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Cluster Approach as Tourism Development Factor

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Abstract:

Tourism is one of the most important ways influencing social and economic land use development. Tourism industry development has multiplicative effect and helps to advance different business areas, such as tourism companies' services, hospitality facilities, transportation, trading and catering, souvenir manufacturing, folk craft and art production, agriculture, building and construction. Thereby tourism development is very important for society and government in total as well as for regional and municipal units in particular. Modern Russian reality makes tourism industry development one of the most important government social and economic goals. Russian Federation has enormous resources to advance the tourism sphere. Most territories could become recreation and tourism areas. However, tourism development in Russia is currently being restrained by different social and economical problems such as tourism infrastructure underdevelopment, tourism services quality and prices incompatibility, lack of science-based strategy of creating positive country image, local budgets deficit, low level of tourism services differentiation, lack of professionals involved in tourism industry. According to the authors, these problems solution lays in using cluster approach in tourism. Introduction of such modern method as tourism cluster makes it possible to develop every type of tourism, provide differentiated services and solve some of social and economic problems currently existing on some of Russian territories.

Keywords: tourism; tourist attraction; management; tourist services; tourist infrastructure; tourist cluster

JEL Classification: Z1; Z3.

Introduction

By the beginning of the XXI century tourism took leading position in social and economical activities of almost every country, and tourist industry became an important part of social life and consumption pattern for most societies.

According to UNWTO, every tenth employee is involved in tourist industry – more than 250 million people worldwide. Tourist industry share in overall investment is 7%, 11% share in consumer spending worldwide, one third of world services sold and 5% of all tax revenues. Money invested in tourism refund faster than those invested in any other industry. Tourism is a way to initiate multiplication effect that helps other branches of countries` industry develop. Tourism became a source of significant income increase and national economy growth for lots of countries. Highly developed countries such as Switzerland, France and Austria gained most of their welfare out of tourism income.

International Tourism became an important source of money income for many developed and developing countries. The share that tourism has in overall goods and services export is *e.g.* 53% in Cyprus, 33.6% in Greece,

18.3% in Spain, 14.9 in Portugal, 11.8% in Austria. For many developing countries such as India, Egypt, Peru, Paraguay and Costa Rica international tourism makes 10-15% of overall goods and services export¹.

Although Russian Federation has big touristic potential, its place in world' tourism market is very low – only 1.4% of worldwide tourist flow. According to the experts, Russia has potential in tourism and could host up to 40 million foreign tourists every year if appropriate level of tourist infrastructure is provided.

However, Russia currently hosts only 7.4 million people from abroad every year including not only tourists, but also businessmen and people with some private goals. Although tourist infrastructure and industry as well as exogenous factors (ecological, political etc) are in bad conditions, inbound tourism in Russia possesses great potential.

There are some positive examples of tourist industry development in Russian Federation for the past several years: these are cities like Vladimir, Cheboksary, Suzdal, Kazan, Pskov, Myshkin, Sochi, Kaliningrad, Kislovodsk etc. Yet using cluster approach to control this sphere in Russia would be more effective because tourist clusters are becoming relevant worldwide. Cluster approach is currently used in the USA, Australia, Macedonia, South African Republic, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Poland and other countries.

In conditions of Russian municipal units' budget deficit, creation of the tourist clusters is the most important factor in this industry.

1. Analysis of the latest publications on this problem

The following Russian and foreign scientists dedicated their publications to tourism development in XXI century: Abdurazakova, Y.M. (2011), Voronina, A.B. (2011), Kamenskaya, M.A. (2013), Croes and Semrad (2013), Kastenholz *et al.* (2013), Saphronov, R.A., Avagyan, G.K. (2015), Konanova, E.I., Milova, V.V. (2015), Kryukova, E.M. (2015), Myasnikova, V.A. (2016), Kabanova, E.E. (2016), Herrero-Prieto and Gómez-Vega (2017), Baynova, M.S. (2017) *et al.*

The basics of tourist clusters management are viewed in publications of the following scientists: Vysotskaya, O.A. (2012), Stepanovskaya, G.V. (2014), Pecheritsa, E.V. (2014), Anokhina, M.E., Mochalnikov, V.N., Korostelev, D.G. (2014), Schwets, Y.Y. (2015), Romchankova, Y.S. (2015), Fetisova, O.V., Kurchenkov, V.V. (2017).

