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Ecotourism in Sustainable Regional Marketing

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Abstract

Attention is paid to ecotourism as a fundamental element of sustainable destination marketing. The concepts of territory branding and sustainable marketing are disclosed. The problem of development of ecological tourism in the regions is touched upon. Based on the analysis, it was revealed that the demand in the field of tourism in the regions is increasing due to the development of ecotourism. Models of sustainable marketing are given and a unique own model of ecotourism, considered through the prism of the Galanchozhsky district of the Chechen Republic, is defined. It is shown that the Galanchozh region is the most promising direction for the development of tourism in the region, both in terms of protecting the natural and cultural and historical heritage, and in terms of making a profit from this and developing the entire tourist destination. The applied significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the findings to establish the ideological, epistemological and methodological foundations for the development of ecological tourism and branding of territories.

Keywords: territory branding, sustainable marketing, sustainable marketing models, ecotourism, Galanchozh district.

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Экотуризм в устойчивом маркетинге регионов

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Аннотация

Уделяется внимание экотуризму как основополагающему элементу устойчивого маркетинга дестинаций. Раскрыты понятия брендинга территорий и устойчивого маркетинга. Затронута проблема развития экологического туризма регионов. На основании проведенного анализа, выявлено, что спрос в области туризма регионов повышается, благодаря развитию экотуризма. Приводятся модели устойчивого маркетинга и определена уникальная собственная модель экотуризма, рассмотренная через призму Галанчожского района Чеченской Республики. Показано, что Галанчожский район является наиболее перспективным направлением развития туризма региона как со стороны охраны природного и культурно-исторического наследия, так и со стороны получения от этого прибыли и развития всей туристской дестинации. Прикладная значимость исследования состоит в возможности

the natural and cultural and historical heritage, and in terms of making a profit from this and developing the entire tourist destination. The applied significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the findings to establish the ideological, epistemological and methodological foundations for the development of ecological tourism and branding of territories.

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Введение. Постоянно растущая конкуренция стран, регионов, городов и возрастающие запросы населения к качеству окружающей среды потребовали создания и поддержания положительного имиджа и репутации территорий, основной составляющей которых является их брендинг и создание положительного экологического состояния дестинаций. Придерживаясь данной политики, маркетологи пытаются придать важность дестинации через бренд. Он должен быть громким, сильным и придерживаться идеи экотуризма, вызывая тем самым, доверие туристов.

Развитие экотуризма сможет стать причиной решения многих задач и проблем, повысив конкурентоспособность дестинации. Отличительная черта экологического туризма заключается в том, что главным для туристов является общение с природой, познание ее объектов и явлений, активный отдых на природе. На второй план отходит бытовой комфорт и традиционные развлечения. Экотуризм — это путешествие в мир дикой природы, прогулка в те места, куда редко ступает нога человека, это взгляд на мир глазами первобытного существа.

Экологический туризм оформился в 70-80-х гг. XX в. как локальная идея: создание баланса между экономической выгодой, получаемой от рекреации на природе, и экологической безопасностью рекреационных территорий в рамках глобальной идеи — сохранение природы планеты как основы жизни на ней.

Материалы и методы. В исследовании методология носит комплексный характер, что обусловлено междисциплинарностью подходов к изучению проблемы. Исследование проблемы экологического туризма в устойчивом развитии территорий носит характер сложного и неоднозначного процесса использования целого комплекса философских и общенаучных методов: аналитического, феноменологического, принципов объективности, всеобщей связи, противоречия, методов сравнительного анализа и синтеза, научного обобщения. В исследовании применяется концептуально-логический анализ теоретической терминологии с целью определения термина «экологический туризм» для социокультурного контекста. Привлекаются методы историко-генетического анализа научной методологии для анализа её переориентации от формально-теоретической установки к социально-значимой. Исходной методологической идеей исследования являются диалектический и системный подходы.

Экологический туризм нуждается в новой методологии исследования с привлечением нового понятийного аппарата и методологического инструментария. В нашем исследовании рассматривается объект — экологический туризм в составе маркетинга территорий, а также сопутствующие явления в виде социальных последствий. Методология как логическая организация экологического туризма состоит в том, чтобы определить цель и предмет исследования, найти подходы и ориентиры к проблеме, выбрать методы исследования.

Экологический туризм представляется объектом социальной сферы в виде исследований. Это обусловлено неоднозначностью понятия «экологический туризм». Современность требует уточнения и развития этого понятия, соответствующего их новому пониманию.

