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PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INNOVATIVE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN GEORGIA

Abstract

Tourism development began with an accelerated rate in Georgia, which is one of the priority spheres and a source of growing income. In recent years, new types of tourism development began in Georgia, because the country had appropriate geographical-natural-historical-cultural traditions. There are more than 1,200 monuments of material culture here, which gives us the opportunity for tourism to reach a high level of development and bring economic profit, other innovative types of tourism are also developing. Namely: gastronomic or culinary tourism. It is a completely new species in Georgia and people who will go anywhere to expand their gastronomic interests are interested in it. Agrotourism is also important - one of the important sectors of tourism industry. It creates a tourism product in rural areas, using by natural, cultural-historical and other resources. There is also ecotourism, which is a relationship with wild nature. This type of tourism encourages preservation of nature, it is a mitigation mechanism to increase the economic income of the population of protected areas and regions. About 15-20% of international tourism belongs to ecotourism. Protection of ecotourism and natural diversity should be one of the most important activities of the country. Ecotourism has four main keystones: sustainability of development, economic benefits for the local population, integration of local culture, educational component.

Key words: innovative tourism, mountain tourism, equestrian tourism, gastronomic tourism.

Gaming business is also very popular. In the cities of Georgia, including Batumi Georgia offers a wide selection of casinos to tourists who love gambling. Business tourism is also important in Georgia, which means various kinds of exhibitions and conferences. Its geopolitical location, the transit function between Europe and Asia, is a unique opportunity for the development of MICE industry in the country - international symposiums, congresses, conferences and business meetings. Rich historical and cultural heritage, unique climate, beautiful nature allow business trips to combine business and leisure.

Therefore, work should be intensified in accordance with the requirements of international tourism, so that individual regions of our country come into compliance, because it has the best resources for the development of tourism with its geopolitical location and existing natural, historical and cultural resources. The space of “Eurasian Bridge” and “Great Silk Road” shows a brilliant prospect for the development of tourism. The statistics of data evaluation of the innovative potential of tourism in Georgia are based on old databases. In addition, there are no real quantitative or qualitative indicators of tourism potential in the country, which is why we are not able to analyze and evaluate different types of innovations. However, according to foreign experts, Georgia has a great opportunity to increase its potential, not only attract it. For this is necessary: 1. Implementation of scientific research and development works in the country, creation of a new database of relevant data and their optimal use, in order to be able to increase the innovative potential, so that private and public sector can fully utilize the innovative tourism potential via mutual cooperation.

Promoting the development of the innovative potential of tourism in Georgia

In Georgia, since the 1990s a sharp increase of competition has begun in the market of tourist services. Foreign companies provided comprehensive information to their clients about Georgia’s tourism potential.

The development of tourism in Georgia started with an accelerated rate. However, its sustainable development was hindered by low professionalism, high taxation, economic instability, etc. However, in terms of competitiveness, Georgia is among the popular regions among tourists.

Tourism is one of the priority sphere and a source of growing income in Georgia. The geographical location of Georgia, for gathering Europe and Asia has been connecting the civilizations of the West and the East since time immemorial. The location on the Black Sea gives it a great advantage compared to other states of the South Caucasus (<http://ninochanchaleishvili.blogspot.com>). In recent years, the development of new types of tourism began in Georgia, because the country had appropriate geographical-natural-historical-cultural traditions. Since 1971, UNESCO has developed the “Man and the Biosphere” program, according to which historical monuments of world significance are assigned the status of “treasures of world significance”. Such Georgian architectural monuments as: C. Mtskheta, Bagrati and Gelati temples. This encouraged development of cultural tourism in Georgia. There are more than 1,200 monuments of material culture here, which gives us the opportunity for tourism to reach a high level of development and bring economic profit. The state is entitled to take care of these monuments in order not to lose their original appearance. These monuments form the basis of cultural tourism and the subject of state care. Monuments recognized by UNESCO hold the most important place among tourist attractions (Kvaratskhelia N., 2009:64). Other innovative types of tourism are also developing. Namely: gastronomic or culinary tourism. It is a completely new species in Georgia, and people who will go anywhere to expand their gastronomic interests are interested in it. These people are gourmets, history researchers, anthropologists and representatives of various fields. (<http://culinartmagazine.com/2016/05/03/>).

Not all tourists go to museums and exhibitions, but all tourists taste the national dishes of the country, because they are interested in the ethno-culture of this or that country. The demand for gastronomic tourism is gradually increasing. The field of interest is getting to know the local gastronomic culture, getting to know the technological processes of creating the authentic taste of local dishes and participating in the preparation of dishes. That’s why he/she pays a lot of money. The tourist realizes what is the difference and what is common between the representatives of that country or region.

In order to develop gastronomic tourism in Georgia, festivals of both wine and food, agricultural products, etc. are held. Participating in local festivals and the process of becoming a part of tradition or culture makes the tourist’s impressions even more impressive. Agro tourism is one of the important sectors of tourism industry. It creates a tourism product in rural areas, using natural, cultural-historical and other resources. In connection with the development of agro tourism, several conferences and exhibitions were held in Adjara. For example: Batumi international exhibition of agro-food products and technologies; International Rural Tourism Conference and others.