The usage of cluster approach is viewed in publications of the following scientists: Kozlyaeva, V.I., Zaberzhinskiy, B.E. (2015), Abdyramanova, Z.N. (2016), Bochkova, E.V., Nazarenko, V.A. (2016), Kazhykhanova, D.M. (2016), Poluhina, A.N., Rukomoynikov, V.P. (2016), Moreva, L.A. (2017). These authors claim that usage of cluster approach in tourist industry management promotes tourist sphere development and raise of effectiveness of the whole tourist industry.

Modern approaches and methods of studying in tourism sphere analysis shown in publications of the authors mentioned above allows us to conclude that there are premises that have been created by now to improve the theory and practice of tourist sphere management. However, there are still barriers making this sphere hard to develop. It's about systematic regulation of tourist complex extension that is poorly developed and can't provide multipurpose social and economic advancement in tourist regions as well as in tourist centers.

2. The aim of the research

The research of tourism development in Russia and abroad in XXI century; the research of cluster approach usage in tourist industry aimed at its development.

3. Results

The tourist sphere, depending on the area where it is developing, influences regional or country' economy, agriculture, social and humanitarian basics. The most successful in tourist sphere countries are Spain, Italy, France, Cyprus, Greece, Austria, Germany, Tunisia *et al.* Kabanova E.E. (2016). Such a stable level of tourism development is provided by government support. Spain is the proper example of effective support provided to tourism by the government. Spanish tourism, being highly profitable industry, heavily influences Spanish economy. Due to tourism many branches of national economy have changed their priorities; the standards of living have also changed. Moreover, tourism changes the way labor forces and finances are assigned as well as it changes the country' solvent demand on goods and services. Advertising business becomes more and more important in Spain, mass media and cartography are also developing. At the national level, tourism is being controlled by the Ministry of

¹ The official site of UNWTO: <u>Available at: http://www2.unwto.org/ru</u>

Energy, Tourism and the Digital Agenda. There are Departments of Tourism in 52 Spanish provinces promoting tourism on the national level.

A vivid example of tourism sphere development is France. Over 82 million foreign tourists visit France every year and it is the most popular tourist destination worldwide. This is explained by France's rich nature, beautiful views, unique image of its villages and extraordinary rich cultural heritage (museums and historical sights). Besides, France holds third place after Spain and the USA in the level of economic income from tourism. More than 2 million people are involved in French tourist industry. It forms more than 7% of GDP of the country, and the income from tourism makes €44 billion. Tourist potential of France allows it to develop different types of tourism: cultural and educational, business, eventful and gastronomic tourism in particular.

Italy has reputation of a "festive" country. Venice carnival that takes place annually in February is the most popular one. They recreate the festive spirit of XVIII century for 10 days. More than 500 thousand tourists come to Venice to this carnival every year.

For the last several years tourism in Russia was mostly supported by the government what helped create tourist infrastructure, create new tourist routes and upgrade the old ones. The vivid example is Sochi city. Before the Olympics, tourism in Sochi was seasonal and was about recreational holidays. The Olympics were an infrastructure project meant to raise the standards of living through attracting tourists. Tourist infrastructure modernization allowed this city to develop summer types of holidays, open new skiing routes and to develop medicinal cluster what helped get away from seasonal factor and become a multifunctional resort.

Let's take a look at Vladimir Oblast tourism development experience. For the last 15 years the support of tourism in Vladimir Oblast has been provided purposefully and systematically through tourism development programs created by appropriate local authorities' subdivisions and supported by local tourism companies and authorities. All ongoing programs are working in conditions of continuity because they serve the main tourist sphere purpose – they increase the tourist services quantities and tourist flow through forming and complex developing competitive tourist product called "Small Golden Ring". Tourism in this region has been developed since 1998 using systematic method. Since 1998 they implemented a set of measures, two regional target programs and one departmental target program. The annual budget of these programs is 6.633 million. "Small Golden Ring" is the state "Development of culture and tourism 2014-2020 program" subroutine. The realization of this program by the year 2020 could create proper conditions to equally provide Russian population with all cultural and tourist services and to create the positive image of this region. The realization of this program is connected with several risks that could create obstacles on the way to achieve planned results. The partially manageable risk is the lack of professionals in cultural and tourist spheres that are meant to implement on regional and local levels results-oriented systematical methods and management mechanisms. The main unmanageable risk is rising destabilization, economy growth deceleration and, due to that, sufficient cuts in Programs' financing.

