

ASIAN EXPERIENCE IN CREATING AND DEVELOPING ECOTOURISM AND THE PERSPECTIVE OF USING IT IN UKRAINE

ДОСВІД КРАЇН АЗІЇ ЩОДО СТАНОВЛЕННЯ ТА РОЗВИТКУ ЕКОЛОГІЧНОГО ТУРИЗМУ ТА МОЖЛИВОСТІ ЙОГО ВИКОРИСТАННЯ В УКРАЇНІ

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The study determined that many Asian countries recognize ecotourism as a key area of their national economy. At the same time, the population of these countries understands the importance of preparing for the reception of "green" tourists, which is due to the ecological features of natural territories. The goal of this study is to scientifically substantiate the prospects for the development of ecological tourism in Ukraine, using Asian experience. Because many Asian countries recognize ecotourism as a key area of their national economy. It has been established that China and Vietnam have the best mechanisms for regulating the development of ecotourism, which can be used in Ukraine. The restraining factors of the development of recreational, historical, cultural and natural potential have been clarified: Based on the results of the research, the priority areas of ecotourism development that need to be implemented in Ukraine have been identified: awareness of the country's population of the need for ecotourism development, improvement of the legislative framework and policy for the development of ecotourism; development of human resources in this area. The scientific novelty and theoretical significance of the obtained results lies in the fact that, based on the conducted research, the areas that need to be implemented in Ukraine for the development of ecological tourism, based on the experience of China and Vietnam, are proposed. The practical significance of the article lies in the development and substantiation of scientific and practical provisions regarding the formation and development of ecological tourism in Ukraine using the experience of Asian countries.

Key words: ecotourism, Asian countries, tourism industry of China and Vietnam.

В дослідженні визначено, що багато країн Азії визнають екотуризм як ключову сферу своєї національної економіки. Разом із цим населення цих країн розуміє важливість підготовки до прийому "зелених" туристів, що обумовлено екологічними особливостями природних територій. В якості мети даного дослідження поставлено задачу наукового обґрунтування перспектив розвитку екологічного туризму в Україні, використовуючи азійський досвід. Оскільки, багато країн Азії визнають екотуризм як ключову сферу своєї національної економіки. Встановлено, що саме в Китаї та В'єтнамі найкращі механізми регулювання розвитку екотуризму, які можна взяти на озброєння в Україні. З'ясовано стримуючі фактори розвитку рекреаційного, історико-культурного та природного потенціалу. За результатами дослідження визначено пріоритетні напрями розвитку екотуризму, які необхідно реалізувати в Україні, виходячи з досвіду Китаю та В'єтнаму: зміна сприйняття населенням необхідності розвитку екотуризму (важливо створити свідоме усвідомлення серед населення про важливість екологічного та культурного спадщини), реструктуризація індустрії туризму для забезпечення професіоналізму та сталого розвитку відповідно до законів ринкової економіки та міжнародної інтеграції; вдосконалення владних інститутів і політики (для успішного розвитку екотуризму необхідна дієва співпраця між різними рівнями влади та ефективна політика, яка сприяє збалансованому розвитку); інвестиції в розвиток інфраструктури та матеріальних об'єктів для екотуризму (розвиток інфраструктури, такої як готелі, маршрути, туристичні центри, є ключовим для забезпечення комфортного перебування та безпеки туристів); створення сприятливого середовища для розвитку екотуризму (заохочення ділових ініціатив, що спрямовані на розвиток екотуризму через податкові пільги та інші стимули); розвиток людських ресурсів у сфері екотуризму; забезпечення якості навчання та навичок гідів та персоналу для забезпечення відмінного обслуговування та незабутнього досвіду для туристів. Наукова новизна та теоретична значущість отриманих результатів полягає у тому, що на основі проведеного дослідження запропоновано напрями, які потрібно реалізувати в Україні для розвитку екологічного туризму, виходячи з досвіду Китаю та В'єтнаму. Практична значущість статті полягає у розробленні та обґрунтуванні науково-практичних положень щодо становлення та розвитку екологічного туризму в Україні використовуючи досвід країн Азії.

Ключові слова: екотуризм, країни Азії, туристична індустрія Китаю та В'єтнаму.

