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## The Regional Features of Tourism in Russia: the Formation of Clusters

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*Oroszország turizmusának regionális sajátosságai: a klaszterek képződése*

### Abstract

*In the present study we draw attention to the urgency of the problem related to the formation of tourism clusters. Then we describe the current state and the specific features of the object of study. We expand upon the scientific basis of the proposed research methodology. Finally we offer recommendations on the practical application of the expected results. The organizational model of the regional tourist cluster based on a two-element core, in the case of its practical application will improve the efficiency of the formation and development of clusters in a variety of service industries, and adapt them to the high variability of the environment. The improvement of scientific and methodological tools, the connection of economic and administrative resources provide a solid foundation for the development of the tourism sector, increase the investment activity of economic entities and increase the investment attractiveness of the economy at the regional level of government.*

**Keywords:** tourism, cluster, infrastructure, methodology, tourist companies

### Összefoglaló

*Jelen tanulmányban felhívjuk a figyelmet a turisztikai klaszterek képződésével kapcsolatos problémák fontosságára. Ezután leírjuk a vizsgálat tárgyának jelenlegi állapotát és speciális jellemzőit. Majd részletesen kifejtsük a javasolt kutatási módszertan tudományos alapját. Végül javaslatokat teszünk a kapott kutatási eredmények gyakorlati alkalmazására. A regionális turizmus klaszter szervezeti modellje egy két elemből álló magon alapszik, amelynek a gyakorlati alkalmazása javítani fogja a klaszterek képződését a szolgáltatóipar teljes körében és a változatos környezethez fogja igazítani őket. A tudományos és a módszertani eszközök fejlesztése, valamint a gazdasági és az adminisztrációs erőforrások összekapcsolása szilárd alapot fog biztosítani a turizmus szektor fejlesztéséhez, növeli a gazdasági szereplők befektetési kedvét és a gazdaságot vonzóbbá teszi a befektetők számára a kormányzás regionális szintjén.*

**Kulcsszavak:** turizmus, klaszter, infrastruktúra, módszertan, turisztikai vállalatok

### THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM

In the conditions of the formation of a socially oriented market economy one of the priorities is the improvement of service organizations primarily related to the production of tourism

products. The study of the positions of various research and analysis of the scientific literature indicates that to date, as far as we know, the creation of universal approaches to solving the accumulated problems are not fully completed

in this regard. In this regard, the actual aspect is the application of scientific principles and modern technology in the development of the conceptual foundations of the formation and development of regional tourism clusters. Coordination, communication and cohesion of all the elements within the cluster can be used by the entire set of methods and forms of government regulation of the national economy and tools targeted at program planning.

#### **THE CURRENT STATE OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY**

Under Russian law, the term "tourism" refers to the non constant travel of citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign citizens and stateless persons with a permanent residence, with the purposes of health, educational, professional, business, sports, religious and other purposes without occupying a remunerated activity in the country (place) of temporary stay [1]. Currently, the Russian sphere of tourist services operates very rapidly, but the emphasis of the priority development of domestic tourism is fundamentally important. The normative legal acts of the Russian Federation emphasized the importance of tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic development of regions - administrative and territorial entities of the country - the republics, territories, and regions. The long-term documents of program-target character justified the role of tourism as one "of the most important trends affecting the growth of the economy, including the development of such areas of economic activity as a service of tourist companies, collective means of accommodation, transport, communications, trade, production of souvenirs and other products, food, agriculture, construction and other industries "[2].

The Russian government includes in its membership 85 regions - the regions of the Russian Federation. Territorial differences in levels of development and economic potential, accompanied by a variety of climatic conditions, especially the placement of production, prevailing settlement and the age and sex structure of the population - all these factors have a significant impact on the status and role of tourist agencies in the national economy. In this regard, there is a need for the practical application of new, advanced tools to improve the management of regional social and economic development [3, p. 9-10]. Among the most important areas of strategic management in foreign countries are the cluster policy development and implementation of cluster initiatives. The so-called "cluster approach" has established itself as a tool to improve productivity, efficiency, productivity, innovation orientation in the functioning of individual industries and regions. It is supposedly used in the process of developing and implementing national and regional innovation programmes and projects in various fields of the market economy.

