

# ECOLOGICAL TOURISM AS A PRIORITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*Having analyzed the main directions of development of ecological tourism in the world, as well as taking into account the main provisions of the concept of "sustainable development", we can conclude that ecotourism is a tourist activity, the purpose of which is to understand the characteristics of unchanged natural and traditional cultural landscapes, while maintaining landscape diversity. Ecotourism should be developed in line with modern world approaches and concepts, the features of which are that this type of tourism not only satisfies the desire to communicate with nature, but also mobilizes the tourism potential to protect nature, socio-economic development, environmental and educational activities, and helps to create new jobs, attracting local people and raising the general cultural level of society. In the process of ecologization of rural and agritourism, it is necessary to pursue a policy of popularizing and encouraging the rural population to develop tourism in the countryside, which will solve the existing socio-economic and environmental problems within the boundaries of rural areas, modernize the existing infrastructure and improve the landscaping of individual estates and personal plots, and villages in general.*

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Organizational and Economic Mechanism for Managing the Regional Development of Ecological Tourism, Monitoring, Agritourism, Ecological Consciousness.

**JEL Classifications:** M5, Q2.

## INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is gradually starting to occupy a significant niche in the global tourism industry. According to the WTO, ecological tourism is one of the types of tourism that occupies a leading position in popularity and pace of development throughout the world. It has occupied its niche in the market of tourism services due to an increase in demand for sustainable tourism. And this will primarily have a beneficial effect on the economic development of developing countries that have not yet lost their priceless natural resources.

There are natural territories in the world, little changed by human activities, therefore ecotourism with a responsible attitude to nature and the least impact on the environment has prospects for development. This type of tourism contributes to the sustainable development of territories, provides for the participation of the local population in the provision of services, and creates economic incentives for environmental protection.

## REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

The scientific problems of the development of ecological tourism as a promising type of tourism activity are highlighted in the works of scientists. So, at present, 4 main types of ecological tourism can be distinguished:

1. Science tourism (Coronado Martínez, et al., 2018). During scientific tours, tourists take part in various nature studies, conduct field research, usually in protected areas (nature reserves, wildlife reserves, national parks). The category of science tourism can also include research expeditions and educational practices of students of natural sciences.
2. Nature History Tours (Grydehoj, A., & Kelman, I. (2017)). Travels related to the study of the environment, local culture. Most often, trips of this kind are organized on the territory of nature reserves or national parks (Papayannis, 2017); Kişi, (2019).
3. Adventure tourism (Heslinga, et al. 2017). This type of tourism combines all types of trips associated with active means of movement and outdoor recreation (Xu, S., Mingzhu, L., Bu, N., & Pan, S. (2017)). The purpose of this recreation is to obtain new impressions, sensations, adrenaline. These are: alpinism, climbing, caving, mountain hiking, hiking, water touring, ski touring, mountain skiing, horseback riding, as well as steam gliding and diving, which are extreme, but have the highest income in the field of ecotourism.
4. Traveling to nature reserves and reservations (Newsome, 2017). Most of the wildlife that has been preserved is currently located in nature reserves and reservations, where it is most protected (Fan & Xue, 2018), Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, et al. (2019). Traveling to preserve pristine areas of nature in order to study and observe the wild flora and fauna.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the study is the dialectical and abstract-logical method of cognition of economic phenomena and the provisions of economic theory. In order to substantiate the strategic directions of the development of ecotourism, formal logical methods were used - induction and deduction, comparisons, analogies, modeling, content and logical (analysis and synthesis, hypothetical, historical) and sociological (expert assessments, opinion polls) methods.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One of the most important indicators for planning the development of ecotourism and technology for the use of natural resources is the ecosystem capacity. Recreational potential is a common indicator, the value of which depends on the parameters of 4 load-bearing elements: environment; spatial distribution of recreational resources; psychological comfort; economic potential of the landscape.