Formulation of the problem. Tourism embodies the mechanisms of using natural resources. Nevertheless, the negative impact of tourism on the environment has already been scientifically confirmed. That is why the object of our research is ecotourism, studied with regard to the concept of rational and responsible nature management.

It is not for the first time that the world is witnessing proper understanding the importance of nature conservation, consideration of ecological aspects and the development of a sustainable economy. Ecotourism occupies an important place among the key factors influencing this evolution, as this phenomenon combines travelling and natural

science, revealing opportunities for economic development and preserving natural resources of various countries. The issue of the impact made by ecotourism on the economy is becoming especially relevant in modern world, with its growing awareness of the need for harmonious coexistence of human and the environment.

Formulation of the purpose of the article. The article is aimed at scientifically substantiating the prospects for ecological tourism to be developed in Ukraine using the Asian experience as a basis. Many Asian countries recognize ecotourism as a key area of their national economy. At the same time, the population of these countries understands the

importance of preparing to receive “green” tourists due to the environmental features of their natural territories.

Presenting main material. This research is aimed at conducting a thorough analysis of the relationship between ecotourism and the economy. Besides the economic contribution of ecotourism, we also consider its sociocultural and ecological impact on society and the natural environment. Various aspects of ecotourism have been highlighted, from its development and impact made on local ecosystems to the economic benefits that can be gained through the development of this type of tourism.

Through carrying out this research, we aim to expand our understanding of the processes taking place in ecotourism, and to explore the possibilities of using this potential in the best way possible to enhance economic growth. Our findings and recommendations can become an important contribution to the development of strategies and policies aimed at promoting economic growth through the development of ecotourism.

For further development of the topic, let's take a closer look at the definition of ecological tourism, or ecotourism. It is a relatively new area in the tourism field appearing in the 1980s, when the first studies in the area were published. The main reason for ecological tourism to emerge was the lack of accomplished relations in the society-nature system, or, in the context of tourism, tourism-ecology system.

The first definition of ecotourism was presented by the Mexican eco-economist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, and it sounded like this: Ecotourism is a combination of travelling with an ecologically sensitive attitude to nature, which allows you to combine the joy of getting to know and exploring unique natural features with the opportunity to contribute to their preservation.

Ecotourism can play a key role in the income generation within the general budget funds of a village, provided that the state actively intervenes in the recovery of the tourism industry. Specially authorized bodies can implement an effective policy of attracting potential customers, as well as providing motivated support to private tour operators in villages (granting microcredits, promoting innovations, supporting innovative ideas, providing financial support for public initiatives, etc.). These measures can help raise the level of economic activity in villages, ensuring stable incomes and development of local economies.

For many countries, ecotourism has become a key component of the national economy and allowed countries to develop and spread information about the real treasure of our planet, e.g.:

– The Amazon rainforest_(South America): This is the largest rainforest in the world and is home to the most diverse species of plants and animals.

Eco tours allow you to travel through the jungle, study the vegetation and interact with local cultures.

– Yosemite National Park (USA): This park is famous for its spectacular nature, such as huge rocks, waterfalls and huge forests. Eco tours allow visitors to enjoy the wildlife and observe the life of various animal species.

– Niagara Falls (Canada/USA): These spectacular falls separating Canada and the United States are considered one of the most famous natural wonders of the world. Tourists can enjoy the views of the waterfalls and study the surrounding ecosystems.

– Mount Kilimanjaro (Tanzania); This huge mountain is the tallest in Africa and one of the tallest in the world. Climbing to the top of Kilimanjaro is a challenge for brave tourists who can enjoy the views and explore the mountain ecosystems.

The abovementioned places amaze tourists with their beauty and diversity, and ecotourism provides an opportunity not only to travel, but also to contribute to the preservation of these unique environments for future generations [7].

Considering the current situation in the Asian tourist market, it can be noted that eco- and agrotourism have become among the most popular areas in the field. These forms of tourism allow tourists not only to enjoy the natural beauty and authentic atmosphere, and preserve natural resources, but also actively contribute to the accumulation of finances in a country with a well-developed tourism sector.

