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**ENVIRONMENTAL TOURISM AS AN EFFECT OF**  
**DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURIST DEMAND**

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**Abstract**

Ecotourism as an element of the market can serve the ecological, sociocultural and economic interests of a person, society and the state. Its successful development largely depends on the effectiveness of its promotion on the market as a tourism product, that is, targeted tourism marketing. In the course of the study, the conditions and factors of organizing ecological tourism were identified, taking into account the existing international experience in the context of globalization, and the prerequisites for the emergence and historical and geographical features of the development of ecological tourism were considered; the analysis of approaches in the terminology of ecological tourism is made; identified restrictions for the development of ecotourism; the assessment of the possibilities of its development in Russia is given. Among the constraining factors for the development of ecotourism, the following are identified: lack of uniform methods for determining permissible recreational loads and monitoring; lack of detailed information on the directions of tours and environmental programs, specialized information on the biodiversity of the territory; insufficient number of routes and programs for different categories of tourists, lack of a tourism product that meets the standards of the international tourism market; lack of experience and knowledge among staff for organizing ecotourism; lack of educational programs for different categories of tourists; low level of infrastructure development; lack of high-quality advertising and information materials and opportunities to enter the international market, as well as an unfavorable modern economic environment to attract investors.

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*Keywords:* Ecological tourism, sustainable development, socially responsible tourism



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## 1. Introduction

Increases in the burden on the environment as a result of the uncontrolled growth of tourism can cause negative consequences – damage to the environment and local communities. In the territories, widely visited by tourists, problems in social development, culture and ecology began to appear. This fact makes one think about the protection of historical, cultural and natural values. The prerequisites in this direction were the steps taken in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro at an international conference on the environment organized by the United Nations. The final program document of this forum was the “Agenda for XXI” and the declaration on environment and development. This document was the starting point for a radical innovation in the field of tourism – on its basis, the UNWTO proposed the principle of sustainable development of tourism. This innovation has forced both tourists and tourism professionals to change their ideas about tourism in general, and to take a different look at relationships in the tourism industry. In 2004, the World Tourism Organization formulated the concept of sustainable tourism development. The continuous process of sustainable tourism requires monitoring the impact of the state of the environment and taking preventive measures or interventions (Novikov, 2007). This was the prerequisite for the emergence of such a nature-oriented tourism as ecological. The problem of developing eco-tourism is multidimensional and requires detailed study.

## 2. Methodology

The object of the study is ecological tourism, as a kind of socially responsible tourism. The purpose of the work is to identify the conditions and factors of the organization of ecological tourism in terms of existing international experience in the context of globalization. Based on the purpose of the study, the following tasks were solved:

- considered the prerequisites for the emergence and historical and geographical features of the development of ecological tourism;
- analysis of approaches in the terminology of eco-tourism;
- identified constraints for the development of ecotourism;
- an assessment was made of opportunities for the development of ecological tourism in Russia.

Historical-geographical, comparative-geographical, descriptive, cartographic, and sociological methods were used as the methodological basis of the study.

For the formation of ecotourism routes, a methodology is needed to assess the ecotourism potential of the territory, adapted to the characteristics of the protected mode and methods of managing ecotourism in protected areas. The formation of such a methodology requires the determination of the classification characteristics of the assessment of the potential of ecotourism. Kotlyarov (1978) unites them in three groups:

- Primary, including natural conditions and resources;
- Secondary, including socio-cultural conditions and resources;
- Limiting conditions (Zadevalova et al., 2013).

Studying the problems of development of domestic ecotourism, the method of Kotlyarov (1978) was used. The methodology requires the adaptation of criteria for assessing the tourist potential of environmentally oriented natural objects located in the country.

### **3. Results**

Beginning in the second half of the 20th century, humanity faced major environmental problems and their possible consequences – climate change, destruction of the ozone layer, etc. These phenomena, which arise primarily as a result of local and regional, but mass actions, have acquired a global scale and have given rise to global environmental problems. Globalization is an objective process. Equally objective is the desire to contribute to its positive consequences and counter the negative, including environmental ones. That is why it is necessary to carefully analyze the processes of globalization and the problems they cause – and, so to speak, primary environmental (exposure to population growth), and secondary environmental problems that have economic phenomena as their primary source. In this sense, tourism is a phenomenon that causes precisely the secondary environmental problems. At the junction of the social, natural, economic and environmental problems of our time there is a need for environmentally friendly tourism.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, two interrelated trends have become quite noticeable in the development of world tourism. Firstly, the global spread of high-tech standardized tourist services and at the same time a certain diversification of demand, manifested as a natural countertrend. Secondly, the high growth rate of a relatively new market segment – eco-tourism, especially its West European (“German”) modification. The latter trend is directly related to the growing ecologization of public consciousness and culture, with the environmental imperative. At the same time, it should be considered in a single context with the first trend as one of the powerful factors for diversifying tourist demand.

