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THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RESOURCE POTENTIAL ACTIVATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS FOR THE INBOUND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The issues of market analysis of tourist services in the Republic of Belarus, the country's economic advantages for the inbound tourism development, the unique resource potential and the developed tourist infrastructure, the opportunities for using the resource potential, the tools for activation the resource potential of Belarus for the inbound tourism development are raised in the article.

Keywords: tourism; the Republic of Belarus; inbound tourism; resource potential; infrastructure; the market of tourist services; dynamics; prerequisites; formation of a tourist product; activation.

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ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ АКТИВИЗАЦИИ РЕСУРСНОГО ПОТЕНЦИАЛА РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ ВЪЕЗДНОГО ТУРИЗМА

В статье рассмотрен рынок туристических услуг Республики Беларусь, выявлены экономические преимущества страны в развитии въездного туризма, выявлены уникальный ресурсный потенциал и развитая туристическая инфраструктура, определены возможности использования ресурсного потенциала, сформулированы инструменты активизации ресурсного потенциала Беларуси по развитию въездного туризма.

Ключевые слова: туризм; Республика Беларусь; въездной туризм; ресурсный потенциал; инфраструктура; рынок туристических услуг; динамика; предпосылки; формирование турпродукта; активизация.

Tourism is a highly profitable industry of each state and it contributes to the formation of its gross domestic product, the inflow of foreign exchange, the development of related industries and an increase in employment. The international tourist exchange which special attention is paid to inbound tourism is of certain importance in the development of the country's tourism.

Inbound international tourism should be considered as trips organized for a certain period, for foreign citizens through the territory of their state, crossing the state border and for the purpose of non-commercial activities.

The Republic of Belarus has a huge potential for the development of inbound tourism and, accordingly, for the export of tourism services [1].

The country is becoming more and more attractive for foreign tourists, which is illustrated in fig. 1.



🖾 the number tourists and excursionists who visited the Republic of Belarus

I the number tourists and excursionists who left the Republic of Belarus

the number tourists and excursionists sent along the tour routes within the territory of the Republic of Belarus

Fig. 1. Dynamics of the number of tourists and excursionists who visited the Republic of Belarus, left it and was sent along the tour routes within the territory of the Republic of Belarus in 2015–2019, thousand people

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of statistical data [2].

For the period 2015–2019, the number of organized tourists and excursionists who visited the Republic of Belarus increased of 46.9 % and amounted to 405.5 thousand people in 2019 against 276.0 in 2015. The largest share in the inbound tourism market is held by foreign tourists from the Russian Federation (53.7 %), Lithuania (18.8 %) and Poland (15.1 %). The number of tourists from Latvia is 2.6 %, China — 1.3 %, Germany — 1.1 %. An insignificant share is made by tourists from Ukraine, Estonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, the United States of America, the Czech Republic, and Turkey [2].

The number of tourists and excursionists sent along the tour routes within the territory of the Republic of Belarus in 2019 increased by 32.2 % and amounted to 1106.9 thousand people [2].

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This positive dynamic is due to the competitive advantages of our country, which include an advantageous geographical position; rich natural, historical and cultural potential, the sufficient provision with recreational resources, the presence of cultural and natural heritage sites, a positive tourist image, well-developed infrastructure, etc. The UNESCO World Heritage List includes such sites of the Republic of Belarus as Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Mir Castle, Struve Geodetic Arc, Nesvizh Castle. The attractions nominated for inclusion in this list are also indicated: the Augustow Canal, the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord and the St. Sophia Cathedral, the Church of Boris and Gleb (Grodno), wooden churches of Polesie [3].

It should be marked, that in the tourist services market the Republic of Belarus has a fairly developed infrastructure which includes a set of hotels and other accommodation facilities, catering facilities, health, sport and other facilities, means of transport, as well as organizations carrying out tour operator and travel agency activities, representing excursion services.

In particular, the dynamics of the number of organizations engaged in tourism activities in the Republic of Belarus in 2015–2019 is shown in fig. 2.



Fig. 2. Dynamics of the number of organizations engaged in tourism activities in the Republic of Belarus in 2015–2019, units



In 2019, the number of organizations engaged in tourism activities in the Republic of Belarus amounted to 1,544, an increase of 13.2 % compared to the same period in 2015.

The dynamics of the number of tourists and excursionists served by organizations engaged in tourism activities is of certain importance: during the study period, the increase was 34.7 % and reached the value of 2,495.3 thousand people.

During the study period 2015–2019, the number of collective accommodation facilities amounted to 1,089 units and increased in comparison with 2015 by 75 units. Dynamics of objects of collective accommodation facilities in 2015–2019 is illustrated in fig. 3.