Through the formation and functioning of clusters it is possible to more fully exploit the potential of tourism and recreation in Russia. The use of cluster technology in the tourism sector has a high relevance for the regional economy and is designed to facilitate the efficient utilization of existence in the territories of the Russian Federation production capacity, improve the competitiveness of companies operating in the sphere of tourist activity, the achievement of compliance with the standards of the world level. Regional tourism clusters become a source of positive externalities that naturally spread throughout their home. The cluster approach promotes the growth of productivity, efficiency and competitiveness of the regional economy

and the regions in general – the sustainable development of territorial socio-economic systems.

#### **SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY**

Regional tourism clusters are a form of economic clusters, but they have certain advantages because of objective features of the environment of their origin and existence - the tourism sector of the economy<sup>1</sup>. The specific characteristics of the tourism sector of the regional economy are due to a number of objective and subjective factors. Tourism depends on the territorial scope of climatic and geographical features that are objective. Permanent tourist interest is the peculiar objects of culture and history. The quantity and quality of tourist infrastructure determine the amount of tourist traffic, the comfort of tourists, their satisfaction with the tourism product.

Many scientific studies economic clusters are seen as a form of economic integration. However, to date remain debatable issues related to the basic characteristics of regional tourism clusters. The researchers do not always take into account their complexity and objectivity, interdependence and interdependence. The analysis of the different points of view leads to an understanding of the most important, significant features, which

allow to allocate regional tourism clusters, among other types of cluster structures. These distinguishing characteristics are: tourism potential; cultural and historical heritage; tourist infrastructure.

The synthetic concept of "**tourism potential**" in the most general, systematic form reveals the concepts of "geographical features of the territory", "climatic features of the territory", "natural objects." Geographical, climatic features of the territory determine the interest of tourists in it. The presence of natural objects extends it. The geographic features include the physical and geographical characteristics of the territory (natural boundaries, altitude, elevation, topography, water availability, etc.). By climatic features we mean weather and temperature conditions and their anomaly (seasonality, duration of rain and snow periods, the temperature regime and its externalities – cooling, warming). Natural objects include natural resources such as forests, land, water bodies, mountain and rock formations, specific field of minerals, flora, fauna, etc.

The concept of "**cultural and historical heritage**" includes such specific concepts as "historical sites", "recreational facilities", "and leisure facilities". Historical sites are monuments of history, archaeology, nature, art, culture, urban planning, architecture, documentary and archival evidence. The recreational facilities include natural attractions, scenic spots, protected areas, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries. The leisure facilities include cinemas, theatres, museums, dance halls and other places of public entertainment. All the above mentioned and other objects of recreational facilities are the major places of recreation and pastimes. Each of these types of facilities is of particular interest for different tourist groups identified by certain characteristics: age and sex

<sup>1</sup> The tourist sector includes: the organization of the hotel industry; catering and trade; passenger transport; banking organizations, public utility services, consumer services, telecommunications, rental services, advertising and information agencies, organization of cultural and entertainment; tour operators and travel agents; agricultural enterprises and other industries that produce goods of a tourist destination; Various organizations involved in the design, construction and modernization of tourist facilities, enterprises for the production of equipment for the hotel and catering facilities; educational institutions on personnel training [4, p. 35-36].

composition, income and other. The more potentially attractive target (historical, recreational, leisure) in a particular region, there is more reason for the organization of its territory target tourism cluster.

