

UDC 338.48 (574)

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Ecological tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan: problems and prospects of development

In this scientific article were considered one of the most promising sectors of the economy Republic of Kazakhstan — tourism industry, including the importance and development opportunities of ecological tourism. Accordingly, the history, types and directions of the development of the industry were given definitions and explanations and analysis of the principles and peculiarities of development. Opportunities for the development of ecological tourism are characterized by a radical description of the country's resource potential for this sector. Today, our country pays great attention to the development of tourism as a source of income. The President pointed out that the eco-tourism system, based on its structure and peculiarities, has a great potential for development in the country. But it is well-known that the development of traditional tourism is long-term and expensive. And ecological tourism, in this case, does not require a large amount of money, it not only differs with its complicated infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, roads, communications, etc.), but also now provides priority employment for rural populations. In the process of ecological tourism development, villagers can be mixed with their services such as hotel, *kyiz yu*, national dishes, horses. To do this, it is necessary to provide basic knowledge of hotel business and prepare road guides for trips to the native land, explaining the benefits to the local population.

Keywords: ecological tourism, ecotourism community, economic incentive, economic benefits, infrastructure, investment, basic education, travel, tourism market.

Ecological tourism (ecotourism) is a kind of cognitive trips of different levels. The main and essential resource of ecological tourism is the natural environment or its individual elements: landscapes, natural monuments, plants or animal life. Ecotourism was first used in the West in the 80s of the XX century with the Mexican ecologist Eckor Sebarellos — Laskuren. There are several types of ecological tourism in the professional environment:

1. Ecological tourism is one of the types of tourism which is aimed at the knowledge of the environment and its non-destructive natural areas, for the purpose of refining the natural, cultural hospitality. (International Council for Nature Protection).

2. Ecological tourism is a journey of responsibility towards natural areas, which contributes to nature conservation and enhances the quality of life on the ground. (The Ecotourism Community — The Ecotourism Society).

3. Ecological tourism is a special type of tourism that preserves ecosystem integrity, which provides economic benefits to local people through the acquaintance of natural, cultural and ethnographic features of those lands, as well as protection of nature and natural resources. (World Wildlife Fund) [1].

Based on the above definitions, there are special cases of ecological tourism, which constitute a set of the following principles of ecological tourism:

1. A journey to familiarize with the surroundings, the wildlife, local tradition and culture.

2. Contributing to the preservation of the environmental sustainability by collecting environmental and social data.

3. Access to protection and renewal of natural environment.
4. Income of local residents, their income from the tourist business. This in turn creates an economic incentive for environmental protection.
5. To achieve stable development and economic efficiency of favorable land development in ecological tourism development (Table 1).

Table 1

Principles and features of ecological tourism

Principles of ecological tourism	Special features of ecological tourism
1. To achieve effective ecological and socio-cultural result, to preserve the environmental sustainability.	Tourism development is clearly planned, controlled and managed. Accurate rules of tourists during traveling to natural areas. Ecologically clean vehicles for tourists. Disposal of wastes outside the territory of the territory for ecotechnological treatment. Not allowed for sale, purchase of memorable items from live natural objects. Tourist hotel, camping, etc. not to adversely affect the sustainable environmental development of local landscapes.
2. Formation of environmental education and understanding	Acquaintance of ecotourists with information on preliminary trips and natural tours, acquaintance with the tour rules. Excursions and excursions are mandatory, environmental and cognitive components. Tours are carried out by highly specialized guides — ecologists. Objects of formation of cognitive concepts — ecologically acceptable, natural and cultural landscapes.
3. Contribution to the protection of nature, local social and cultural environment	Tourist farming is an additional, effective source of funding for protected areas. Participants also take a part in environmental activities (volunteers, ecologists, etc.) Tourists are aware of the local traditions, culture and life style.
4. Participation of local people and income from tourism	Local residents have the opportunity to develop their traditional farms by engaging in tourist business. Ecotourism is economically profitable for locals.
5. Economic achievement	Complex intervention in tourism development. Real planning, control and management. Ecotourism integration. Collaboration of various industry organizations in this area.