According to statistical data in 2019, out of 1089 units of collective accommodation facilities in the Republic of Belarus, 54.8 % (597 units) are hotels and similar accommodation facilities. Compared to the same period in 2015, the increase was 10.8 %. Sanatoriums, health-improving organizations and other specialized accommodation facilities own 45.2 % (492 units). The growth in this category of collective accommodation facilities for the period 2015–2019 amounted to 3.6 % [4].

The number of people placed in collective accommodation facilities amounted to 2,950.4 thousand people in 2019, having increased by 24.7 % by 2015.



Fig. 3. Change in the number of collective accommodation facilities for 2015–2019, units

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of statistical data [2].

The change in the number of people placed in collective accommodation facilities for 2015–2019, by regions of permanent residence is shown in fig. 4.





Source: developed by the authors on the basis of statistical data [2].

Of the total number of people accommodated in collective accommodation facilities in 2019, tourists from foreign countries accounted for 46.0 %. The growth rate was 157.8 % compared to the same period in 2015.

Revenue from hotel accommodation and similar accommodation facilities in 2019 amounted to 712.2 million rubles and increased in comparison with the previous year by 471.3 million rubles.

At the end of 2019, the export of tourism services amounted to 265.4 million US dollars (against the plan of 240 million US dollars) and grew in 1.66 times [5].

Thus, it can be argued that inbound tourism for the Republic of Belarus is an important item of the country's foreign exchange income and, accordingly, one of its priority industries that performs an important integrational function.

The potential of the Republic of Belarus in the field of tourism development and economic benefits from its contribution to the economy is very large, but the results achieved are not sufficient.

The development of inbound tourism in the Republic of Belarus does not fully correspond to the resource potential of the country.

It should be noted that at the macro level, certain measures are being taken to develop tourism in the Republic of Belarus. In particular, in accordance with the priorities of the socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020 the State program «Belarus hospitable» was developed, the purpose of which was the formation and development of a modern competitive tourist complex [6], increasing the contribution of tourism to the development of the national economy [7]. But the chronic lag in the context of achieving the goals of tourism development outlined by the state does not allow the intersectoral tourism complex to become a significant sector of the national economy [8].

Moreover, the national strategy for sustainable socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030 defines the development of the tourism industry as one of the important directions of Belarus's transition to a post-industrial society and innovative development of the economy [9]. The strategic goal of tourism development for the period up to 2030 is the creation of a highly efficient and competitive tourist complex, Belarus joining the top 50 countries in terms of tourism development through a number of activities, which include: effective use of the available natural potential, historical and cultural heritage, material resources, entering new tourist markets, comprehensive security of tourist activities, development of cultural, educational and social tourism.

The Republic of Belarus and other countries discussed the problems of developing cooperation in the field of tourism during the pandemic, as well as the prospects for restoring tourist flows, BelTA announced in the press service of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism [10].

The Republic of Belarus has good prerequisites for the development of transit tourism. In this regard, the necessary condition is to improve roadside service. At the beginning of 2019, there were 414 petrol stations, 159 gas filling stations, 72 hotels, 45 car washes, 101 guarded parking lots, 586 catering points, 74 technical assistance points and service stations on the republican roads [11]. For the development of this direction, it is necessary to create information stands (light box) for information and navigation support of tourists. Also on these boards can be placed information of a non-commercial nature, in particular, image and social advertising on the topic of domestic tourism. It is advisable for roadside service objects to have information materials about the historical and cultural sights of Belarus.

The next direction for enhancing the resource potential of the Republic of Belarus is the development of the infrastructure of educational tourism, the most important element of which is a museum activity. Such museums as the Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War, the National Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve «Nesvizh» and many others are the country's visiting cards. More than 150 museums of various fields are currently functioning in the Republic of Belarus. Leading museums of Belarus introduce new marketing tools, for example, a map system, modern technological equipment of expositions with interactive platforms and augmented reality equipment, audioguides with a wide range of languages, virtual reality helmets, special bracelets for activating services and moving between exhibition halls and locations. These tools make it possible to stimulate demand among the youth, family and children's audience of visitors.

Our research allows us to state the fact that on the market of tourist services it is necessary to intensify the activity on the formation of a tourist product and exclusive routes for visiting historical and non-traditional objects. It is advisable to create routes for various categories of tourists, including adherents of extreme tourism. For example, the Polesie Radiation and Ecological Reserve located in the Gomel region can become a unique non-traditional object of international scientific and ecological and educational tourism (including extreme tourism) markets and includes advertising, propaganda and other marketing tools, taking into account the specific characteristics of the target markets. There are some steps to activate inbound tourism: strengthening of personnel and educational and methodological support of the tourism sector, a wide advertising and informational campaign, formation of various tourism products, modernization and improvement of tourist infrastructure.

Thus, the formulated tools to activate the unique resource potential of the Republic of Belarus and their implementation will contribute not only to the development of inbound tourism, but also to the further integration of our country into the international market of tourist services.

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