Результаты исследования. Возникновение и развитие экологического туризма тесно связано с историей выделения природных территорий, особо привлекательных с эстетической и рекреационной точек зрения, с разработкой нормативов их использования и охраны.

Оценки современного состояния и уровня развития экологического туризма в различных публикациях существенно различаются. Большая часть различий связана с определением экологического туризма. Так, если принимать за основу представление о том, что экологический туризм объединяет все формы отдыха, базирующиеся на использовании природных ресурсов, то оценка объемов будет значительно выше, чем в том случае, когда к экологическому туризму относится рекреационно-познавательная деятельность на природе, сопровождаемая технологиями экологического менеджмента.

The concept of “ecological tourism” is often not fully disclosed and, thus, its whole essence is underestimated. After all, ecotourism is not just a useless trip to a natural area, but a trip that benefits both vacationers and destinations.

In the book of E. L. Pimenova “Ecological tourism” identified two models (schools) of ecological tourism.

One was formed on the territory of the American continent, and its idea is also supported in many English-speaking countries — Canada, USA, Great Britain, Australia, etc. people, and the main feature of ecotourism, based on the ideas of the American model, is environmental awareness and education.

Also, an integral part of ecotourism is a careful attitude to the culture of traditions. The European model of ecotourism, to a greater extent, reflects the views of Swiss, German and Austrian specialists, and emphasizes the natural foundations of ecotourism. The European model of ecotourism focuses on social responsibility, and with the help of tourism, the economic problems of the region are solved [6, p. 15].

In the study of ecological tourism, the first model is often called the “North American” (“Australian”) model, and implies ecological tourism within the boundaries of protected areas (specially protected natural areas), and the second one is called the “European” (“German”), where ecotourism goes beyond limits of protected areas.

Many researchers studying ecotourism note four main types of eco-tourism and eco-tours: scientific tourism; tours studying the history of nature; travel to nature reserves, protected areas; adventure tourism.

For example, during scientific ecotours there is observation and acquaintance with rare birds and animals, research and collection of historical data in protected areas, and tours that study the history of nature, as a rule, involve a combination of popular science, thematic and educational excursions, for this the organizers are equipped with special ecological trails, this also includes trips of school groups, during which the guide, the teacher conducts conversations regarding the nature of the destination and various excursions. This type is popular in the tourism of German cities; therefore, it has such a name as the “German model for the development of ecological tourism” [3, p. 31].

In the work “Ecological tourism” T. K. Sergeeva considers the directions of tourism that cause more damage to nature if they do not apply a competent ecological approach to a specific territory or route. So, T. K. Sergeeva, the following areas of ecotourism are identified: trekking; travel with naturalists; travel by bike; tour along the route on inland waters; travel by sea; sport-type hunting in protected areas; riding; speleotourism [7, p. 57].

A broader concept is sustainable tourism. According to the definition of the WTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), “sustainable tourism meets the needs of both tourists visiting tourist centers and the population of the latter; in addition, it involves securing and optimizing the prospects for future development. Resources are used in such a way as to satisfy economic, social and aesthetic needs, while preserving cultural uniqueness, critical ecological features, biodiversity and vital systems” [4].

As defined by the Environment and Development Forum: “Sustainable tourism must meet the criteria of social, cultural, environmental and economic compatibility. Sustainable tourism is tourism that in the long term, i.e. in the projection on current and future generations, can adapt to specific ethnic and cultural characteristics, meets the requirements of social justice, is environmentally compatible, and is also expedient and beneficial in economic terms” [4].

According to the definition of Travis and Ceballos-Lascurain, this is tourism, which implies an indefinitely long maintenance of the resources on which it is based. De Kadt uses the concept of sustainable tourism in a broader context: “all types of tourism based on both natural and artificial resources that contribute to sustainable development” [4].

Sustainable tourism is a general concept suitable for all types of tourism.

Ecological tourism in Russian reserves should develop in line with the principles and concepts accepted throughout the world.