Ecotourism is relation with wildlife. This type of tourism encourages the preservation of nature, it is a mitigation mechanism, to increase the economic income of the population of protected areas and regions. Ecotourism encourages the the development of sustainable tourism in the country. It involves viewing natural landscapes by tourists, approximately 15-20% of international tourism is ecotourism. Protection of ecotourism and natural diversity should be one of the most important activities of the country. Ecotourism has four main keystones: sustainability of development, economic benefits for the local population, integration of local culture, educational component.

In Georgia, ecotourists have the opportunity to enjoy not only beautiful nature and landscapes, but also with 35,000 historical monuments, 5,000 of which are protected by the state. Since 1994, four of them have been included in UNESCO’s list of monuments of world importance: 1. Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, as a city-museum, 2. Gelati monastery complex (XI century), 3. Bagrat temple in Kutaisi (XI century) and 4. Ushguli architectural ensemble. Adjara offers tourists interested in ecotourism beautiful



nature, mountains, waterfalls, hiking, fishing in mountain rivers, hunting, etc. Gaming tourism is very popular in Georgian cities, including Batumi. Georgia offers a wide selection of casinos to tourists who love gambling. According to the legislation of Georgia, the production of gaming business is not prohibited. The “Casino Investors” conference held in Batumi was important for the development of this type of tourism, in which 120 representatives of different fields (tourism, gaming business, etc.) from 25 countries of the world participated (<http://adjara.gov.ge>). There are five-star hotels for the gaming business in Georgia and the construction of such hotels continues. Business tourism is also important in Georgia, which involves holding various kinds of exhibitions and conferences. Its geopolitical location, the transit function between Europe and Asia is a unique opportunity for the development of the MICE industry in the country - international symposiums, congresses, conferences and business meetings. Rich historical and cultural heritage, unique climate, beautiful nature, allow business trips to combine business and leisure. Successful examples of MICE tourism development in Georgia are: Buying Business Travel Awards 2016 - Georgia was named the best business tourism (MICE) destination. Caucasus Tourism Fair - international tourism exhibition and tourist discount festival International Business Forum (IBF Batumi) In 2017, the National Tourism Administration in Spain (Barcelona) participated in business tourism exhibition IBTMWorld. IBTM World is one of the largest business tourism exhibitions held in Barcelona every year.

In 2017, the National Tourism Administration participated in international exhibition IBTM Arabia in United Arab Emirates. With numerous international and high-level events, our country has gained an important place in world tourism market. Such high-level exhibitions, meetings, conferences are held here, such as: International Exhibition of Tourism and Hotel Equipment; International exhibition of technologies; Exhibition of agro-food products and international construction and design; International Rural Tourism Conference and other.

Mountain-ski tourism is also well developing in Georgia because it has great potential. Several mountain and ski resorts are known: Bakuriani and Gudauri. High-mountainous Ajara also offers a great choice for lovers of mountain-ski sports. It is rare for any other country to have all types of healing factors known in the world: sea countries and sea climate up to 2400 healing muds, mineral springs, healing caves and other. Recently, an innovative type of tourism has been developing in Georgia - rafting - the same as rafting, landing on a river with a special raft, which is one of the popular sports in our country. It has good prospects in the area where are interesting places for tourists on the banks of rivers, canals and lakes, as well as on sea and ocean coastal areas and islands, because tourist accommodation and other services are provided on deck. Tourism in camping and tents is very popular and it becomes a source of income for the local population. Wild places should ideally merge the environment and be provided with appropriate infrastructure. Ethnic and nostalgic tourism - the motivation of the trip is clear from the title. This type of tourism also has great potential. Tourists, when they go on such a trip, use traditional tourist facilities and services, in many cases it is necessary to create special guide services, as well as develop new routes. The hunting of wild animals and birds is one of the oldest branches of human production and today it is very attractive for a certain part of tourists. It was combined with fishing, farming, cattle-breeding and other fields.

Another interesting and attractive is mountain tourism in Georgia - one kind of pedestrian tourism. The mountains offer a much more difficult route for the tourist. A detailed map is necessary when traveling in the mountains. It is necessary to pay attention to the physical preparation of the tourist and the selection of appropriate clothes, and taking into account the rules of movement in the mountains. When climbing the peaks and mountain slopes, the tourist should have information about rescue services or volunteer rescuers. It is desirable to have photos of the peaks and characteristic views of the routes with appropriate explanations. the mechanism of sending of rescue messages is important (mobile communication, radio

communication.) Using of evacuation means and insurance should exist while driving on the path. In the recent period, bicycle tours and bicycle routes have become popular.

On the tourist map, cycling routes are marked with their designations and detailed information (for example the quality of the route surface, the slope, the length of the ascent or descent, etc.). Including tourist attractions, tourist resources and food objects. It is also important to mention the bicycle service point. The main requirement for a mountain bike is its safety and proper condition. The bicycle should be carefully inspected before each rental process.

Another popular type is equestrian tourism. During an active vacation in the rural environment, the host can offer the tourist to ride a horse, horseback riding or tourist riding routes. Our unique flora, easily accessible subtropical and alpine zones, pure rivers, green and snowy mountains at the same time of the year encourage rapid development of tourism in the entire territory of the country and the massive attraction of foreign tourists. "Georgia has all opportunities to be an outstanding tourist country in the world, which can satisfy all kinds of tourist needs. Among these conditions, it is distinguished that Georgia is an ancient country, has a delightful nature, a diverse landscape, the Caucasus range covered with permanent snow and glaciers, a coastal subtropical zone, watery rivers and waterfalls, resorts, mineral springs, numerous unique monuments of history, culture and nature" (Mamuladze V., 2008:151)

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