Vladimir Oblast' tourist industry development dynamic remains positive (tourist flow is increasing as well as overall services amount) due to large amount of image-building events supported by the Russian Ministry of culture and Russian tourism.

The most important events are Russian Culture and Tourism "Golden Ring" festival, the conference of the Russian small cities, plenary session of the Public Chamber of the Central Federal District, Saint-Petersburg days in Vladimir. New hotels were opened in Alexandrov, Vladimir, Suzdal, Murom, Petushinskiy and Kyrzhachskiy regions. The amount of region' hotel rooms has been increased by 696 and now has 11 538 places.

The most remarkable events are Christmas festivities, goose fights, the Cucumber celebration in Suzdal, the Samovar celebration in Gorohovetz, tourist festival "Bogatyr play". However, this region needs to create new tourist products in case of attracting more tourists. The work is in progress: they created many new museums in the region including the museum of chocolate in Pokrov and the museum of Rooster in Petushki. Another perspective tourist route of Vladimir Oblast is eco-tourism including creation of fully-operational agro complexes with golf fields. Tourist flow to Vladimir Oblast is stable. Although its prices are a lot higher compared to those in other cities of the region, Suzdal remains the most popular one.

The cumulative effect of the Programs' implementing can be seen as a combination of image-creating, economic, budget and social effects. Image-creating effect implies creating the image of Vladimir Oblast as a suitable for tourism region. According to the financial realization of regional tourism in Vladimir Oblast analysis, we can say that the main source of realization of the measures of creating infrastructure objects and tourist flow increase is state budget funds. We can also note that the amount of money donated from state and regional budgets has a tendency to increase. This shows that the development of tourism in Vladimir Oblast has high priority due to most tourist objects being cultural heritage of Russian people and Russian Federation in whole.

Another example of tourism development in Russian Federation is the creating of eventful tourism in Cheboksary city. There are annual Russian International Fireworks festival, Cheboksary international film festival and the "Navruz" celebration and others held in Cheboksary nowadays.

Russia possesses a great potential of developing internal and inbound tourism. One of the most catching Russian tourist resources is unique historical and cultural and natural and recreational potential. Tourist attractiveness of Russian Federation makes it possible to develop almost every type of tourism including ecotourism, active, extreme, cultural and educational, business, medicinal, recreational, rural, eventful, gastronomic and other types of tourism. However, according to the social studies made by Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) and Public Opinion Fund (FOM), the attraction level of Russian municipal units is very low among Russian and foreign tourists (Frolova, E.V. *et al.* 2016). These studies show that more than 60% of Russians would like to go abroad and don't even know about Russia's tourist potential. Most Russians only know about Silver and Gold Ring cities and the Black Seas' shores in Caucasus.

Low level of attraction of Russian municipal units to tourists is confirmed by sociological surveys. According to Public Opinion Fund research held in June 2014 (1500 respondents surveyed) with "If you had a fully-paid fortnight holidays to any place, where would you go?" question asked, 37% of Russians would go abroad, 13% would stay at home and another 13% found it difficult to answer².

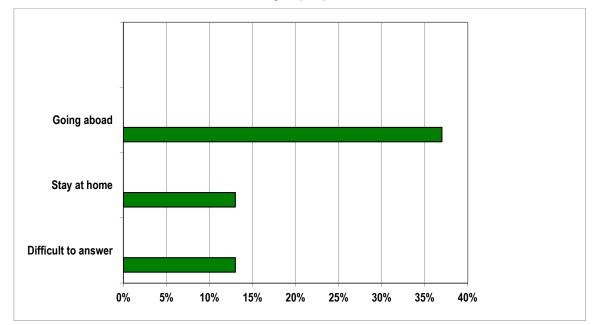


Figure 1. Allocations of the answers on the question: «If you had a fully-paid fortnight holidays to any place, where would you go?" (in %)

The resource base of internal tourism is used only by 10-15%. In countries' tourism and travelling competitiveness rating Russia only holds 45 place out of 141 (Frolova E.V. *et al.* 2017).

On the other hand, Russia possesses significant tourism potential. There are several factors that make Russian Federation competitive in tourism sphere: rich cultural and historical heritage, air transportation infrastructure and telecommunication infrastructure. Tourist attractiveness of Russian Federation makes it possible to develop almost every type of tourism including eco-tourism, active, extreme, cultural and educational, business, medicinal, recreational, rural, eventful, gastronomic and other types of tourism.