For example, a fishing community located on the Palawan island in the Philippines organizes cheap cruises for tourists, during which they can observe marine animals and participate in dolphin and sea turtle conservation projects. Earnings from these excursions significantly raise the community's standard of living and help draw attention to the importance of protecting marine ecosystems.

It is important to note that the governments of Asian countries and representatives of local tourism communities pay special attention to ecological tourism. Cambodia, for example, is the first Southeast Asian country to sign an agreement with the Global Council on Sustainable Tourism. This agreement provides for active support of ecological tourism initiatives in the country and contributes to the creation of favorable conditions necessary to develop ecotourism and preserve biodiversity.

Another example is the Qiang ethnic group living in the mountains of southwestern China, whose members make a profit by selling dishes made of organic products to tourists. This practice promotes organic awareness and supports the development of eco-friendly businesses in the region, while creating a unique tourism experience for visitors [1].

A large part of Indonesia's income going to the country's budget is received from the tourism branch. The development of ecotourism in Indonesia

is an example of a successful sustainable tourism initiative. The country is actively implementing environmentally friendly practices, thereby attracting conscious travelers. Promoting the preservation of the environment and supporting local communities are the key principles underlying the development of ecotourism in this country. In Indonesia, a network of eco-hotels is developing, which use alternative energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines. Many of these hotels also take pains to conserve water through collecting rainwater and using it to irrigate gardens and lawns. Ecotourism projects in Indonesia help preserve nature reserves and protected areas. Increasing tourists' awareness and support helps the government to finance nature conservation and ecosystem rehabilitation projects. There are other measures as well contributing to the development of tourism in Indonesia, ensuring sustainable development and preservation of the environment for future generations [6].

Current development of the tourism industry in Europe is facing the trend of the growing popularity of ecotourism. This type of tourism is aimed at preserving nature and promoting environmental education. For example, scientific research in this field focuses on the tourism compliance with the principles of sustainable development. This implies a positive relationship between environmental, socio-cultural and economic aspects of tourism.

One of the main research areas is the differentiation and logical sequence of the stages within the development of ecotourism. This involves effective use of natural resources, their protection and reconstruction, and taking into consideration the laws of market mechanisms. Another important issue is the safety of environmental management, which requires a set of measures to preserve and restore the natural and socio-cultural environment. Social partnership between authorities, enterprises and the public plays a key role in the development of ecotourism, contributing to the creation of best possible spatial organization and zoning of territories for ecotourism.

It is important to note that international ecotourism brings significant income. For example, according to data from 2016-2018, it brought \$93–233 billion in revenue worldwide. It is mainly caused by investment and state incentives in the field of ecotourism, aimed at supporting its development.

The specified principles and areas of research dealing with the development of ecological tourism are important for effective strategies to appear in this area. Solving the problem of the gap between the national and regional scientific schools of different countries requires conducting interstate studies of the ecotourism impact. This will allow us to identify the most effective mechanisms to develop ecotourism

and to find preferable frameworks for their application in specific regions of the world.

China not only has protected areas included in the Man and the Biosphere International Program, but is also actively developing new environmental initiatives. For example, in the Jiangming Lake area of Jiangsu Province, special bird watching platforms have been installed, helping tourists observe the biodiversity of this unique region. There are also projects on protection and restoration of river ecosystems in China. A project to restore forests and perennial grasses in the basin of the Yangtze River, one of China's most important rivers, has been launched in Yunnan Province. This initiative is aimed at preserving water resources and the diversity of flora and fauna. The construction of an ecologically clean tourist complex called "Taishan Jingzhou" has begun in the city of Jingzhou. This project involves the preservation of the natural environment and the use of renewable energy sources. In addition, garden and park art is actively developing in this region contributing to green tourism and aesthetic education of visitors [2].

Changbaishan Nature Reserve located in the mountains in northeastern China on the border with Korea, plays a key role in the development of ecotourism in the region. This state reserve was founded in 1960 and covers an area of about 500,000 acres. The management of the reserve annually receives significant financial funds intended for fighting forest fires, ensuring nature protection, and conducting scientific research and educational activities.

Each year, Changbaishan Nature Reserve receives about one million Chinese yuan for various conservation activities and educational programs. These funds are used to prevent and extinguish forest fires, conduct scientific research on local flora and fauna, and develop educational initiatives aimed at raising public awareness of the importance of nature conservation and biodiversity. These activities help to attract tourists and contribute to the development of ecotourism in this unique region [2].

