

# The Role of Environmental Tourism in the System of Environmental and Economic Innovation Development of the Russian Federation

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## Abstract

The problem of developing eco-tourism is multidimensional and requires detailed study. Given the rich natural resources, Russia is promising for the development of domestic and inbound tourism, including environmental tourism. The successful development of which depends largely on the effectiveness of its promotion on the market as a tourist product, that is, on targeted tourist marketing. The article analyzes the approaches in terminology, analyzes the current state of ecological tourism in Russia, reveals the relationship and prospects for its development, identifies constraints for its development, and assesses opportunities for the development of ecotourism in Russia. Ecotourism as an element of the market can serve the environmental, socio-cultural and economic interests of a person, society and the state.

**Keywords:** tourism industry, ecological tourism, innovative development, environment.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the World Tourism Organization formulated the concept of sustainable tourism development. The continuous process of sustainable tourism development requires monitoring the impact on the environment and taking preventive measures [1]. This was a prerequisite for the emergence of such nature-oriented tourism as ecological. The problem of developing eco-tourism is multidimensional and requires detailed study. Russia is a country with a unique vast natural area, which has the opportunity to develop this type of tourism. The UNESCO World Heritage List includes five Russian natural sites: Kamchatka volcanoes, virgin Komi forests, Altai Mountains, Lake Baikal, the Western Caucasus. It is in these regions that ecotourism can play an environmental role, contribute to the growth of employment and socio-economic development. In addition to these places, in the Russian Federation there are plenty of other areas that are attractive from the point of view of ecotourism: in north-western Russia - in Karelia, Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions; in Central Russia, the Central Forest State Biosphere Reserve in the Tver Region in the Valdai Hills; Lake Seliger; in the western part - a national park on the Curonian Spit in the Kaliningrad region; in the south - Astrakhan Biosphere State Reserve; the unique natural resources of the North Caucasus; in Siberia - Gorny Altai, Gornaya Shoria, Kuznetsk Alatau, Western and Eastern Sayans, in the Far East - Primorsky and Khabarovsk Territories [2]. But Russia does not occupy a leading position on ecotourism among other countries, even though it has a rich natural potential, cultural monuments, incredible tourist sites and national reserves. The roots of the problems lie in the lack of motivation, desire and, of course, financing, which significantly reduces the chances of our country to be among the countries where ecotourism is well developed. Successful development of eco-tourism in Russia depends on the effectiveness of its promotion in the market as a tourist product. Integration into a single federal strategic policy for the development of ecotourism becomes problematic because of the independent processes in certain regions of Russia, which significantly slows down the socio-economic development of the regions and hinders the preservation of their natural balance.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The relevance of the study is related to the position of eco-tourism as one of the promisingly developing industry in the economic component of developed countries. One of the fundamental aspects of tourism development are recreational resources of the territory. Russia, in turn, occupies one of the leading places in the world in terms of the number of recreational resources. The potential for the development of tourism in the country is great, but not used, creating negative consequences. This creates so-called "opportunity costs" (the cost of lost opportunities). The object of the research is a kind of socially responsible tourism – ecological tourism. The purpose of the study is to analyze the

characteristics of the organization of ecological tourism in terms of existing international experience in the context of globalization in Russia. Historical-geographical, comparative-geographical, descriptive methods were used as the methodological basis of the research. Problems of tourism development, in the form of weak developing eco-tourism in Russia, and, consequently, insufficiently strong involvement of the industry in shaping the country's environmental and economic well-being, are often raised in scientific papers and articles, moreover - mentioned in speeches by Russian political leaders [3]. The great potential for the development of ecological tourism is the territory of the Russian Federation with a unique nature, its diversity, attractiveness of untouched places, vast landscapes that have not yet managed to cover urbanization and processes of intensive agricultural production. Its vast ecosystem allows developing ecological tourism in many national parks and reserves of Russia, which are successfully striving to develop new and modern forms of ecological tourism. In Russia, there are regions with extensive farm types that are of great ecological value for the expansion of ecotourism in the specially protected areas of the Russian Federation. Such a country as Russia, endowed with a unique and truly unique heritage, regional diversity of nature management traditions and cultures, a reserve of "original" tourist movement in the new century can develop and become one of the leading countries in the world for the organization of ecological tourism. But for a start, you need to create the right strategy, allowing you to organize a competent transition to environmentally oriented environmental management policies and environmentally sustainable development of regions [4]. For the formation of ecotourism routes, a methodology for assessing the ecotourism potential of territories is necessary. This methodology should be adapted to the peculiarities of the protected mode and methods of managing ecotourism in protected areas. To create such a methodology, it is necessary to determine the classification characteristics of the assessment of the potential of ecotourism. E.A. Kotlyarov unites them into three groups: primary, including natural conditions and resources; secondary, including socio-cultural conditions and resources; restrictive conditions [5]. The methodology requires the adaptation of criteria for assessing the tourist potential of environmentally oriented natural objects located in the country.