The tourism offers that Russia provides are becoming more competitive when talking about prices thanks to a significant depreciation of the ruble. On the other hand, underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and adverse business climate still remain one of the biggest obstacles on the way of increasing tourist flow. Analyzing the tendencies of tourism development helps us to reveal several problems preventing Russian territories from developing its tourist attractiveness. The biggest problem is lack of financial resources.

Tourism share in overall Russian GDP is 1.5% although the potential of its development in our country is very high. This industry is currently facing several serious problems holding it back from advancing. These are low

² Public Opinion Fund, Available at: <u>www.fom.ru</u>

quality of transportation, accommodation and related infrastructure. Internal air transportation especially with remote regions is also in need of improvement (by funding regional transportation *e.g.*). This could make self-dependent travelling in Russia more competitive to going abroad.

Prohibitions on travelling to Egypt and temporarily to Turkey imposed in November 2015 as well as restrictions imposed on several departments' employees on going abroad reduced the volume of external tourism. The natural crisis outcome was increasing of internal tourism. On the other hand, it is harder to create any statistics on internal tourism because many Russians don't use tourist companies' services while travelling in Russia and they usually use their private cars for transportation. According to Rostourism data, there were 50 million internal tourist trips made by the end of 2015. That is 20% more than in 2014. In 2015 there was an 11.5% increase of people using hotels and other types of travelling accommodations in Russia. Although it's clear that not everyone was a tourist it still indirectly shows that the internal tourist flow is increasing. This is also confirmed by regional growth pattern: 2/3 of accommodated people were situated in 3 regions: Moscow Oblast (+43.8%), Krasnodar Kray (+25.8%) and Crimean Republic (3.3 times growth)

According to VTsIOM surveys, Russian preferences of summer holidays have changed during last years. The share of surveyed in 2013 having holidays in their summer cottages was 6% and 4% in 2016. Wherein the absolute number of people went to Crimea on holidays from January to October was 5.1 million tourists, most of them are Russians. That is 11% more than in 2015 (4.6 million people). For comparison: 3 million people visited Crimea in 2014, and there were 6 million tourists in Crimea before it became a part of Russian Federation. These numbers is 2017 goal.

In turn, Russian internal tourism faces several main problems:

- Iow quality of domestic services.
- developing of tourist clusters is not that active.
- weak tourist navigation.
- most routes are situated around Moscow.

Cluster approach could solve most of these problems because positive tendencies of using cluster approach in tourism sphere are uniting municipal units financial resources and creating move favorable conditions of government-private partnership and cooperation between different municipal units. I.S. Miloslavskiy understands tourist cluster as a group of geographically localized and interconnected organizations, tourist services providers, infrastructure, educational centers and other organizations which complement each other and aim at satisfying the needs of tourists. (Miloslavskiy I.S. 2012). Tourist clusters provide effectiveness, productivity and competitiveness growth of municipal units as well as their stable social and economic development.

4. Discussion

The Development of tourist cluster allows us to gain social-economic effect that is manifested in the following directions:

- raising the level of local population employment;
- infrastructure development;
- increase of tax revenue to the local budget;
- stimulation of creating and advancing new business structures;
- local economy branches productivity growth;
- improvement of innovation municipal unit potential;
- creating positive image of territories;
- creating proper conditions to effectively solve social problems.

There are 17 tourist clusters that are currently under development in our country in regions such as Dagestan, Udmurtia, Karelia, Komi, Mari El, also the Transbaikal and Krasnodar Krai. Initially, cluster approach is going to be implemented in Novgorod, Bryansk, Volgograd and Tula regions. Tourist cluster formation in these regions is going to raise the standards of living and help local industry advance.

The experience of many countries shows that tourist clusters help raise the effectiveness of economy. The experience of creating e-Kolot "The land of milk and honey" tourist cluster in Poland is very interesting. This cluster is operating in Klusborsk and Oleskoe counties of the Opole Voivodeship. This cluster unites agricultural facilities, local governments, Opole University and Scientific-technological Opole Park.

