

THE GROWTH OF AN AUTHENTIC MĀORI TOURISM
IN NEW ZEALAND

Due to the growing popularity of tourism, the preferences of modern travelers are also changing. Indigenous tourism, as one of the possible options, involves getting acquainted with the cultures of the people who originally lived in a particular region. The intended outcomes of its development are to increase understanding between public and private tourism sectors focusing on maximizing economic progress opportunities and to decide how then to balance it with the important elements of the culture and identity.

Māori tourism includes any tourist experience of Māori culture. Today Māori tourism provides a wide range of the most frequently requested elements of tourist infrastructure, such as performing, accommodation, catering services, etc.

Tourism New Zealand's work in Māori development is focused on a few key areas: building the organization's own internal capacity and understanding of Māori culture, support in building the capability of Māori tourism businesses and working with international travel sellers to raise awareness of Māori tourism products.

Among the reasons for a visit there is assistance to the Māori, who are currently demanding economic and cultural autonomy. In addition, there is a crucial necessity of providing additional jobs and reducing unemployment rates.

According to New Zealand Māori Tourism Annual Report, 537 Māori tourism businesses have been identified, where about 37 % employ the tribe in comparison with non-Māori tourism (only 13 % of Māori participation). Since 2016, New Zealand Māori Tourism has achieved significant gains, as the implementation of the NZ Māori Tourism Strategic Plan 2016–2019 has contributed to the Māori tourism earnings increase from \$0.5 bn to \$1.97 bn. Māori tourism enterprises

continue to work mainly with visitors from English speaking countries and the proportion of Māori tourism enterprises offering “activities and experiences” has increased from 58 % in 2014 to 83 % in 2019.

Today, resilience looks like 80 % of pre-COVID Māori tourism businesses surviving (unemployment in Māori tourism remaining under 20 per cent). The planned NZ Māori Tourism 2020–2030 strategic plan is focused on developing successful and resilient Māori tourism enterprises and an agile workforce.

It can be concluded that Māori tourism is really in the stage of growth and development. However, at the same time, there is a number of phenomena and facts that slow down the spread process. Among them are the following:

- lack of effective representation in the main tourist organizations;
- insufficient number of Māori travel agencies;
- fairly low level of education/training.

It is important that control of the Māori tourism product remains with Māori including the rights over imagery and assets. Tourism from a Māori perspective is something that needs further exploration.