### 3 RESULTS

Despite the fact that on the territory of Russia there is experience in implementing projects of various types of eco-tourism, but as an formed case, this idea has not yet been formed. Basically, there are regional projects that are little known at the federal level. Based on the experience that exists in the world, tourism industry enthusiasts have begun work on the implementation of the idea of creating a market for ecological tourism in the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Specially Protected Natural Territories", the development of ecological tourism is among the main tasks of the national parks of Russia, as environmental protection and environmental education institutions. In a certain way, this issue is regulated by the current regulatory framework. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of August 3, 1996 No. 926 approved the Regulation on the procedure for leasing land, natural objects, buildings and structures on the territories of national parks for carrying out activities to ensure regulated tourism and recreation. According to this Regulation, land plots and natural objects that are in the use (possession) of national parks can be provided for rent, and the transfer of which to the lease is allowed by the legislation of the Russian Federation. Leasing of buildings and structures is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation. The provision of land plots and natural objects for rent for purposes related to the provision of regulated tourism and recreation can be carried out for a period of up to 50 years. Land plots, natural objects are provided for rent by the results of a competition or auction. If, at the end of the deadline for applying for participation in a contest or auction, one application was submitted to the National Park Directorate, the lease agreement may be concluded in the course of negotiations between the applicant and the Park Directorate. Only legal entities and individuals who are licensed to carry out activities to ensure regulated tourism in the national park and submit project documentation for all types of work that is covered by this license can participate in a tender or auction. Project documentation is developed at the expense of participants in the competition or auction. The winner of the competition or auction has the right to conclude a lease agreement with the national park [6]. Subleasing land plots, natural objects, buildings and structures on the territory of the national park and transferring by the tenant of their rights and obligations under the lease agreement to another person (transfer), granting the leased property for free use, as well as transferring the lease rights as a pledge and contributing them in the authorized capital of business partnerships and companies or a share in a production cooperative are not allowed. The size of the rent for the use of land, natural objects is determined by agreement of the parties, but not lower than the basic amount of the rent, established by the relevant executive authorities when renting land in

state or municipal ownership. Incomes received from the rent for the use of a land plot or a natural object remain fully at the disposal of national parks and are spent by them for environmental purposes. At the same time, the national park pays land tax on the area of land plots leased in accordance with the established procedure. Speaking about the interest shown by tourists to nature-oriented tours, according to the estimate given in the report of the World Economic Forum on the demand for nature tourism, Russia still holds 73rd place in the world. According to the Director General of the Center for Ecological Travel, in the structure of the tourist flow, there is now an increasing interest in this type of tourism, which began in 2016. This center has reached a level of work with foreign tourists, which was observed only in the 90s. But at the same time, domestic demand for environmental tours, on the contrary, shows a downward trend. It should be noted that the popularity rating among Russian environmental zones, compiled by Mindscan, a company specializing in media and social media monitoring, revealed that in 2017, which was declared the "Year of Ecology" in Russia, interest in environmental zones in Russia increased significantly. If in 2016 the average number of mentions per month was 11,188 in the media and 24,729 in social networks, in January 2017 this figure was 15,584 and 29,547, respectively. The main reasons for the low popularity of environmental tours among Russian tourists, as well as visits to specially protected natural areas include:

- the almost complete lack of information about ecological tourism and about the possibilities of specially protected natural territories as tourist destinations;

underdevelopment of necessary infrastructure.

A prerequisite for the implementation of eco-tourism should be:

presence of relatively untouched natural and original cultural landscapes;

respect for ecosystems;

assistance in the implementation of environmental projects;

improvement of the welfare of the local population.