From the point of view of regional management, the emergence and development of ecological tourism leads to the following (shows in Table 1): increase in the number of taxpayers and tax base; increase in the number of jobs; convenient tool for interacting with business; growing investment attractiveness of the region; increasing the political, economic and social significance of the region.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECOTOURISM PRACTICES</b>	
<b>(AUTHORING)</b>	
<b>At the state level</b>	
1.	Imperfection of the legislative and regulatory framework especially - tax policy, visa system, land use rules
2.	Lack of a strategy and concrete plans for the development of ecotourism based on rural areas
3.	Lack of separation of powers between state authorities and local self-government
4.	Low efficiency of the existing facilities of the resort and recreation complex
<b>At the regional level</b>	
5.	Lack or low comfort of infrastructure
6.	Limited range of tourist and recreational services
7.	Ineffective tourism development management system
8.	Passivity of marketing and informational and advertising activities
9.	Depreciation of fixed assets in the tourism sector
10.	Gradual depletion of treating and natural and climatic resources
11.	Lack of detailed information about the areas of the tours and environmental awareness programs
12.	Low qualifications due to the lack of a multi-stage education system in the field
13.	Lack of mechanisms for determining permissible recreational loads and monitoring the environmental consequences of tourism
14.	Lack of specialized information, for example, lists of plant and animal species with comments, lists of rare and endangered species, etc.
15.	No specialized structures capable of organizing and coordinating the development of ecotourism at the regional level

Thus, an organizational and economic mechanism for managing the regional development of ecotourism is needed, which should be understood as a set of system elements that determine the algorithm for direct and indirect impact on the functioning and development of the management object and ensure the implementation of cooperative interactions of participants in order to realize the resource potential to increase the effectiveness of the regional economics.

The management of the development of ecological tourism in the region should be considered as a long-term task, which can be solved only professionally, without turning it into a non-operating function.

The strategy should ensure the development of tourism along the trajectory, which contributes to: safety of the natural complexes; creation of mechanisms to increase the employment of local residents; an opportunity for income growth of both environmental structures and local settlements; environmental education development.

Based on the proposed strategy, rural areas are able to minimize the "costs" of ecotourism and maximize its benefits.

The basis for managing the development of ecotourism is the program-targeted method, which is based on a rational distribution of powers and functions between the regional level and the level of individual destinations of ecotourism.

The validity of the use of this method in the field of ecotourism development is confirmed by the fulfillment of the requirements for the selection of regional and sectoral targeted development programs: development of ecological tourism contributes to the solution of priority tasks of a socio-economic and environmental nature; within the framework of the existing market mechanism, it is impossible to comprehensively solve the problem of the development of ecological tourism; development of ecotourism requires coordination of intersectoral cooperation in the provision of high quality services.

The development of ecotourism is already finding its practical implementation in the form of specially created ecological paths.

In order for the ecological paths to effectively carry out the environmental, educational and environmental protection tasks assigned to them, they should be equipped with wooden furniture and attractive full houses, which will contain information about the ecological state of the tourist area, information about the local flora and fauna, as well as the rules of rational nature management.

Rural and agritourism. These types of tourism can be safely attributed to ecologically safe types of tourism activities that are focused on protecting and preserving the environment, rational farming, consumption and use of natural resources, environmental education and the like.

In our opinion, rural tourism is an active (walking, sightseeing, sports, hunting, fishing, etc.) or passive (cultural and ethnic) tourism activity that directly takes place / is organized within the countryside, is associated with agricultural activities of personal (farmer) households, accommodation of excursionists in rural (agri) estates, acquaintance with available natural resources, customs, everyday life, national cuisine, folklore, culture and unique traditions of the corresponding region.

Rural tourism is very closely related to agrarian tourism, which is a somewhat narrower concept and is a variety of it.

**Water touring:** The organization of water tourism should occur using environmentally friendly types of water transport - non-motorized boats, catamarans, kayaks, canoes and the like. The use of precisely such types of water transport is indicated in the rules for using the territories of national parks and within other nature reserves.

**Hiking:** Its development should be accompanied by environmentally-educational programs (placement of informational, environmentally-filled stands, creation of eco-educational paths, scientific and educational excursions during a tourist trip, etc.).