Globalization in tourism appears as a set of interrelated phenomena in the fields of technology, economics and politics. The tourism market has expanded significantly over the past decades. Global tourist flows have grown, multinational companies have been formed, tourist technologies and tourist products have evolved and unified. Globalization in tourism is a distinct megatrend. For countries and regions seeking to enter the global tourism market, it will be extremely difficult to overcome price competition. Consequently, the role of those new qualities of the tourist product that can be offered due to regional natural and cultural specificities is increasing. This trend, which corresponds to the diversification of demand, can be described as regionalization. The socio-economic consequences of regionalization are the opposite of the negative effects of the globalization of tourism. Moreover, its positive role obviously manifests itself not only in a cultural, but also in an ecological aspect, since mass and industrialized world tourism has already had and continues to have a very unfavorable, often destructive effect on the natural ecosystems of many tourist regions. According to the forecasts of the WTO, the growth of tourist flows is more intense than expected. Many countries and regions are making great efforts to support the tourism industry. But the conjuncture of the tourist market, and the direction of tourist flows can change rapidly. Therefore, it is extremely important to diversify the tourist product. Regionalization based on natural and cultural identification is very close to the ideology of eco-tourism. Equally important is the development of the ideas and principles of cultural tourism by tour operators and other participants in environmental

projects. Especially important is the synthesis of these two areas of the tourism industry, which can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the concepts of sustainable development of tourist regions.

Ecotourism is developing as one of the most important means of sustainable development of natural territories. Ecotourism is able to have a positive impact on the formation of ecological culture and encourages people to take a different look at the natural environment. Ecotourism is closely related to environmental education. Tourists who join it, not only travel to places untouched by civilization, but also learn the peculiarities of nature, realize the need for careful attitude to it. An example is the experience of Ireland and the Scandinavian countries - regions where coastal tourism has recently become popular, which is well planned and characterized by eco-technology.

Ecotourism began to develop in the 80s of the twentieth century "as a local idea - creating a balance between the economic benefits derived from recreation in nature and the environmental safety of recreational areas within the global idea - conservation of nature on the planet as the basis of life on it" (Snytko, 2006). Over time, ecotourism has become popular and increasingly popular in the scale of international tourism. Ecotourism has become regarded as an activity responsible for the environment, contributing to its protection, enhancing the ecological culture of tourists, carrying out an educational function and respecting the traditional culture of the local population. The most important in the ideology of eco-tourism is environmental education and the creation of economic interest, aimed at preserving the natural environment intact. Tour operators, providing ecological tours, take into account the goal of preserving the uniqueness of nature and culture of the area. Ecotourism is distinguished by a bright variety from a geographical point of view. The main difference is the low-altered attractive natural complexes, usually characterized by biodiversity.

According to forecasts of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), eco-tourism is among the five main strategic directions of development for the period up to 2020. According to expert estimates, the number of people concerned about the state of the environment is growing. Environmental disadvantage produces in some people the need to change their attitude to nature, in others - to actively participate in its protection and preservation, in the third - the most conscious - in restoration. Some of the people, not limited to their own efforts, tend to attract supporters to their active work.

The main factors that motivate the development of eco-tourism are the desire of people to enjoy nature, to have the opportunity to breathe clean air, drink and bathe in clean water, use environmentally friendly products, and get aesthetic pleasure from the contemplation of natural landscapes.

In Russia, despite the fact that the country has unique natural resources and their diversity, eco-tourism is developing slowly, although the number of offers in this market segment begins to grow. Specially protected natural territories have the greatest potential in the development of eco-tourism, but it requires the right choice of priority areas for the development of this type of tourism. Currently, there are methods for assessing the recreational and environmental potential of territories. However, the conformity of the territory assessment methods with ecotourism is extremely rare. Classical methods for assessing the recreational potential cannot be used, since the planning of the development of recreational activities will be constrained by the ecological regime of the territory. The recreational potential of the unique places of nature, which are mostly in protected areas, will always be attractive to tourists. Ecotourism will develop

steadily when a tourist follows the rules and principles of ecotourism, when all ecological routes and trails will be checked and classified into categories of tourism, special routes and eco-tours. These routes should be protected from mass tourism and based on the principles of sustainable development. The relationship between the number of tourists visited by the locality and the state of its ecosystems, the ecological state of the environment, social impacts and the marginal utility of a tourism product may take different forms. In addition, not all ecosystem components in the area are equally fragile - some of them can deteriorate quickly even when the number of visitors is small, while other ecosystems retain their qualities until the number of visitors reaches a high level. Therefore, environmental impact is usually cumulative; a study is needed about the relative importance of each of them in a common ecosystem.