The notion of "**tourist infrastructure**" is based on the concepts of "physical infrastructure", "information infrastructure", "infrastructure of hospitality." By "physical infrastructure" we mean the road and transport infrastructure to serve as the material support of the tourism sector. Infrastructure hospitality includes activities that cater for the tourism industry. These include accommodation facilities, catering, recreation, entertainment, sightseeing activities, exhibitions, symposiums and others. In the modern period the importance of the information infrastructure increases. It is a network through which one communicates in the tourism sector of the national economy (means of communication, the Internet, computer and telecommunication networks and others.). Due to the high degree of localization of the tourism sector at the regional level and its affection to real objects, the presence of these types of infrastructure, combined with positionable comfortable living, has a significant influence on the decision-making by tourists on the time and place of rest, as well as the feasibility and ways of moving between objects of cultural and historical heritage in the framework of a functioning tourist cluster.

The analysis allows to systematize the properties inherent in the regional tourism clusters and highlight the most important ones among them. An exploded scientific definition of this category can be summarized as follows. A "regional tourism cluster" - a set of interrelated and interacting organizations to create a comprehensive tourism product, focused on the use of, first, geographical,

climatic and natural features of the area; secondly, cultural and historical heritage, a part of historic, recreational facilities and leisure activities; third, the tourism infrastructure, including physical infrastructure, information infrastructure and hospitality infrastructure.

This definition synthesizes a number of elements that are offered in the work of various researchers, for example, infrastructure, potential, information, climatic and geographical features of the territory. However, in contrast to existing approaches, given the wording allows to allocate such objective foundations, typical of a particular area as a tourist potential, historical and cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure area, as well as to present them as a methodological framework that provides the relationship of individual disparate elements within a cluster.

#### **SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The important factors influencing the change in the situation in the tourism sector in Russia are, firstly, the creation of economic conditions for the development of industrial and social infrastructure; secondly, the creation of a progressive paradigm of sustainable functioning of this sector of the regional economy. The cluster approach allows you to:

first, form the core of the cluster structure, which defines the list of elements and mechanisms of integration of business entities that make up the regional tourism cluster, as well as the principles of their cooperation and the possible vectors of development; secondly, to engage in activities to build regional tourism cluster representatives of related sectors of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of which depends on the quality of the tourist product and accompanying services

and, consequently, customer satisfaction.

It is assumed that such a transformation will lead to the improvement of existing and the creation of new tourism infrastructure. This assumption is based on the active functioning of existing business entities related to the tourist sphere of the regional economy, as well as the emergence of new stakeholders in the cluster, the priorities in the activities of which are focused on the creation and promotion of a highly competitive integrated tourism product.

The analysis of the tourism sector of the regional economy of a number of subjects of the Russian Federation, namely: Krasnodar region, Stavropol Territory, the Republic of North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria has shown that in these areas the objective conditions for the formation of multi-regional tourism clusters have developed. In the tourism sector these regions should be allocated as the basic elements of the presence of the tourist potential, cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure. The presence of a well-developed material base allows the design of the structure of regional tourism clusters and the development of organizational and economic mechanism of their formation and development. However, to complete all the work requires significant amounts of investment. The possible channels for their preparation is the participation in investment projects as part of the state of federal and regional programs to attract private investors and other non-budget sources of investment resources.

Currently, the literature actively discusses issues relating to the organization of various kinds of clusters and modelling of appropriate organizational structures for managing them. The researchers suggest that such structural elements are core providers, labour market,

educational, informational, financial institutions, government, infrastructure units, etc. At the same time the core of the cluster is usually described as a simple, single element. However, in practice the objective reasons that impede the process of formation and development of clusters are not always taken into account. However, it is known that the created sectorial and territorial clusters in a number of cases are based on the complex structure of the nucleus and the deployed system elements within them. It appears that these objective reasons have a negative impact on the dynamics of the formation of clusters and their organizational structure.

