

MECHANISMS OF FORMATION OF AUTO TOURISM CLUSTERS IN GEORGIA

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Abstract

The article presents the monitoring carried out by the Georgian Federation of Auto-Moto Tourism (hereinafter – GFAMT). The introduction of this direction of tourist traffic on the territory of Georgia will create many advantages in this new direction of business. In particular, the revenues of the state and local budgets will increase, unemployment will decrease and the quality of life of the population will improve. Auto tourism clusters will create additional motivation for the development of tourist services and new roadside infrastructure: new motels, campgrounds, parking lots for cars and trailers, cafes and restaurants, car services, etc. will open. This will increase the professionalism of service personnel and establish international service standards.

In the research are discussed the economic, environmental and cultural aspects of the general concept, and the potential for developing the direction of auto tourism, the need to clarify and adopt regulatory documents in accordance with international standards; Equipping the roadway, new, operated routes with technological and technical means; The need to organize rehabilitation and health enterprises; Creating specialized-safe, environmentally acceptable material and legal conditions for nutrition and accommodation. Providing tourism enterprises with educated personnel.

As a result of the study, the necessary conditions for the effective development of the priority areas of the auto tourism sector and the Georgian economy were identified: a) popularization of the country's regions abroad; b) stimulating business development; c) attraction of investments; d) creating diversity in the field of tourist service facilities; e) Increase in income from tourism, etc.

The analysis showed that for the creation and formation of effective tourist auto clusters and for the development of tourism, it is necessary to adopt the experience of the leading tourist countries of the world.

INTRODUCTION

The Georgian Federation of Auto and Moto Tourism has monitored that part of the implementation of program activities, which are financed in the field of auto tourism and the tourism industry.

Rich natural, landscape, cultural and historical potential, as well as many events create real preconditions for the development of auto tourism in Georgia.

At present, the tourism sector is receiving great attention from both the authorities, practitioners and the scientific community. Tourism is viewed not just as a recreational component of public life, but also as a source of income for state and local budgets, as a means of reducing unemployment and, in general, improving the quality of life of the population.

The novelty of this study lies in the conceptual substantiation of the directions for improving the organizational and economic mechanism of the formation of a tourist auto cluster at the state and regional levels.

ESSENCE OF THE AUTO TOURISM MODEL

The traditional concept of automobile tourism is associated with the travel of people, and the main means of transportation is a personal or rented car.

Organized car tours are a fairly new direction in the tourism business of Georgia. Its further development will ensure the development of both international and regional tourism in the Caucasus.

This problem can be solved by classifying the types of car tourism.

It is generally accepted that any journey involving the use of motor vehicles can be classified as automobile tourism. Consequently, as a feature of the classification, one can single out the “Vehicle used”; “Form of organization”; “Geography of travel”; “Type of tourism”; “Purpose of Travel”; “Number of participants”, etc.

The classification of automobile tourism proposed by us will make it possible to develop an appropriate toolkit for managing the mechanism for the formation and development of tourist auto clusters.

The purpose of the trip is determined by the tourist resources and infrastructure, type, geography, form and way of travel. Infrastructure requirements, transport safety and travel arrangements, risk factors, safety and legal support also affect it. Almost all the same factors determine both the number of participants in the trip and their composition.

DEFINITION OF AUTO-TOURIST CLUSTER

Auto tourism clusters unite enterprises and organizations that provide tourism and related services, complementing each other and providing civilized conditions for auto tourists. Auto tourism clusters include roadside hotels (motels), campgrounds, parking lots for cars and passenger vehicles, cafes and restaurants, car services, roadside shops, petrol stations, etc.

When constructing clusters, it is advisable to take into account informal-institutional factors, i.e. local traditions, interethnic and social culture are conditions that directly affect the tourism industry locally. As a rule, social factors also include the sphere of education, which is part of the sphere of training for all cluster participants, therefore, it determines not only the human potential for the tourism cluster, but also the basis for creating new tourism resources in the region.

THE PROBLEM OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTOCLUSTERS

The key problems of the formation and development of the infrastructure of automobile tourism can be formulated as follows:

- ~ problems of creating a new road service system, or adapting of the existing system to modern requirements;
- ~ lack of a rental system for vehicles, including Car shops;
- ~ lack of a full-fledged service system for motorhomes (there are no specialized service stations, or auto repair shops);
- ~ There is practically no infrastructure for caravaners, which, according to foreign tour operators, significantly reduces their flow to Georgia;
- ~ insufficiently developed information accessibility of the road system and tourist navigation, etc.

An auto tourist cluster can be defined as an organized set of objects of tourist attraction (tourist attractions) and objects of specialized transport infrastructure necessary for tourists using vehicles; the combination of objects of tourist attraction and transport infrastructure is characterized by the properties of an adaptive system with stable horizontal and vertical connections, which ensures the creation of an effective multicomponent product of the tourist auto cluster.

The existing practice of the functioning of tourist clusters in general and tourist auto clusters shows that they can be used to develop tourism in the regions of our country.