Ecotourism refers to any type of tourism and recreation in nature that does not damage natural complexes, contributes to the protection of nature and the improvement of the well-being of the local population. In other words, it is sustainable and nature-oriented tourism and recreation. Sustainability in this case refers to a positive overall balance of the environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts of tourism, as well as the positive impact of visitors on each other. Ecotourism lies "at the intersection" of nature-oriented and sustainable tourism. The relationship between the listed types of tourism is illustrated by the following scheme proposed by Strasdas [3]:

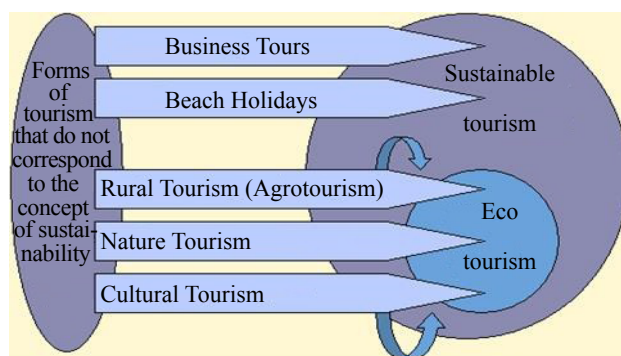


Fig. 1. Relationship between sustainable tourism and ecotourism [3]

Ecotourism is, first of all, travel and visits to relatively well-preserved natural areas, represented throughout the world, as a rule, by national and natural parks, reserves and other types of protected natural areas (PAs). Ecotourism implies the presence of certain, rather strict rules of conduct, the observance of which is a fundamental condition for the successful development of the entire industry as a whole. Ecotourism has a relatively weak impact on the natural environment. That is why it has become practically the only use of natural resources within most of the world's protected areas. Ecotourism assumes that local residents not only work as service personnel, but also continue to live in a protected area, lead a former way of life, engage in traditional types of economy that provide a sparing nature management regime. This brings a certain income to the population and contributes to its socio-economic development.

These and other features of ecological tourism should not be considered in isolation from other components of tourism: recreational, cultural, educational, aesthetic, artistic, entertainment, etc.

Therefore, usually, ecological tours mean hiking, water or horse trails along ecological paths, accompanied by guides, who, as a rule, are employees of nature reserves.

Ecotourism in Russia is just beginning to develop. And this formation should take place on the basis of the basic principles of ecological tourism. That is, minimizing negative impacts on the nature and culture of the visited territories.

The first condition of ecological tourism, which distinguishes it from previously used forms of organizing and conducting outdoor recreation, is a meaningful, environmentally and economically verified policy in the use of recreational areas, the development and observance of an inexhaustible nature management regime, which ensures not only the conservation of the biological diversity of recreational natural areas but also contributes to the sustainability of the tourism activity itself. In addition, minimization of the negative impact on the environment can be carried out through the use of renewable energy sources, the use of local building materials, as well as the recycling of garbage in recreational areas.

It is worth noting that the traditional culture and customs of the peoples living in recreational areas also require careful attitude on the part of tourists, which means that the inclusion of the ethnographic component in an ecological tour should also be organized very clearly and competently, because the traditional culture of local communities facing with mass tourism, turns out to be even less resistant to them than nature. Assistance in the preservation of the ethnographic diversity of the planet is one of the most important installations of ecological tourism [2, pp. 55–60].

An important principle is the participation of the local population in the development of tourism and the receipt of financial and other benefits from tourism activities.

As noted above, the need for the participation of the local population in the tourism process was noted among the basic principles of ecological tourism by the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism [5]. Thus, ecotourism provides an increase in the level of socio-economic sustainability of the regions involved in the tourism process by creating new jobs for the local population. The participation of local residents is envisaged in such areas of tourism as the hospitality industry, the production and sale of souvenirs, the production and supply of food products, the maintenance of tourist routes, participation in animation events, the performance of security functions, etc. Employment for local residents allows not only to increase their level of employment, but also contributes to their consolidation in their original territory, as well as their return from cities.

Another indicator is the increase in the ecological culture of participants in ecotourism activities. Ecotourism should be aimed at environmental education and enlightenment of ecotourism participants, which in this case means both tourists and the local population. The population of recreational territories, involved in the tourism process and receiving economic benefits from it, realizes that nature, which attracts tourists, must be preserved, since it is precisely this that is the main value of the territory — the source of their own income. In addition, ecological tourism is aimed at forming relations of equal partnership with nature, it implies the participation of tourists in local cultural and nature management activities, increasing their level of environmental literacy.

It is necessary to actively promote the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of recreational areas. Tourism revenues, provided that a significant part of them remains in the region, create economic resources for the conservation of natural ecosystems and the development of the region. However, active promotion of the conservation of nature and culture of recreational areas implies, in addition to financing recreational areas, the personal participation of ecotourists in various environmental activities.