To classify and identify ecological routes, it is first necessary to calculate the potential capacity for sustainable tourism in the region. The calculation of the bandwidth of the visitors takes into account three levels: physical bandwidth, real bandwidth and effective bandwidth. Each level is a revised estimate of the previous one, based on the specific factors involved in each case studied. In addition, certification and environmental monitoring of routes and the determination of the annual assessment of the negative impact of tourism on local resources, such as fauna, flora, soil, and water, are needed. Environmental labelling will determine the routes and amount of state financial assistance for eco-tours.

At this stage of the research, the characteristics were analyzed, and their assessment was made to match the Russian ecotourism characteristics: various climatic conditions; ecological attractiveness of landscape elements; biodiversity; recreational opportunities; natural monuments; culture (local customs, the preservation of the traditional way of life) of the local population. This analysis allowed us to adapt the classification of Kotlyarov (1978) to assess the ecotourism potential of the country's regions.

To determine the signs of compliance of tourist territories with the requirements of ecotourism, the definition of the nature of ecotourism was used, in which the main actions of consumers rely on nature combined with knowledge of its objects and phenomena.

#### **4. Discussion**

The questions of the study of ecological tourism are reflected in the scientific literature and are represented by the works of such domestic geographers, ecologists, economists, biologists, teachers, psychologists, such as E.I. Arsenieva, O.G. Omarova, E.N. Bukhova, T. V. Bochkareva, V. A. Drozdov, G.I. Gladkevich, L.I. Egorenkov, A.S. Kuskov, E.U. Ledovskikh, N.V. Moraleva, I.N. Panov, V.B. Pozdnev, A.V. Reznikova, T. K. Sergeeva, G. A. Sorokina, V. B. Stepanitsky, N. V. Feoktistova, V. V. Khrabovchenko, V. P. Chizhova, A. I. Eitingon.

Foreign scientific schools of ecological tourism differ sharply from Russian ones in their approach to the analysis of ecological tourist activity. There are four academic schools that stand out clearly - American, Australian, German and Mexican. The concept of eco-tourism is reflected in the work of the following researchers: P. Wight, N. Ward, D. Western, D. McLaren, P. Hasslacher, K. Ziffer, G. Wallace, W. Stradas, D. Kramer, K-H. Rochlitz, P. Valentine, B. Steck, I. Mose, T. Whelan, D. Hawking, K. Lindberg, P. Jonsson, Epler Wood, J. Krippendorf, E. Boo, H. Ceballos-Lascurain (Arsen'yeva et al., 2005).

Regardless of the fact that there are a large number of scientific works, the results of scientific research in this field are published, yet, until now, scientists have not come to a single universal

understanding of the term “ecological tourism”. Opinions of domestic and foreign researchers differ in their views on the conceptual definition of ecotourism activity. The first publications containing the results of studies on the negative impact of tourism on the natural environment of recreational areas appeared in the 1980s. At this time, the West German magazine “TEO” publishes an article by the German futurologist R. Jungk “How many tourists per hectare of beach?”, The book “Peaceful destruction of the landscape and measures to save it in Switzerland” by H. Weiss. Scientific developments in this area have led to the emergence of such concepts as “green tourism”, “soft tourism”, “ecological tourism” (as cited in Mozgovaya, 2004).

There is an opinion that for the first time the term “ecological tourism” was applied by the Mexican economist and ecologist Hector Tseballos-Laskurein in 1983. According to his interpretation, ecotourism is “a trip to relatively untouched corners of nature for exploring and studying nature, samples of wild flora and fauna, as well as cultural attractions located in this area” (Ceballos, 1984, p. 41).

Later in 1993, Ceballos (1993) changed his point of view, and the final interpretation of this term reads as follows: Ecotourism is environmentally responsible trips to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to explore and explore nature and associated cultural attractions that contribute to the preservation of the environment, causing minimal damage nature and creating socio-economic benefits for the local population through their active involvement in the tourism process. (p. 32)

In 1996, this formulation was approved by the International Union for conservation of nature. This interpretation gives an idea of tourism compatible with social and environmental requirements. Ecological tourism – contributes to the protection of the environment and the preservation of the well-being of the local population, differs from natural tourism by the presence of obligations in relation to environmental protection and regional development.