Our study leads to the conclusion that the regional tourism cluster, like most sectorial and regional cluster structures should be composed of a core comprising one or more elements. The structure of the nucleus (composed of its constituent elements) and a list of business entities that make up the cluster forming and participating in the creation of the final product, to a large extent determine the organizational structure of the projected regional tourism cluster, which allows to develop a universal model for managing its formation and development.

In our opinion, for the formation of a universal organizational structure of the multi-regional tourism cluster, it is advisable to allocate, first, the two-element core of the "Association of tourist companies" and the "Innovation centre of the cluster"; secondly, the organizations and enterprises involved in the production of the final tourist product, which it is advisable to group together in the following areas: a) tourism companies (tour operators and travel agents); b) the company's related sectors of the regional economy (transport, catering, accommodation, leisure, etc.); c) infrastructural

facilities and information component; thirdly, organs of management and coordination, agreements on the activities of all enterprises and organizations – cluster participants.

Therefore, each element of the proposed organizational structure of the universal regional tourism cluster has its own resources to enhance competitiveness and economic performance. Let us examine this in more detail.

1. The association of tourism companies can be the initiator of cluster initiatives, implement the internal co-operation of tourism companies to organize the promotion of tourism products and brands, to act as the key partner agencies to state and municipal authorities in determining the requirements of the activities of the public sector to ensure the conditions for the functioning of the tourism cluster.
2. The presence of this element in the kernel of regional tourist cluster needed to ensure the nature of the tourism industry, which is represented mainly by the enterprises of small and average businesses. The practical experience suggests that we need some kind of co-ordinating structure that is able to perform communication functions, represent the interests of the subjects of this sector of the regional economy in cooperation with state authorities and local self-government, to develop common rules for economic activities of businesses and ensure their interaction with the environment, to combine the efforts of all the stakeholders in the development of tourism products and developing new markets.
3. The Innovation Centre cluster. This is a new element in the composition of the core of the regional tourist cluster. According to the recommendations, the element of the organizational structure can include a wide range of participants: scientific, research, consulting organizations, educational institutions, engaged in training for the industry. The main objective of the Innovation Centre is to provide a cluster the shortest way up the chain of creation and implementation of the tourism product, its substantive content, marketing, consulting and other support activities of enterprises-members of the cluster, as well as organizing information and support educational infrastructure.
4. The legal status of the Innovation Centre of the regional tourism cluster, in accordance with the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, is appropriate to fix a non-profit organization with a broad membership in its vocational and higher educational institutions that train specialists for the cluster of educational programs at various levels of education, scientific organizations, carrying out activities in these areas, forming the content of the tourist product, consulting organizations and cultural institutions that exploit the natural and historical and cultural sites visited by tourists.
5. As part of the observance of saving mode when creating innovation centres, it is advisable to use the existing technical base of various educational and scientific organizations (this may be, for example, the fixed assets of the disbanded vocational and other educational institutions) and conduct their retrofitting necessary equipment. A substantial part of the activities of the Innovation centre

of the cluster, in our opinion, is expedient to form through the consolidation of the funds allocated by the state (in the framework of the program of tourism development and funds for training), and borrowed financial resources, which is consolidated within the "Association of tourist companies" and designed to create tourism products.

6. Travel companies (tour operators, travel agents). This is a basic element in the structure of the regional tourist cluster. Tourist companies are engaged in the manufacture and sale of the tourist product. These include travel agencies (the main activity is the sale of tourist products); companies involved in the market as tour operators. Tourist companies form the tourist product requirements, taking into account the views of consumers, as direct contact with them and can most accurately describe the conditions under which they will ensure the competitiveness of the tourism product in the relevant internal and external markets.
7. Companies of the related sectors (transport, catering, accommodation, leisure, etc.). They are formed and, at the same time, are an actively developing element in the structure of the regional tourist cluster. Companies of the related sectors of the economy are represented, above all, by the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry, as a rule, includes companies that provide support services to ensure the implementation of the tourism product: transport and logistics companies, companies providing accommodation and food for tourists, companies representing souvenir production, entertainment, and others.