Ecotourism is a form of responsible tourism when traveling on the nature and contributes to the protection of the environment and the preservation of the welfare of the local population. It is designed for traveling in small groups in non-mass places. Ecotourism differs from nature tourism by the obligation to preserve the environment and to develop regions.

Ecological tourism programs that have been active for several years in Russia:

- environmental projects for the protection of Lake Baikal, implemented in the form of summer camps in nature reserves and national parks on the lake: "The Great Baikal Trail": the project "Save Baikal", "In the Wilds of Khamar-Dabana"; "Zapovedniy Ostrov", "To the Taiga Territory of the Baikal Region", "The Land of the Barguzin Sable", the Camp "Baikal Coast Guard Service", "On the Banks of Enchanted Ina", "Stars of Balan-Tamura", "Giants of Siberian Taiga", "Valley of Shumilikha", "Sunny Beach" and many others;

- an environmental project implemented in the Pribaikalsky district of Buryatia "Preserve Baikal", whose main goal is the development of fishing sports and tourism in the region;

- environmental projects in the framework of the worldwide volunteer campaign "Let's Do It! World Clean Up";

- ecological projects within the framework of the national park "Ergaki" - eco-trails "Path to the Raduzhnoe Lake", "Path to the Svetloe Lake", "Stone Town", "Path of the Siberian Hunter";

- Volunteer programs of the Ecological and Educational Center "Reserves";

- environmental projects of the Volunteer Center "Chipmunk" in Moscow [7].

Starting the classification of ecological tourist routes, it is advisable to calculate the potential capacity for sustainable development of tourism in the region. When calculating the throughput of visitors, it is necessary to consider three levels: physical, real and effective throughput. Routes need to be certified and regularly monitored routes and an annual assessment of the negative impact of tourism on local natural resources should be made. Analyzing the conformity of tourist areas with the requirements of ecotourism in Russian conditions, it is advisable to be guided by the following features: diversity of climatic conditions, biodiversity, attractiveness of landscape elements, recreational opportunities, cultural traditions of the local population, natural monuments.