In Russia, the emergence of the term “eco-tourism” is associated with the activities of the Sputnik International Youth Tourism Bureau in the Irkutsk Regional Committee of the Young Communist League in the mid-1980s. The bureau specialists developed and implemented tourist routes “Ecotour along the valley of the Goloustnaya River”, “Ecotour along the Circum-Baikal Railway” and others, which for the first time received the official name “ecotourism routes”. Ecological tourism meant the implementation of tourist routes in which the actions of travelers did not pollute the environment, tourists would not only take a rest, but also if possible participate in solving environmental problems of the territory, in particular, Baikal. At that stage of the development of “eco-tourism”, this concept was viewed more as a moral category, rather than an economic one. Currently, the definition of the environmental tourism sector distinguishes two approaches. First, by ecological tourism they mean tourism, the object of which is “wild” nature. This approach was developed in the USA in the 80s of the 20th century as a direction for the development of tourism for naturalists. That is, tourism within untouched areas, contributing to the preservation of nature and the well-being of the local population. This approach is not entirely justified, since for recreation in the natural environment, “wild” nature is not a prerequisite for environmental awareness raising activities, environmental protection measures, events that improve the well-being of the local population. In addition, the circle of travelers who are able to visit territories with “wild” nature will

be narrowing, due to their inaccessibility and lack of special training. And this in turn will not contribute to the development of eco-tourism. Secondly, a number of scientists make the identification of two concepts of “ecological tourism” and “sustainable” tourism, in which environmental management does not entail degradation of resources, because part of the income from the development of tourism goes to their protection and restoration. These concepts, in our opinion, cannot be synonymous for a number of objective reasons.

Analyzing the existing interpretations of the concept of “eco-tourism”, you can combine definitions in several groups. The first group includes general definitions that do not reflect all the specifics of ecological tourism:

“Ecotourism is a viable tourism sensitive to the environment, including the study of the natural and cultural state of the environment and aiming at improving the situation in this environment” – definition by Miller (1987); “Eco-tourism is a responsible journey to natural areas, areas that preserve the environment and support the well-being of local residents” – a definition formulated by the International Organization of Ecotourism (TIES) (Naturfreunde, 2019);

“Eco-tourism is natural tourism that promotes nature conservation” - the definition of the World Wildlife Fund (2015);

“Eco-tourism is a sustainable and natural-oriented tourism and recreation” – definition by Lindberg and Hawking (1993);

“Eco-tourism is a journey with a low anthropogenic impact on the environment or tours to nature” is a formulation made by Markus Endicott (Khrabovchenko, 2003);

“Ecotourism is a type of tourism that is connected with the knowledge of nature and contributes to the preservation of ecosystems while respecting the interests of the local population” – the definition of the Canadian Environmental Advisory Board (Khrabovchenko, 2003);

“Ecotourism is an active form of recreation based on the non-exhaustive use of natural goods” – this definition was given by Mazurov (2004);

“Eco-tourism is a quiet and calm tourism that should provide physical and spiritual relaxation for people in direct contact with the landscape, taking into account the long-term interests of local residents” - an interpretation of the Swiss ecotourism school;

“Ecotourism is any kind of tourism and recreation in nature that does not damage the natural complexes, promotes nature conservation and improves the well-being of the local population,” this is the definition given by the US Ecotourism Society (Naturfreunde, 2019).

The second group includes definitions that are more specific, but still do not reflect the main content of ecological tourism. As the dominant components of the content marked by a mild impact on nature, stimulating the protection of the biosphere, the economic interest of the local population. Ecotourism in the three main components of the definition: “ecotourism encourages the primacy of the interests of local residents in the tourist development of the territory, protects the local flora and fauna and provides local residents with economic incentives to preserve the environment,” says the International Society for Survival (Babkin, 2008); “Traveling with responsibility to the environment in relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to explore and enjoy nature and cultural sights, which contributes to nature conservation, has a mild environmental impact, ensures the active socio-economic participation of local people and their

benefits from this activity” – the definition of IUCN; “A set of forms of tourism in which a conscious attempt is made to minimize the negative impact on the environment, to assist in financing protected natural areas, to create sources of income for the local population” is the interpretation of the German Ecotourism Society (Miller, 1987). The third group of definitions of “ecotourism” includes definitions in which the content of this concept is revealed, but the emphasis is shifted. For example, in a number of works by Mamaeva (2008) eco-tourism is considered as:

Eco-tourism is a kind of nature tourism, which is carried out in untouched corners of nature for the purpose of environmental education, acquaintance with the traditional way of life, crafts, folklore traditions and historical past. The main conditions for such tourism are the careful use of natural resources, the preservation of the natural-cultural complex and the support of the local, mainly traditional economy.