Ecotourism cannot develop without the activity of civil society. Prospects for the development of ecological tourism are largely determined by the activity of state, regional and local authorities to preserve the environment. At the level of the Government of the Chechen Republic, these problems are dealt with by the Tourism Committee. The Government of the Chechen Republic determined the need for the development of ecological tourism by Decree No. 20 “On the development of physical culture, sports and tourism in the Chechen Republic” dated May 30, 2001.

Also promising is the formation of local programs on the basis of specially protected natural areas of the Chechen Republic. Separate, most promising activities of these programs could receive their support within the framework of the Republican long-term target program for the development of ecological tourism in the Chechen Republic.

We have singled out such a beautiful corner of the Chechen Republic as the Galanchozhsky district, which fully appears before us with nature that has retained its original appearance, as well as a scope of ideas in the field of tourism.

This region is rich in cultural and historical values. On this territory there are grottoes; natural caves. Here is the most beautiful alpine lake in the world — Galanchozh (Chechen. Galain-Iam), which has its own popular belief (Fig. 2).

The territory is famous for its alpine meadows of extraordinary beauty, dense forests, mountain rivers, waterfalls with trout. There are also natural rocky formations with their own folk history-belief — the Stone Army, the mountain peaks of which are the highest in the Republic. Mountain roads are very steep descents / ascents. On the way you can meet a mountain arch from a cliff. The attraction is “Selfie-toolg”. Translated from Chechen: a selfie-stone, from where a beautiful view of the entire gorge opens.



Fig. 2. Lake Galanchozh (Chechen. Galain-Iam)

The Galanchozh region has a rich animal world. Bears, wolves, wild boars, deer, eagles, mountain goats, wild horses, etc. are found here.

Centuries-old buildings have been preserved on the territory of the region. Currently, they are the subject of study by archaeologists, historians, speleologists. The results of the work are reflected in scientific works and transferred to local museums.

In the Galanchozh region, races were held in the style of Rally on mountain off-road (Fig. 3).

The sights of this destination evoke many ideas: the creation of eco-trails, glamping, mountaineering, horseback riding, etc. Not for nothing, from the mouths of those who have been there, one often hears: “We have our own Alps. We have our own Switzerland!”



Fig. 3. Galanchozhsky district, mountain serpentine

This territory can be presented as a separate tourist cluster, a separate zone for ecotourism, and the brand can be assigned: “Galanchozh – the land of wild beauty”, which will certainly be justified.

After all, love for the highlanders is a secret, hidden feeling, and only love for the mountains can be openly broadcast by the people, since it is love for freedom, love for home. Only having been in such an atmosphere, it is possible to catch the peace and strong spirit of the ancestors of the Chechen people.

Elina Batayeva, Chairman of the Tourism Committee at the CCI of the Chechen Republic, says in response to a comment under her article “Ecotourism in Chechnya. Photo report of the expedition “Chechnya-Center of Tourism” Part 1» on the site livejournal.com: “Chechnya is a white spot, both for speleologists and climbers, and work in the field of tourism in the region of the Chechen Republic is no end!” [1].

Under the condition of competent development, ecological tourism can play a role in resolving the current socio-ecological crisis. It promotes the protection of nature and traditional cultures. The growing demand in this tourism sector leads to the creation of new specially protected natural areas, primarily national and natural parks. Ecotourism brings significant income to the state budget.

The prospects for the development of ecological tourism in the Chechen Republic are great, since there are 8 biological reserves and 43 natural monuments on the territory of the republic. It is planned to create the National Park “Kavkaz” of regional significance.

Discussion and Conclusions. Therefore, we have formulated the main directions and ways of development of ecological tourism in the Chechen Republic — these are:

- promotion of the ecological potential of the Chechen Republic at the All-Russian and international levels;
- formation of regional support for ecotourism;
- creation of a new competitive ecotourism product (development of new routes);
- providing competent specialists in the field of ecological tourism;
- formation of a regional policy to support ecotourism, as an activity that positively affects the health of the population.

For the implementation of these areas of activity, it seems promising to form local programs on the basis of specially protected natural areas of the Chechen Republic. Separate, most promising activities of these programs could receive their support within the framework of the Republican long-term target program for the development of tourism in the Chechen Republic.

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Conflict of interest statement

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