In the late 1970s, the reserve opened its doors to foreign tourists, thus contributing to the development of ecotourism in the region. At the same time, the necessary infrastructure started to be built to provide comfortable accommodation for visitors. The reserve was divided into three zones to make its management effective. The main area, which made up more than half of the total area, was turned into protected area and was absolutely inaccessible to tourists. The second zone was made experimental and as such was set aside for scientific research and regulated tourism. The third zone, or the buffer zone, was intended for mass environmental tourism.

Revenues from tourism in this zone were received through selling entrance and guided tours tickets,

collecting fees for parking, hotel accommodation, chairlifts service, and profits from shops. As soon as by 1996, the reserve had received a significant income of 9.23 million yuan from tourism, thus almost reaching a balanced budget due to this activity. This became possible thanks to proper management and rational use of the reserve's resources to develop ecotourism and preserve the natural environment [2].

Thus, European and Chinese approaches to financing protected areas differ greatly. While Europe mainly uses public funding for nature conservation, China focuses on a mixed model that includes income from tourism.

In Chinese nature reserves, the forms of tourism used are closely related to the ecological features of the territories in question. Groups I and II reserves with sustainable ecosystems allow ecological excursions arousing cognitive interest in nature, which are popular forms of tourism. However, tourism is prohibited in Group V ecosystems with fragile features.

The positive effects of ecotourism, such as increasing the income of the local population, are nonetheless accompanied by negative consequences. Targeted tourism leads to deforestation, and degradation of vegetation and soil cover. The increase in solid household waste is also a serious problem, as there are no systems for its disposal.

Ecotourism, while helping to develop travel industry and stimulating economic growth, can also have a negative impact on the cultural and social environment of small nations and national minorities. This type of tourism can lead to the assimilation of a unique culture, the commercialization of traditions and the stratification of society. However, there are ways to deal with these challenges so as to preserve ecological diversity and cultural heritage. Shifting attention to other aspects of ecotourism can help preserve cultural heritage and support small nations. For example, studying and promoting traditional crafts and artisanal skills can help preserve unique aspects of a culture. It is also possible to implement programs helping to involve local population in tourism activities, thus contributing to the creation of new opportunities for their income and supporting the preservation of their cultural heritage.

For example, Vietnam is noted not only for its natural beauty, but also for its multi-layered cultural heritage. To support this heritage, educational programs for tourists on such issues as traditions, art and history of Vietnam can be implemented. It is also important to take into account the opinion and needs of the local population while developing tourism in order to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship between tourists and local residents.

Thus, the development of ecotourism can only be successful if cultural and social aspects are taken into account, and the principles of nature conservation

and cultural diversity are followed. Ecotourism in Vietnam is based on a number of principles that contribute to the preservation of the country's nature and cultural heritage [3].

Principle 1. Awareness raising and environmental education. Travel agencies are obliged to provide tourists with information about the natural features of the environment and involve them in nature conservation work.

Principle 2. Environmental protection and sustainable development. Ecotourism is associated with constant development, love for nature and environmental protection.

Principles 3 and 4. Support for cultural identity and involvement of local communities. Local communities, in particular ethnic minorities, have a unique way of life and traditions. These aspects are a valuable addition to ecotourism. In order to support this cultural heritage, it is important to involve local people in ecotourism and promote their participation in traditional activities.

In 2011, the European Union granted Vietnam 11 million euros to implement these principles. These funds were directed to execute the program on the development of socially responsible and ecological tourism till 2015. This assistance is recognized as the most significant one among other international assistance in the field of tourism received from foreign partners, contributing to the development of ecologically responsible and culturally balanced tourism in the country.

Despite positive trends in the development of the travel industry, the local population continues to live in poverty. Now, the economic benefits of ecotourism should be distributed to ensure community participation in the process. China is a positive example in this regard: a 2017 study by Dr. Li Wenjun found that the majority of residents in the Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve are involved in jobs in the tourism business. This involvement includes working in family-run hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops, renting animals for photography, and picking up trash in tourist areas. Family-run hotels are the main source of income for residents, helping to improve the quality of life in the community. The priority areas for improving the ecotourism sector include the following aspects:

1. Policy coordination and development. Interested authorities from local authorities to state government should actively coordinate the design and development of ecotourism policies. This includes publishing guidebooks and preserving vulnerable ecosystems and cultural integrity.