**Bicycle touring:** In order to green the tours on bicycles, it is necessary to develop and lay out special bicycle routes within attractive natural complexes and territories, as well as to specially create and equip a bicycle garage.

**Science tourism:** It consists in holding seminars, conferences, environmental meetings, as well as in the organization of research tours of scientists, field practices of students and the like.

Monitoring of tourist territories and objects should be carried out with the purpose of monitoring the state of all environmental components in order to assess and forecast their changes under the influence of tourism activities.

The main tasks of monitoring tourist areas and objects are: collection and analysis of environmental and economic information on the state of the territory that is the object of tourist interest; compiling a cartographic geo-ecological basis for monitoring - identifying objects and key areas for monitoring observations; systematic collection of primary environmental information characterizing the state of objects and key areas; formation of an information database obtained on the basis of regular observations.

The monitoring program must necessarily include monitoring the state of the main components of the natural complex of the visited territory, which is affected by excessive tourist flows, namely: soils (soil compaction, development of erosion processes, loss of fertility, etc.); water resources (pollution of drinking water sources); atmospheric air (pollution control from mobile and stationary sources); vegetation (decrease in species diversity of flora, mechanical

damage to trees and shrubs); fauna (decrease in species diversity of fauna and reduction in population size).

Based on the results of monitoring and general environmental assessments, at the end of each tourist season, the administration of the region and the management of tourist objects should take appropriate management decisions, which should include: regulation, stabilization or increase the permissible tourist load, its distribution by season or month during the year; adjustment of the tourist season; planning measures to prevent or eliminate violations, eliminate the negative consequences of tourism activities, improvement of the sanitary condition of the territory, restoration of natural resources; amendments to the program of tourist and excursion activities (in case of significant influence).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of effective environmental protection measures at the level of an individual tourist object as a whole is possible only with a detailed consideration of all possible and available sources of its impact on the environment. Such information can be concentrated in a single document - an environmental passport.

The environmental passport of natural tourist territories and objects is an official state document that records "environmental diseases", their specifics and development dynamics, contains the necessary information for the effective resolution of environmental issues.

The essence of the ecological certification of tourist territories and objects is the need to take an inventory of the main sources of anthropogenic impacts on the environment, observe environmental standards and rules in the process of nature management, determine the degree of use of environmental resources, and develop existing environmental protection measures on the basis of certification data. Environmental passports help to analyze in detail and differentially the causes of changes in the state of the environment and identify those responsible for environmental damage and the quality of plans for improving the situation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Ecotourism is a trip to places with relatively untouched nature in order to get an idea of the natural, cultural and ethnographic features of this territory, which does not violate the integrity of ecosystems and creates such economic conditions when nature protection becomes beneficial to the local population.

Ecotour has a number of features that together distinguish it from mass tourism: - travel to natural areas is carried out by relatively small groups. - the motivation of tourists is the need to communicate with nature, the desire to get aesthetic and moral satisfaction from it, to see unique landscapes.

Another feature of ecotourism is the ecological consciousness of travelers. Tourists are ready to temporarily forget about the benefits of civilization; it is even possible to temporarily abandon some habits in order to maintain the environment in good condition.

In addition, ecological tourism involves a certain environmental education in combination with a deep knowledge of natural monuments, architecture, and cultural characteristics of the local population.

The development of a set of measures for the management of ecotourism, including the creation of an organizational mechanism for interaction, monitoring and control of the activities of economic agents, will maximize the huge potential for the development of ecotourism.

The organizational and economic mechanism for managing the development of ecological tourism is based on long-term goals - this is the transformation of the region that has the biggest natural resource potential for the development of ecotourism into a dynamically developing one, which is ensured on the basis of the reasonable consumption of recreational especially valuable resources of the tourist and reaction complex. High rates of economic growth should become a means of achieving significant environmental benchmarks, successfully solving the urgent problems of structural and technological modernization of the recreational economy, and realizing additional competitive advantages of resort and tourist regions in the international arena.

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