According to this researcher, the main purpose of eco-tourism is “environmental education and familiarity with the traditional way of life, crafts, traditions and historical past”.

In a completely different light, ecological tourism is seen by authors such as Guzhin et al. (1997):

Eco-tourism is a journey based on caring for the environment and organizing trips with a limited number of participants to natural areas with possible visits to places of cultural interest in order to implement various projects for the protection and rational use of natural resources”.

In the tourist terminological dictionary, ecological tourism is interpreted by Zorin and Kvartalnov (2003):

Eco-tourism is a combination of travel with an environmentally sensitive attitude to nature, which allows combining the joy of exploring new landscapes, studying samples of flora and fauna with the ability to contribute to their protection. The main resource of ecotourism are protected areas – reserves, national and natural parks, unique and typical landscapes. Ecotourism economically contributes to the preservation of nature: protected areas attract tourists, for the maintenance of which jobs are created; natural resources become recreational, their use is based on compliance with environmental laws.

In this definition, the main resource of ecological tourism are protected areas, which limits the possibilities of ecotourism. This interpretation can now be considered obsolete.

Summarizing the results of the analysis of domestic and foreign authors on the definition of the content of the concept of ecotourism, we can formulate it as follows: it is a nature-oriented type of tourism, which aims to harmonize the relationship between man and the environment, an important function of which is environmental education and education. A necessary condition for its implementation should be:

- the presence of relatively untouched natural and distinctive cultural landscapes;
- respect for ecosystems;
- assistance in the implementation of environmental projects;
- improving the welfare of the local population.

Ecotourism is a form of responsible tourism when traveling on the nature and contributes to the protection of the environment and the preservation of the welfare of the local population (Khetagurova et al., 2018). It is designed for traveling in small groups in non-mass places. Ecotourism differs from nature tourism by the obligation to preserve the environment and to develop regions.



## 5. Conclusion

Analyzing the situation of the development of ecological tourism in Russia, it can be stated that this species is mostly in the initial stage of development. Common obstacles to its development include:

- lack of uniform methods for determining permissible recreational loads and monitoring;
- lack of detailed information on the areas of tours and environmental awareness programs, specialized information on the biodiversity of the territory;
- insufficient number of routes and programs for different categories of tourists, a tourist product that meets the standards of the international tourist market;
- lack of experience and knowledge of the staff necessary for the successful organization of ecotourism, especially in terms of marketing, educational programs for different categories of tourists, ensuring adequate quality of services (Khetagurova et al., 2015);
- low level of infrastructure development: transport networks, living conditions, organized tourist routes, equipped ecological and educational trails, observation platforms;
- lack of high-quality promotional and informational materials and opportunities to enter the international market.

The constraints for the development of ecotourism also include the unfavorable modern economic environment to attract investors (Dyachenko et al., 2015). The importance of promoting the tourist product, especially in protected areas, is underestimated. Since in practical work in the development of eco-tourism there is no integrated component, the development of a model for sustainable development of ecotourism and the development of the ecological services market comes to the fore. When building a model of eco-tourism important points are:

- development of a program for monitoring and determining the “capacity” of the territories used for ecotourism and improving the system of planning and controlling the consequences of ecological excursion activities (Kryukova et al., 2016);
- development of a methodology for assessing the ecotourism potential of the territories, adapted to the features of the protected mode and methods of managing ecotourism in protected areas;
- creating favorable conditions for attracting investors, applying the design of public-private partnerships in order to attract private capital for the qualitative improvement of the existing infrastructure and the creation of a new, conducive to the development of eco-tourism (Mosalev et al., 2018);
- improvement of tourist infrastructure;
- optimization of the methodological base of ecological tourism;
- increasing the level of culture of tourists.

In the process of establishing the model of ecotourism, all positive and negative aspects should be taken into account and ways of solving the current challenges of the time in the context of globalization are outlined. Ecotourism as an element of the market can serve the environmental, socio-cultural and economic interests of a person, society and the state. Its successful development depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of its promotion in the market as a tourist product, that is, targeted tourist marketing.

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