These companies have a form activities favourable for the implementation of tourism product environment. The motivation of their interaction with members of the cluster is determined by the ability to expand the market of tourist services.

8. Infrastructure is the main content of the tourist product, as they form the basis for the motivation of the buyer and its competitiveness. The list can be quite diverse - from natural objects to the industrial and financial areas - depending on the capabilities of a particular region -
9. the subject of the Russian Federation. The composition of the infrastructure determines the types of tourism (business, recreational, educational, rural, automotive, scientific, ethical, sports, education, etc.), Infrastructure requirements (types of service and quality characteristics of services), as well as recommendations for recruiting and maintaining competitive environment for the provision of tourism services.
10. Regional authorities in the framework of this organizational model can perform the following functions: to form a normative-legal conditions of activity of the cluster and infrastructure; to perform the duties of the owner and administer the infrastructure cluster, located in the public sector; to monitor the investment process and other measures taken for the development of specific elements of the cluster.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE EXPECTED RESULTS**

The organizational model of the regional tourist cluster based on a two-element core, in the case of its practical application will improve the

efficiency of the formation and development of clusters in a variety of service industries, and adapt them to the high variability of the environment. However, it should be borne in mind that the complex structure of the core of the regional tourism cluster requires certain dialectical contradictions between its elements.

The activities of the state authorities of the Russian Federation in support of the formation of clusters in the tourism sector of the regional economy are fraught with problems caused by various external and internal features. The informal nature of the relationships and interactions, the high dynamism of the processes, the lack of a clear territorial configuration naturally lead to the fact that the regional tourist cluster is difficult to detect, diagnose the current state of organizational structure and management of their functioning and development.

In the model of organizational-economic mechanism of regional tourist cluster the latter is the managed object. The control subsystem consists of the supreme governing body and the subject of direct management. In the role of the High Authority for the management of the projected cluster a regional executive body can serve - the Administration of the Russian Federation represented by the Department of International Cooperation and Development of Tourism. This body would be appropriate to give the authority to determine the strategic objectives of management of formation and development of regional tourism clusters and implementation of actions aimed at achieving them.

As a subject of direct management of the projected creation of a cluster can be offered at a specified Department of the Coordinating Council of the cluster, which can function as a permanent supervisory body. The direct

management of the cluster should be implemented through the redeployment of common resources, principally important for its leading elements. As such resources are quite legitimate to specify any special knowledge and information; the processing and systematization will ensure real time observation, monitoring results and the correction of management actions.

A responsible task of the Coordination Centre should be the co-operation with the Association of tourist companies and innovation centres of the cluster, which is possible through a redeployment between important resources for both sides. The interaction between the elements of cluster-core is advisable to be built on a parity basis. Such an approach will contribute to the dynamic development of each of the partners as well as to influence the productive operation of the entire cluster. The result of cooperation of the Association of tourist companies and innovation centres as components of the cluster core, as well as all elements (participating organizations) of the regional tourism cluster as a whole, should be generating a flow of services (tourism products, information, specific services) to contribute to the specialization of these organizations. The development of various forms of cooperation should contribute to the formation of forward and backward linkages between the participants of the projected regional cluster, increase the level of trust between them, and generate new ideas, projects and partnerships, ultimately, solutions to common problems related to the creation of competitive tourist products and services.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In general, the improvement of scientific and methodological tools, connecting economic and administrative resources provide a solid



foundation for the development of the tourism sector, increasing investment activity of economic entities and increase the investment attractiveness of the economy at the regional level of government. The results can be used in the various cluster projects in the tourism sector, implemented as the executive authorities and initiative groups.

Based on the fact that for all the variety of characteristics of the Russian regions, they are the objects of a class, that is, have certain universal features and properties, the proposed mechanism of management of development of tourist areas can be applied in different regions of the Russian Federation.

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