage of the project, there is no park in the whole country similar to planned form of it. That creates very good starting position for the whole idea. Yet, there is one potential competitor with attendance over 200 000 visitors per year – Dolní Morava town with very trendy lookout tower called “Stezka v Oblacích” – literally a path in the skies. That is, however, thematically totally different model of tourist attraction.

VI. Market position, marketing strategy

Based on practical part, case studies and interview summary, marketing strategy of each chosen enterprise is essential and beneficial. One must think of at least 2 people really taking care of marketing activities within the organization. Short- and long-term strategy would be to attract as many locals as possible (circular distance 80 kilometers). Proper targeting of the audience would be ensured mainly via word-of-mouth propaganda and via direct e-mails/newsletters. Social media would be also very valuable for propagation of the latest events and activities. In more detail using properly Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook and eventually Twitter. Next leaflets, posters, billboards or stance in town centre would be possibly direct and effective way of raising awareness among people. Regarding PR activities, local but also entire-state radio channels would be part of marketing strategy. Tourist, garden or other magazines could also target specific customers quite efficiently. Advertising agency is another possibility when talking about different channels of communication and promotion.

VII. Financial plan

Purpose of this paragraph will be getting familiar with financial plan for the project. Mainly to understand what were the unknown cost items when conducting such plan. Structure of the plan is based on template made by bank Česká spořitelna, created for SMEs to properly apply for bank loan. All steps were consulted with current economist employed in the company Školky Litomyšl – with Ing. Milan Pavliš. One of the biggest items of expenses are salaries for workers and the initial costs for the park. We can generally say, based on the data from the tables, that the more visitors park will attracts, the easier way project will have to make profits and sustainable business. Other costs compared to that two items are proportionally much lower. Although lower, costs for promotional activities are still significant when running such park. As calculated in part of EAT, one can see that first three years of business

operations are in negative numbers, whereas fourth year of running the business might be break-even year. From then on, if everything goes more or less smoothly, business can be profitable (ensuring that enough visitors will come and pay). Author decided to put the rest of sensitive data into appendix.

VIII. SWOT analysis

In order to minimize risk of the project it is convenient to conduct SWOT analysis. This analysis is helping any starting or running business when thinking about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In context of garden tourism industry, following box (see in appendix) reflects possible areas of risk or opportunities. Analysis was consulted together with director and people responsible for marketing within the company Školky Litomyšl.

As a partial summary, one should see key takeaways from this particular SWOT analysis. First, one of the greatest strengths – any maybe the strongest – is the unique model of the gardens together with strong and high-quality services in good “geopolitical” location. As second item of internal environment one should always consider weaknesses of the project. In this case, entrepreneur should know that such project goes hand in hand with large initial investments plus hard situation when looking for any skilled and competent employees → mainly thanks to very low unemployment rate (currently (data from February 2020) **2,36%** in Pardubice region). The overall unemployment rate in Czech Republic in 2019 was **2,2%**. Next, reader should look at external environment influencing whole decision-making process. As perhaps biggest opportunity one can objectively consider very low number of competitors within this niche market of the show gardens + future highway connection D35 from Prague and other big cities. Park would have very good starting position when choosing all kinds of attractions and other facilities that would ensure great success of the business. Last but not least, let us have closer look at weaknesses of such project. As probably biggest external factor one should consider weather and climate conditions. Park would be from more than 80% of all facilities “outdoor-oriented”. That means if there is bad weather, people do not come and do not support fluent cash-flow over the season. There would be space for creative indoor activities, etc. See the complete table in Appendix.