Currently, eco-tourism is highly developed countries: Laos, Nepal; Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Tourism is now distinguished by the fact that ecological tourism, which is becoming a floating and highly successful economic sector, can clearly regulate the demand types. The international tourist market today is primarily tough competition, which is measured by a wealth of hundreds of billion dollars. This situation also determines the necessity of development of the tourism industry in our country that meets the requirements of today. One of such industries is ecotourism. Accordingly, there are selected and effective areas for environmental tourism. These regions in Kazakhstan are: Almaty, Zhambyl, South Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan, Akmola region. To this end, Almaty is implementing a tourism development program for 2004–2010. It is very convenient for the development of ecological tourism in Almaty region. It has unique nature: Lake Kulsai, Ili River, Charyn Canyon, Singer Sands, Altyn-Emel National Park, Ile Alatau Dynasty etc. we can note many natural objects. Popularly known species of ecotourism are tourism in this region [2].

In the East Kazakhstan and the Altai Mountains, there is high demand for extreme tourism, including gliding with bicycles. The southern and western regions of Kazakhstan are focused on the natural landscape and cultural and historical monuments of Islam. In Atyrau, it is planned to make such tours in camels. In the Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve, near the city of Astana, we can describe saline lakes and large birds of waterfowl that are of interest to eco tourists. Currently, there are 750–800 tourist companies operating in Kazakhstan with at least 80 countries, from them only 10 to 15 percent are engaged in attracting tourists and providing domestic tourism services. On this basis, the government creates many conditions for the development of domestic tourism. Many of the picturesque and colorful places of the country are unknown to the public, and the most important problem in the tourism sector of the republic is the problem, which is difficult to achieve. In order to find a solution, first of all, it is necessary to use innovative information technologies, including the creation of web sites to increase the tourist potential of Kazakhstan in the Internet. In turn, the President

of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, in the Council of Foreign Investors proposed to pay more attention to the development of tourism industries in our country. But it is well-known that the development of traditional tourism is long-term and expensive. And ecological tourism, in this case, does not require a large amount of money, it does not only distinguish its complex infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, roads, communications, etc.), but also now provides priority employment for rural populations. In the process of ecological tourism development, villagers can be mixed with their services such as hotel, yurta, national dishes, horses. To do this, it is necessary to provide basic knowledge of hotel business and prepare road guides for trips to the native land, explaining the benefits to the local population.

National parks occupy leading positions in the development of ecological tourism. Compared to nature reserves, national parks can be considered as places of interest for tourists while maintaining nature conservation. For example, vacation in national parks is rugged for Europe and Americans. Unfortunately, tourists and tour operators in Kazakhstan do not understand the difference between ecotourism and camping. The main purpose of classical ecotourism is to create ecological awareness of tourists, tourists should be acquainted with the natural and cultural heritage of the region and country. Ecotourists, oriented to different categories of travelers, are characterized by such types of accommodation as chambers, tourist destinations and holiday homes. In recent years there has been a «explosion» of ecological tourism around the world. Citizens of the developed countries have chosen the choice of traveling in different countries, which has not been damaged by nature. That is why the ecological tourism philosophy is so simple that it says: «Do not leave anything else in the snow and sand; not to kill anything except the time; and taking nothing but the photo» [3].

Ecological tourism is one of the most popular sectors that contributes to the sustainable development of the economy. According to the analysis of the tourism market of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan Tourism Association, IPK Analyzes 2011), the nature of the country has a high potential, including national parks, reserves and cultural heritage. Surveys are conducted in Germany, Great Britain, France, South Korea and Japan (around 10,000 questionnaires) show that foreign tourists have a high interest in environmental tours in Kazakhstan. It is worth noting that the tourist zones in the country are comparable to pearls. Kazakhstan is in the world-class with its tourism capabilities. Our country needs a considerable US investment to become a major tourist destination by 2020. Today Kazakhstan, along with specialized, extreme tours, along with other countries, offers tours to the Great Silk Road, but these travels can not be achieved. For this purpose, tourism should be primarily focused on qualitative services within the state. At the same time, Kazakhstan has two high potentials for the development of the tourism industry. They are:

- 1) Business tourism;
- 2) Ecological tourism (31 %, 1 half of 2015).

These two types of tourism are also competitive in the international tourist market. It should become one of the main sources of the development of Kazakhstan in the world's best in the ecological tourism market. What can we offer today to the international tourist market? This is our natural resources and landscapes that are not inferior to nature. Nevertheless, the environmental tourism sector cannot become a precondition for state tourism policy. This type of tourism in the form of a social facility is not mentioned in any state strategic document.