Auto tourism as a component of general tourism

The formation of a tourism cluster is a complex process, its organization requires consideration of not only the state interest and opportunities to stimulate economic development, but also the interests of different types of economic activity opportunities for the development of the individual companies and organizations operating in a particular area, as well as market conditions that promote the competitiveness of the tourism cluster to be created.

AUTOTOURISM

Taking “vehicle type” as the classification criterion, the following conceptual models of auto tourism can be distinguished:

- caravanning model (vehicle type – caravan, trailer, or “house on wheels”);
- “active auto tourist” model (vehicle type – any car with which you can move along the transport network);
- “travel by bus” model (vehicle type – bus);
- a sports model, including extreme auto tourism, jeeping, etc. (vehicle type – specially equipped vehicles of the “all-terrain” class).

Each of the above models can serve as the basis for designing an organizational and economic mechanism for the formation of tourist auto clusters from the point of view of the target segment of auto tourists.

Auto tourism

Each of the above mentioned models can serve as the basis for designing an organizational and economic mechanism for the formation of tourist auto clusters. Moreover, these models have both common and distinctive features. For example, the caravanning model requires specific infrastructural conditions (in particular, the presence of equipped campsites), while the “active auto tourist” model has no obvious specific features; for its effective functioning, it requires a developed network of roadside cafes, motels and other elements of tourist infrastructure. The conceptual model of car tourism requires the fulfillment of a number of conditions, since a traveler cannot independently change his route, and is strictly tied to certain stages and conditions of travel.

In a typical conceptual model of auto tourism, it is necessary to take into account the interaction of such elements of automobile tourism as the consumer (tourist), a vehicle, tourist resources, infrastructure (primarily road and tourist), an existing tourist product, tourism organizers, state institutions and, as a result, the impressions of the road trip.

Autocluster formation

There also exist limiting factors (“points of application of forces” of the system of state regulation of the tourism sector), which include:

- many of the objects of cultural heritage are in a dilapidated or completely lost state;
- underdeveloped or completely absent engineering infrastructure on a number of highways (energy supply, water supply, parking and recreation areas for auto tourists, treatment facilities, the possibility of removing solid household waste);
- insufficient level of development of the tourist infrastructure (lack of accommodation for auto tourists, catering, trade and leisure facilities, low quality of road service facilities on the highways of the region);
- insufficient level of quality of services and services due to lack of professional staff;
- lack of a classification system for camping sites;

- the presence of gaps in the regulatory framework for caravanning, including the maximum allowed mass of motorhomes, cars, and caravans;
- lack of service stations specializing in servicing motorhomes and caravans, which is typical for all regions of Georgia;
- insufficiently effective system for promoting cultural and historical heritage sites and objects of the region that are attractive to auto tourists.

In addition to general limiting factors, a relatively low level of development of public intercity transport lines is a threat to the development of auto tourism.

AUTO TOURISM CLUSTERS – Problems and Disadvantages

With the increasing demand for auto tourism services and the growing interest of the state in its development, it is necessary to look for ways and approaches that will allow it to be effectively managed.

The cluster approach acts as a tool that will create conditions for the development of common standards, incl. service standards, in the design and implementation of infrastructure projects in the framework of automobile tourism. The interest of cluster members in effective functioning will significantly improve the quality of services provided, and since clusters are very diverse in form and type, this will cover different territories and create uniform conditions for the provision of services.

Roads and informative sources

The presence and condition of roads of regional and intermunicipal importance, providing interregional and intraregional travel, is of particular importance for the development of auto tourism and, in addition, are an essential element of the transport infrastructure.

At the moment a negative factor that reduces the tourist attractiveness of many regions of Georgia for autotourists is also the lack of information materials on the presence of tourist facilities on the roads. In the future, this direction should be made one of the mandatory directions of the functioning of tourist auto clusters.

Ecology

It should be noted that at present, most (out of a small total mass) of auto tours today are self-organized trips of small groups of consumers in their own cars, which either use tents or private sector services offered by residents of local settlements for accommodation. Uncontrolled tourist activity on the territory of the regions is one of the biggest problems affecting the landscape, ecology and environment, biological resources, which leads to the loss of the attractiveness of tourist resources and their possible loss.

In order to develop the auto tourism in the country, it is necessary to prepare and improve:

1. a general concept for the development of auto tourism with a preliminary regional and sectoral study of the potential and problems of its development;
2. regulatory and legislative support of auto tourism:
 - a. the adoption of regulatory and legislative documents, incl. standards that limit the negative impact on nature from human activities (“green standards”), which are an element of ensuring sustainable development of the territory, since they are aimed at creating a favorable human environment and protecting the natural environment;
 - b. construction projects that meet the standards of “green standards” provide benefits for investors, property owners, as well as designers and management companies;
 - c. the adoption of a global code of ethics for auto tourism provides trust between all participants in domestic, inbound and outbound auto tourism;

Development of regional auto tourism

Staffing should contribute to the comprehensive formation of a high quality auto tourism industry, taking into account the economic, environmental and cultural aspects of the development of the destination;

Auto-moto service companies should ensure stable operation, high quality of service and minimize the costs of auto-moto tourists at car service centers,

Organization of tourist recreation – use in tourist auto clusters of various means used by auto tourists (e.g. short routes, bike paths, horse paths, etc.)