Polish cluster simultaneously realizes different types of tourism providing tourists with wide range of services suitable for any type of social groups:

 active tourism (horse tourism (riding lessons, riding and horse walks; cycling; active rest in ecological and rural tourist facilities);

- eventful (organization of cultural, business, family and entertaining events);
- gastronomical (showoff of local milk and beekeeping businessman products);
- educational (thematic lessons for children and teenagers, master classes in handcraft and beekeeping);
- business (international meetings).

One of the main directions of tourism is cultural and educational allowing tourists to learn local culture and traditions, to see cultural sights and unique monuments (Dmitruk O.V. 2013).

Mutually beneficial cooperation between local authorities, entrepreneurs and scientific community helped not only to create innovative solutions, make territories more attractive, raise tourist flow, develop related branches of national economy, economical growth of counties included in tourist cluster, but to create and actualize unique and competitive tourist product.

In its turn, significant touristic potential of municipal units in Russian federation allows to develop different types of tourism inside cluster simultaneously, helping provide differentiated tourist services of different spectrum. According to cluster approach, municipal units with cultural and historical heritage act like cultural centers, attracting the main tourist flow. The building and construction of tourist infrastructure objects, creating a complex package of tourist services actualized here must be exactly on these territories. To increase the duration of tourist stay on certain territory it is appropriate to involve nearby municipal units and especially rural settlements into tourist cluster. Russian Federation, possessing unique and unused potential is able to develop tourism in rural areas and even in those municipal units where tourist infrastructure is currently underdeveloped.

Developing tourism in rural settlements could solve many problems connected not only with local unemployment but with existing infrastructural problems, involving locals in tourism development, saving its original culture and traditions, rational usage of natural and recreational heritage, creating ecological tourist product, environment degradation. At the same time rural tourism will create demand on local products and services opening new ways to gain income. Rural and small town settlements natural and recreational potential that is currently available allows realizing such types of tourism as eco-tourism, recreational, ethnic, rural, sporting, adventurous, eventful and gastronomical within the framework of a single cluster. Tourist attractiveness of rural settlements is unique and allows tourists to relax in the countryside, learn more about local culture and way of life, traditions, folk customs and crafts, take part in agricultural process, harvest berries, mushrooms, nuts, go fishing, hunting, photohunting, visit local sauna, try local dishes and more. Providing wide range complex of tourist services allows tourists to choose interesting tourist routes which help not only visit cultural center and get in touch with historical and cultural sights but to take part in rural way of life.

Formation and developing tourist cluster helps create more favorable conditions to develop social partnership and cross-municipal cooperation which is of current interest considering current problems of municipal units. Now cluster approach looks like one of the possible ways of developing tourism in Russian municipal units.

Using a social technology of forming a tourist cluster could help most Russian municipal units get out of crisis. Consolidation of efforts of every member of tourist cluster could achieve synergistic effect out of their cooperation on behalf of forming and/or developing tourist attractiveness of municipal units. As a result of developing tourism in a framework of a single cluster, tourists get a possibility to choose from wide range of tourist services without spending sufficient amount of money. In its turn, municipal unit territory improves its infrastructure, creates new ways for locals to spend their free time, locals get working places and possibility to sell products they created. An association of several units, especially rural areas, in a cluster allows to increase the duration of tourist stay and to diversify products provided for tourists. Tourism based on a cluster forms its own uniqueness and could become one of the ways for local municipal unit economy to develop.

Conclusion

It should be noted that Russian federation has large resources to develop tourist sphere. Most Russian territories could become touristic and recreation areas. That is why Russian Federation must pay more attention to developing tourist industry, provide support to perfection of innovative processes in tourism and help creating new tourist products and services, and tourist business management technologies.

Although Russian territories have high tourist potential, the study of tendencies of tourism development in municipal units of Russian Federation helped us highlight most important problems:

- Iocal budgets deficit.
- Iack of governmental funding from regional and state budgets.
- problems with infrastructure.
- Iack of professionals.
- Iow level of tourist services differentiation.

- popularization of Russian territories tourist abilities is not properly funded.
- potential tourists are poorly informed about municipal units potential (Frolova E.V., Kabanova E.E. 2017)

These problems are most important factors holding Russian internal and inbound tourism. Solving these problems means, first of all, using cluster approach to develop tourism. Productivity of tourism industry objects could become more effective through innovative systems and technologies usage and tourist cluster forming. Creating tourist clusters in Russian Federation guarantees the improvement of municipal unit tourism attractiveness and raising the quality of tourist services.

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