Taking into account the tourist resources and opportunities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, experts recommend the state to develop ecological tourism. Kazakhstan offers tourists to get acquainted with natural and cultural landscapes, national hospitality. But in the field of tourism, there are still unresolved problems and «white spots». Suggestions as a solution to these issues:

1. Formation of competitive infrastructure.
2. Development of convenient transportation at affordable prices.
3. Development the quality of roads and communications.
4. Formation of top rated hotels and campsites.
5. Information support in this area (maps, links, guidebooks, thematic sites and portals, local memorabilia and other components of tourism industry) should be perfected.

From the years of independence of Kazakhstan, tourism has been a major breakthrough of development as an innovative phenomenon in economics. Therefore, we can see good results have been achieved by considering environmental tourism as the basis of tourism. At the state legislative level, much attention is being paid to the ecological aspects of tourism through meaningful reforms in tourism, regulatory acts. Public organizations working in Kazakhstan and around the world have contributed to the development of ecological tourism and its principles. Such structures have invested resources in the development of eco-tourism by attracting donor organizations. One of the first such projects is the Ecotourism Information Resource Center

(EARO). This organization was created for the development of ecological tourism and local communities. The Center was established in 2005 by the Kazakhstan Tourist Association. Ecotourism Information Resource Center is targeting ecological tourism and attracts information and resource base for ecotourism. Over the past five years, the center has been working with such world-renowned organizations as VSO, Pragma, USAIP, ExxoMobil, Eurasia. EARO is a center aimed at creating sustainable income through the development of international tourism and tourism in Kazakhstan and providing support to local organizations. Since the EARO project is of humanitarian nature, its main source of revenue is the proceeds from memorable items and thematic paper [4].

EARO is a necessary unit on the tourist market. Eco-friendly advertising is a leading role in the development of ecological tourism in Kazakhstan. EARO statistical data for 2010–2012 (tourists, hotels and night-breaks, eco-availability and their performance) (Table 2) [5].

Table 2

EARO statistical data for 2010–2012

Parameter	Years		
	2010	2011	2012
The number of foreign tourists visited Kazakhstan	347413	459337	424355
The number of tourists visited EARO	754	1310	222
The number of foreign tourists visited the office	305	850	200
Number of tourists visited the website of EARO	12700	17500	15910
The number of ecosites	23	29	30
Nightlife number of hotels (stop gray)	43(30)	56(30)	58(30)
To EARO h/day	1072	1750	276
The number of tourists directed to ecosites	487	690	163

Note. Personal EAO statistics.

With regard to the dynamics of the development of ecotourism of the country, it should be noted that currently there are about ten ecosites in Kazakhstan. What are environmental sites? Ecosite («ecological parking» in English) is the development of ecological tourism, with the exception of projects based on rural associations (Table 3, Fig.) [2].

Table 3

EARO indicators for 2011–2015

Year	The number of foreign tourists visited Kazakhstan	The number of tourists visiting EARO	Number of tourists visiting the office of EARO	The number of ecosites	EARO's success	Accordingly, the success of the ecosystem
2011	434 943	209	52	12418	150000	1500000
2012	520 972	956	330	32783	320000	3200000
2013	541 930	1507	440	59830	350000	3500000
2014	354 098	1610	470	70600	400000	4000000
2015	347 670	754	305	12700	800000	8000000

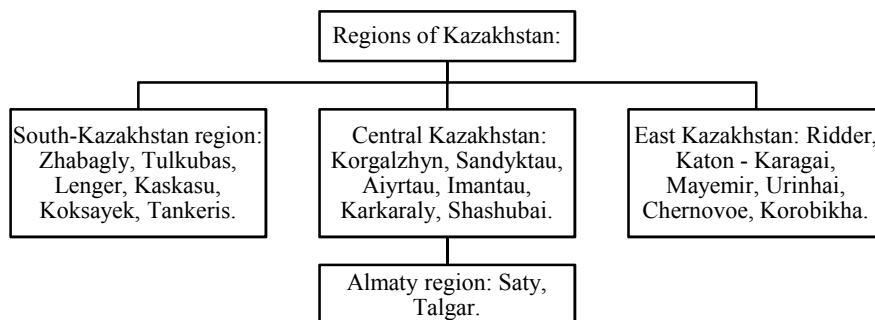


Figure. Ecosites of Kazakhstan

And ecological tourism, in this case, does not require a large amount of money, it not only differs with its complicated infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, roads, communications, etc.), but also now provides priority employment for rural populations. In the process of ecological tourism development, villagers can be mixed with their services such as hotel, kyiz yu, national dishes, horses. To do this, it is necessary to provide basic knowledge of hotel business and prepare road guides for trips to the native land, explaining the benefits to the local population.