2. Research and evaluation of the natural environment. Baseline studies of potential ecotourism areas should be carried out, together with the assessment of the environmental impact produced by ecotourism activities and the possibility of avoiding

over-concentration of tourists, which could seriously affect local life and the natural environment.

3. Professional training of guides. Ecotourist guides should be trained in specialized colleges or universities. Employees, and managers in particular, should have professional skills and basic knowledge of ecotourism practices both at home and abroad.

4. Involvement and education of local communities. Local communities should be informed about the possibilities brought by ecotourism and be interested in its development. This may include information activities and training programs for local residents on the importance of ecotourism and its positive impact on communities and nature.

These measures are aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of ecotourism and the preservation of the country's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

In recent years, the Vietnamese government has been actively investing in improving infrastructure and researching nature reserves, studying their floral, faunal, geological and geomorphological features. These territories have become research centers and examples of biodiversity. Many universities and research institutes organize visits for students, specialists and foreign guests. The total amount of investments in national parks and reserves from 2015 to 2018 was \$71.1 billion [4].

Comparing the development level of the travel industry in the considered Asian countries and Ukraine, it should be noted that the gap in the indicators of tourist flows between them is significant. This is due not only to the degree of infrastructure development, but also to the mechanisms of state regulation in travel industry, the geographical location of countries, different natural and climatic conditions, and even the population size [5].

Comparing the absolute indicators of international tourism in different states, it can be noted that China occupies the leading position in our group, while Europe lags behind China in the number of arrivals throughout the period.

However, when analyzing the dynamics of this indicator, it becomes clear that Asian countries are lagging behind the European ones. Modern foreign investors are investing tens of billions of US dollars in resorts and hotels in China and Vietnam. Europe, on the contrary, cannot fully use its recreational, historical, cultural and natural potential due to several restraining factors:

1. Insufficient level of tourist infrastructure, which does not meet world standards.

2. The critical state of European highways, which makes it difficult for tourists to travel about a country.

3. Absence of a systemic strategy for bringing Europe's tourism product to the world market, which could have a tangible impact on the situation.

4. Low level of service due to the low qualifications of people working in the travel industry.

5. The imperfection of the regulatory and legal framework in the country's tourism sphere, which makes it difficult to conduct business and develop tourist services.

Conclusions. The research carried out has made it possible to single out areas that need to be developed in the countries with good tourism potential, based on the experience of China and Vietnam:

1. Changing the people's perception of the need to develop ecotourism. It is important to create conscious awareness among the population as for the importance of ecological and cultural heritage.

2. Restructuring travel industry to ensure professionalism and sustainable development in accordance with the laws of the market economy and international integration.

3. Improving power institutions and politics. Successful development of ecotourism requires effective cooperation between different government levels and effective policies that promote balanced development.

4. Investing in the development of infrastructure and material objects for ecotourism. The development of infrastructure such as hotels, routes, tourist centers is key to ensure that tourists receive a comfortable and safe stay.

5. Creating environment favorable for ecotourism. Encouraging business initiatives aimed at developing ecotourism through tax benefits and other incentives.

6. Developing human resources in the field of ecotourism. Ensuring high-level training received and skills developed by guides and staff to ensure excellent service and unforgettable experience for tourists.

The study results in finding out the fact that ecotourism contributes to the conservation of natural resources, encourages the maintenance of an ecologically clean environment, and promotes the development of local economies by creating demand for local products and services. In addition, it promotes environmental awareness among the local population and tourists, which is key to ensuring the long-term development of natural resources.

The results of the study emphasize the need to improve policy and regulation in the field of ecotourism, to ensure effective cooperation between government bodies, the public and the business environment. The development of ecotourism requires that favorable conditions be created both for tourists and the local population, which includes the preservation of nature, support for cultural heritage, and creation of innovative technologies to ensure environmental sustainability.

In general, ecotourism is an important tool for achieving economic stability and nature conservation, contributing to the development of both national and global communities.

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