## 4 DISCUSSION

Although the results of scientific research in the field of ecotourism are published, there is still no universal understanding of the term "eco-tourism" among scientists. Opinions of domestic and foreign researchers differ in their views on the conceptual definition of ecotourism activity. Questions of the study of ecological tourism are reflected in the works of such domestic scientists as L.I. Egorenkov, A.S. Kuskov, E.U. Ledovskikh, N.V. Moraleva, E.I. Arseneva, O.G. Omarova, E.N. Bukhova, T. V. Bochkareva, V. A. Drozdov, G.I. Gladkevich, I.N. Panov, V.B. Pozdnev, A.V. Reznikova, T. K. Sergeeva, G. A. Sorokina, V. B. Stepanitsky, N. V. Feoktistova, V. V. Khrabovchenko, V. P. Chizhova, A. I. Eitingon [8]. Foreign scientific schools of ecological tourism differ sharply from Russian ones. The concept of eco-tourism is reflected in the works of the following researchers: P. Wight, N. Ward, D. Western, D. McLaren, P. Hasslacher, K. Ziffer, G. Wallace, W. Strasdas, D. Kramer, K-H. Rochlitz, P. Valentine, B. Steck, I. Mose, T. Whelan, D. Hawking, K. Lindberg, P. Jonsson, Epler Wood, J. Krippendorf, E. Boo, H. Ceballos-Lascurain [9]. There are four academic schools that stand out clearly - American, Australian, German and Mexican. The most correct interpretation of this term, in our opinion, is as follows: "Ecotourism is environmentally responsible trips to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to explore and study nature and associated cultural attractions that contribute to the preservation of the environment, causing minimal damage to nature and creating socio-economic benefits for the local population through their active involvement in the tourism process" [10]. In 1996, this wording was approved by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. This interpretation gives an idea of tourism compatible with social and environmental requirements [11]. Summarizing the results of the analysis of domestic and foreign authors on the definition of the content of the concept of ecotourism, we can formulate it as follows: it is a nature-oriented type of tourism, which is designed to harmonize the relationship between man and the environment, an important function of which is environmental education and education. Ecotourism is a special form of tourism, due to the tourist visiting relatively natural areas untouched by humans in order to explore the area or rest. Also, ecotourism has a second, important definition, since even at the present stage of development of tourist activities, researchers could not give an exact wording. Ecotourism is a tourist activity that draws attention to the need to protect the environment and natural resources and promotes respect for environmental law [12]. The conclusion on these two definitions, in our opinion, can be considered that ecological tourism can be characterized as a separate species in the tourism industry, aimed at protecting natural resources in order to protect the environment and its cognition. Tourism itself is considered to be a complex system that allows combining economic, social, political and ecological cultures. In the organization of tourism activities are possible changes in the environment. It should be noted that tourism is the most environmentally friendly type of nature management [13]. And from the economic side - ecological tourism is a favorable impact on the sectors of the national economy, contributes to its development by increasing the employment of the population of the regions. An important prerequisite, which is the basis for the development of eco-tourism, is the ability of a tourist to travel in places without anthropogenic pressure on nature and cultural resources. Anthropogenic load increases in parallel with the growth rate of visiting tourist-friendly places. According to research by the World Tourism Organization, in the 21st century in terms of the development of tourism activities, it becomes noticeable that contradictions are growing in meeting the demands of potential travelers and the proper use of tourism [14]. Negative factors were revealed in the fact that too many tourists come to certain places to rest. A large flow of tourists for the most part has a negative impact on natural territories and on their ecology. Now, the universal factor of visiting tourist and protected natural areas has a negative impact on tourism. This may be since the tourist areas were not ready to visit such many visiting people in order to relax [15]. If this happens to popular places for tourism, then we can assume what would happen to national parks and reserves in more unprepared conditions. The population is increasing, and the level of urbanization is increasing, this fact, in turn, has a detrimental effect on the environment. All these factors contribute to the change of the earth's shell, in which such natural changes take place as: climate warming; soil degradation; stagnation of biodiversity or even its deterioration; air, water and ground pollution; natural destruction under the influence of human activity; an increase in uncontrolled fertility, population growth, which subsequently affects social stratification; deterioration in food quality affecting human health; significant decrease in natural resources. From the above problems, it can be said that they entail global losses in the quality of natural resources that a person cannot cope with alone or within his own country [17]. In this regard, researchers from the German Council on the issue of global change, decided to highlight certain types of standard problems that tend to be repeated in several countries at once, having common features. The German Council identified three major problems and compared them with syndromes. The first syndrome is called "recycling syndrome". Under this syndrome, it is customary to perceive, so to say tourism, which entails the destruction of a territory through its improvement. That is, to get into any

national park, you need to organize transport accessibility to it. But this transport accessibility may entail the destruction of flora and fauna. The second syndrome is the "development syndrome". An example of a development syndrome is environmental disruption of landscape areas as a result of unacceptable development programs. The third syndrome is "waste syndrome". Waste syndrome is an uncontrolled or controlled action on wastes that are buried in a natural area. Subsequently, control over this territory is not controlled or control exists, but no one wants to clean up the area, as a result of which the waste gradually and slowly decomposes, leading to an ecological disaster and the unsuitability of the natural habitat for animals and plants. More and more countries are paying attention to the problems associated with ecology and the development of ecological tourism, without causing harm to nature in the process of landscaping national parks. In 1996, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), together with the World Travel and Tourism Council and the Green World Organization, developed the concept of sustainable development of ecological tourism in the 21st century Agenda 21 for travel and tourism industry. The very idea of development is based on Agenda 21 for Industry and Travel, a comprehensive program that was adopted by 182 government organizations at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on June 14, 1992. A paper addressed to governments, industry, non-governmental organizations and the media was widely distributed. After this document was adopted, it entered into force and was implemented over the next five years. Five years under the influence of this document have passed with benefit. The meetings, subsequently held in London (February 1997) and in Jakarta (November 1997), entailed the following important conclusions on the work done:

- the tourism industry has real potential to contribute to sustainable development with effective governance and sound regulation. "Agenda 21" should be widely distributed as the main document for the development of the industry, and implementation by all parties of its provisions should be encouraged;
- close cooperation is required between consumers, the public, private sectors and tourism organizations of the industry;
- it is necessary to have many systems for measuring progress towards sustainable development;
- should drive the expansion of tourism infrastructure towards sustainable tourism goals;
- environmental taxes must be fair and non-discriminatory, and funds received will be allocated to the tourism industry for environmental programs;
- education in the field of environmental protection should be strengthened, especially in educational institutions that train personnel for hotels and tourist companies;
- advertising plays an important role in encouraging consumers and forcing the industry to work on new principles. This should be realized through showing videos on airplanes and airports, publishing magazine articles for travel reading, announcements, useful tips on tickets, travel accessories and brochures containing information for vacationers;
- further seminars should be held in different regions of the world to explore the application of the "Agenda 21" principles to specific conditions, while ensuring their full implementation.

The principles of sustainable tourism development are also reflected in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which was started by WTO experts back in 1997. The preamble to the document states that "representatives of the global tourism industry, delegates of states, territories, enterprises, institutions and organizations - members of the WTO, are aimed at promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and accessible tourism in the framework of the realization of the right to rest and travel while respecting the public choice of all nations and you desire to contribute to the establishment of a fair, responsible and sustainable world tourism order, which will bring benefits to all sectors of society in an open and competitive global market economy. "Problems of sustainable development are especially relevant for unique natural objects and phenomena, natural reserves involved in tourism [18]. Often, residents of the territories adjacent to such objects exist only at the expense of receipts from tourists. This is especially true for mountain areas. It was not by chance that 2002 was declared the International Year of Mountains and the International Year of Ecotourism by decision of the UN General Assembly. This opened up great opportunities for cooperation and unification of efforts of all stakeholders in achieving the maximum possible results during the two events. The idea of sustainable development was not accepted by all experts in the field of tourism industry. Most likely this was since the phrase "sustainable development" was not entirely successful, since the term "sustainable" is static, still, and the term "development" is movement, dynamics. A possible definition would be better "life development". The main thing is that every state should correctly understand what

development means. For what it is needed: many states want to equal themselves in one area or another to another, neighboring, and vice versa - distant. This does not need to be done, since each state somehow needs its own, not like another development. The direction of the socio-economic movement of local communities is determined by the residents themselves, and not by outsiders with authority [19]. In this regard, it is necessary to consider traditions more, but not advertising messages. Formation of eco-tourism in the regions with the ability to earn extra income by maintaining the preserved cultures of life, maintaining the traditional lifestyle (production of themed souvenirs, selling unique food products, directly participating in animation performances, events and national holidays). Similarly, through the development of ecological tourism through the work and organization of the local population, the development of ecotourism is promoted by the revival of national cultures.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Thanks to its natural resources, Russia is considered by the world community as the most promising country for the development of ecological tourism. In particular, the UNWTO named ecotourism among the three priority areas for the development of domestic and inbound tourism in Russia [20]. In some regions of Russia, the development of ecological tourism is already quite active in its own ways; however, this direction should be combined into a single federal strategic policy, the objectives of which should be the socio-economic development of the regions and the preservation of their natural and ecological balance. The priority tasks of the development of ecological tourism in the country are:

- the formation of an algorithm for developing a strategy for the development of ecotourism;
- training qualified specialists for the industry;
- development of a wide range of new ecotourism products;
- use of flexible pricing policy;
- state assistance in promoting ecotourism products to the world market;
- joint work of regional authorities and the local community in the development of ecological tourism in regional specially protected natural territories;
- Attraction of domestic and foreign investments, motivating their participation, for example, by simplifying tax burdens or the desire of businesspeople to participate in the development of the region;
- improving the methodological base of ecotourism;
- modernization of tourist infrastructure;
- creation of a system for monitoring the capacity of the territories used in ecotourism;
- formation of a system for planning and controlling the effects of eco-tourism activities;
- development of schemes of interaction with local communities for inclusion in tourism activities;
- creating concept and planning other tourist services and infrastructure for ecotourists;
- improving the marketing process.

Lack of experience, lack of uniform methods for determining throughput and recreational loads, lack of information about eco-tour areas and their natural potential, insufficient number of routes developed, lack of quality advertising and developed infrastructure suggest that ecotourism as a type of tourism is in Russia in the early stage of its development. But given the rich recreational potential of the country, eco-tourism as an element of the market is a promising direction that can serve the economic, environmental, socio-cultural interests of the state and society.

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