Bibliography

- Appeltern, D. T. (2020, February 14th). *The Appeltern gardens in Netherlands*. Retrieved from History of the Appeltern gardens: https://appeltern.nl/en/visit_our_park/history/
- Association, N. G. (2011). *National Gardening Survey*. Burlington.
- Botanica, T. (2020, February 26). *The Park - Terra Botanica*. Retrieved from Terra Botanica - Extraordinary gardens - Angers: <https://www.terrabotanica.fr/en/>
- Bauer-Krösbacher, C., Koschitz, S. (2019). *Management von Gärten & Parks als Besucherattraktionen*. Krems: IMC Fachhochschule Krems.
- Goeldner, C.R., Ritchie, J. R.B. (2007). *Tourism principles, practices, philosophies*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Sandler, Z. & collective (2020, January 8th). *Klášterní zahrady - Litomyšl*. Retrieved from Archiweb: <https://www.archiweb.cz/b/klasterni-zahrady-v-litomysli>
- Eden Project (2020, January 17th). *About Us - Annual reports: Eden Project*. Retrieved from Eden Project: <https://www.edenproject.com/eden-story/about-us/annual-and-sustainability-reports>
- Conservancy, T. G. (2019, January 17th). <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/about>. Retrieved from <https://www.gardenconservancy.org>.
- Derek, W. (2010). *The No-Nonsense Guide to Green Politics*.
- Die Garten Tulln. (2020, January). <https://www.diegartentulln.at/en/the-mission/the-history>.
- EMAS, E. C. (2020, February 10th). *Environment*. Retrieved from Eco-Management and Audit Scheme: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm
- Garden, A. B. (2020, February 14th). *About the Garden*. Retrieved from Atlanta Botanical garden website: <https://atlantabg.org/about-the-garden/>
- Gardens, B. (2020, February 17th). *Butchart Gardens*. Retrieved from Wikipedia.org: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butchart_Gardens
- Gardens, T. B. (2020, February 18th). *The Butchart Gardens - Media*. Retrieved from The Butchart Gardens website: <https://www.butchartgardens.com/media/>

- Gardens, T. R. (2020, February 23rd). *The Rose Gardens*. Retrieved from The Rose Gardens - Buenos Aires Travel: <http://www.buenosaires.travel/en/el-rosedal-palermo/>
- Gardens, V. B. (2020, February 19th). *Vallarta Botanical Gardens: About us*. Retrieved from Vallarta Botanical Gardens website: <https://www.vbgardens.org/>
- Globrands. (2020, February 25th). *Zoover - international name for website*. Retrieved from Globrands website: <https://www.globrands.com/en/cases/zoover-2/>
- Gruber, F. (2019, December 11). MsC. (D. Brýdl, Interviewer)
- Hales, M. (2000). *Monastic Gardens*.
- Hamm, M. (2020, February 7th). <https://www.maximilianpark.de/en/attraktion/der-park/>. Retrieved from <https://www.maximilianpark.de/en/>.
- Janeiro, J. B. (2020, February 22nd). *Jardim Botânico De Rio de Janeiro description*. Retrieved from Jardim Botânico De Rio de Janeiro Website: <http://www.jbrj.gov.br/>
- John, B. (1987). *The History and Design of the Great Islamic Gardens. Gardens of Paradise*.
- Kirchgeorg, M. I. (2005). *The siesta is over: a rude awakening from sustainability myopia. Corporate environmental strategy and competitive advantage* (3 ed.).
- Bertschinger, L., R. B. (2009). *Sustainability of horticulture in europe (environmental, social, economic): examples from the pre- and the post-harvest food chain*. doi:10.17660
- Treib, M., R. H. (2003). *A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto*. New York: Kodansha International.
- Faber, N., R. J. (2010). *The sustainability of “sustainability”—A study into the conceptual foundations of the notion of “sustainability”; Tools, Techniques and Approaches For Sustainability*.
- Organization, W. T. (2019 edition). *International Tourism Highlights*. UNWTO.
- Ouden, E. D. (2011). *Innovation design: Creating value for people, organizations and society*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Project, E. (2020, January 12th). *Eden story: Eden Project*. Retrieved from Eden Project Web site: <https://www.edenproject.com/eden-story>
- Q. Lou, L. Z. (2003). *Chinese gardens*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Rae, D. (1996). *Botanic gardens and their live plant collections: present and future roles*.
- Sydney, R. B. (2002, February 24th). *About us: Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney*. Retrieved from Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney web: <https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/About>
- Taylor, P. (2006). *The Oxford Companion to the Garden*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Trauttmansdorff, T. G. (2020, February 26). *Concept and philosophy*. Retrieved from The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle: <https://www.trauttmansdorff.it/en/the-gardens/history/concept-and-philosophy.html>
- Tulln, D. G. (2020, February 10th). Retrieved from <https://www.diegartentulln.at/en/the-mission/our-mission>.
- UNWTO. (2008). *Tourism Highlights*. UNWTO.
- Winkler, E. (2020, January 15). (D. Brýdl, Interviewer)