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Қазақстан Республикасындағы экологиялық туризм: мәселелері мен даму болашағы

Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасының экономикалық дамушы секторларының бірі — туризм саласы, оның ішінде экологиялық туризмнің маңызы мен даму мүмкіндіктері қарастырылған. Сәйкесінше, бұл саланың даму тарихы, түрлері мен бағыттарына анықтамалар мен түсіндірмелер беріліп, даму қағидалары мен ерекшеліктеріне талдау жасалған. Экологиялық туризмді дамыту мүмкіндіктерін еліміздің осы салаға қажетті ресурстық әлеуетіне түбегейлі сипаттама берілген. Бүгінде еліміз табыс көзі ретінде туризмді дамытуға да баса назар аударып отыр. Елбасымыздың экономикалық тиімді сала деп атап көрсеткен экотуризм жүйесі, өзінің құрылымы мен ерекшелігі негізінде елімізде зор даму мүмкіндігіне ие. Алайда туризмнің дәстүрлі түрлерін дамыту көп мерзімді әрі қымбатқа түсетіні мәлім. Ал экологиялық туризм бұл жағдайда өзінің көп қаржы салымын қажет етпеуімен, күрделі инфрақұрылымымен (қонақүйлер, мейрамханалар, жолдар, байланыс т.б.) ерекшеленіп қана қоймай, қазіргі уақытта басым сұранысқа ие бола отырып, ауылды елді мекендерді қосымша жұмыс орындарымен қамтамасыз етеді. Экологиялық туризмнің даму үрдісіне ауыл халқы араластырылып, өздерінің қонақ үйі, киіз үйі, ұлттық тағамдарды дайындау, жылқыларды жалға беру сияқты қызметтерін ұсына алады. Ол үшін жергілікті халыққа пайдасын түсіндіре отырып, қонақүй бизнесінің базалық білімдерін беріп, туған өлкеге саяхаттарда жол көрсетушілерін дайындау қажет.

Кілт сөздер: экологиялық туризм, экотуризм қоғамдастығы, экономикалық ынта, экономикалық тиімділік, инфрақұрылым, қаржы салымы, базалық білім, саяхат, туризм нарығы.

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Экологический туризм в Республике Казахстан: проблемы и перспективы развития

В статье рассматривается один из экономически развивающихся секторов Республики Казахстан — индустрия туризма, в том числе возможности развития экологического туризма. Даются определения основным понятиям, также показаны этапы исторического развития, раскрываются виды и направления сектора туризма, анализируются принципы и особенности его развития. Возможности для развития экологического туризма характеризуются радикальным описанием ресурсного потенциала страны для этого сектора. Отмечено, что сегодня наша страна уделяет большое внимание туризму как экономически выгодному источнику дохода. Президент Казахстана Н.А. Назарбаев отметил, что система экотуризма, основанная на его структуре и особенностях, имеет большой потенциал для развития в

нашей стране. Хорошо известно, что развитие традиционного туризма является долгосрочным и дорогостоящим, а экологический туризм в этом случае не требует больших денег, не только отличается от традиционного отсутствием сложной инфраструктуры (гостиницы, рестораны, дороги, коммуникации и т.д.), но также обеспечивает приоритетную занятость для сельского населения. В процессе развития экологического туризма привлекаются местные жители, которые предоставляют свои дома, юрты для проживания, готовят национальные блюда, сдают в аренду лошадей, для чего необходимо предоставить базовые знания о гостиничном бизнесе и подготовить путеводители для поездок по родному краю, объяснив преимущества для местного населения.

Ключевые слова: экологический туризм, сообщество экотуризма, экономический стимул, экономическая выгода, инфраструктура, капиталовложение, базовое образование, путешествие, рынок туризма.

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