Insufficient number of places for overnight stays and for recreation: In our country, there are no regulatory documents regarding the service of auto tourists in specialized places of their rest;

Local national dishes should also be included in the menu of food industry enterprises that use environmentally friendly products;

Diverse leisure enterprises should ensure their minimal technogenic and cultural impact on the given territory and its population.

All these factors and conditions should comply with the accepted principles of ensuring sustainable development of auto tourism in Georgia. High-quality and low-budget sustainable development of the country is a prerequisite for ensuring the resources and means of preservation, minimization, self-regulation, self-organization, as well as conditions for adaptation and restoration, already available to all its participants.

Development of regional auto tourism

The main data on the development of auto tourism and tourist auto clusters in the world are presented by caravanning. The analysis of data on the auto tourism market was first carried out in 2007-2008. By the German Economic Institute for Tourism (DWIF) at the University of Munich and the European Caravanning Federation (ECF) <https://www.e-c-f.com/> . Research has identified two of the largest caravan markets – North America and Europe. However, the trends observed in these markets were not the same.

By 2012, after the 2008 crisis, North America overcame the negative dynamics and sold 274,500 vehicles for tourism this year, while the European auto tourism market was not so stable and was characterized by ups and downs. The situation, in terms of sales, in Australia, Japan and South Africa, which are in third, fourth and fifth places, has a large positive trend. DWIF counted a total of 18.75 million overnight stays in 1,300 campsites in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania, bringing an additional 600 million euros to the indicated countries of Eastern Europe. A study commissioned by ECF estimated revenues from camping tourism at € 15.33 billion for Western Europe.

Foreign development analysis

In European countries, there are relevant organizations and associations that not only keep statistics of auto tourism, but also determine the main trends in its development, determine the most popular directions, new proposals, and influence the quality level of auto tourism through the development of various kinds of norms and rules for the functioning of auto clusters. There are such organizations as the German Caravan Manufacturers Union (CIVID), the European Federation of Camping and Caravan Associations (EFCO & HPA) <https://www.efcohp.eu/> , the German Tourism Association (DTV), the European Caravan Manufacturers Federation (ECMF) and others. An analysis of the sites of these organizations allows us to judge the very high level of development of auto tourism in Europe. ADAC processes 2.5 million travel requests annually, of which about 11% are travel requests.

Analysis of the development prospects

A special place in the formation of the auto cluster is occupied by the possibility of circular movement across the territory of the region, which saves the time of the auto tourist and eliminates the need to return to the places of forks, allowing, among other things, to regulate the loading on the main transport arteries of Georgia, dividing transit freight and tourist flows.

It should also be mentioned that for the effective development of the road network, legal support is needed for the modernization and reconstruction of regional and municipal roads in order to ensure transport communication at the interregional, state and international level. In addition, the modernization should involve the creation of a network of cycling and walking paths for movement within the display facilities of the auto cluster.

Based on the study of the planning process for the development of auto tourism in Georgia, several zones can be distinguished for the location of the tourist auto cluster of the region.

The placement of auto-cluster complexes in the regions can be carried out in various recreational zones: in the highlands (Shatili, Gudauri, Juta, Ushguli, etc.); Near the water and close to various natural resources – near the Black Sea, next to natural or artificial lakes, mountain rivers, waterfalls (Paliastomi, Paravani, Bazaleti lakes, Tbilisi Sea), famous and assimilated cultural heritage sites (more than 12,000 monasteries), open-air museums (Vani, Uplistsikhe, Vardzia), natural monuments (Gveleti, Dashbashi, Martvili canyons and waterfalls). According to preliminary estimates, the creation of an auto cluster in the region could attract an additional 1,000,000 tourists a year.

The formation of auto clusters on the territory of Georgia determines the need to modernize the road network within its borders. As a result, within the boundaries of the car cluster, it is necessary to create parking lots for cars near hotels and tourist sites, as well as to provide “pockets” and exits from the roadway for short-term stops of cars.

Another factor that determines the development of auto tourism in Georgia is the vehicle rental system for auto tourism.

In order to effectively integrate tourism in general and auto tourism, in particular, into the implementation of Georgia’s priority development directions, it is necessary to solve the following key tasks:

- assistance in the promotion of the regions of Georgia that support the development of auto tourism and the conditions for its functioning abroad;
- stimulating the development of small businesses in all spheres of tourism, including the service sector;
- attracting international operators to the region (hoteliers, tour operators, restaurateurs, entertainment, etc.);
- attraction of investments for the implementation of a pool of “tourist infrastructure” projects;
- ensuring transport accessibility of the European level in order to maximally facilitate the access of auto tourists to the region.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that in the formation of the provision of the development of auto tourism in Georgia and for the creation of effective tourist auto clusters, one can focus on both the European experience and the experience of the USA, Canada and Australia. The experience accumulated in these countries can be adapted to the Georgian conditions.

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