

RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL CAPACITY OF THE NIZHNY NOVGOROD REGION

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ABSTRACT

The development of domestic tourism has acquired a special significance for the Russian Federation in the period of severe economic and financial crisis. The introduction of sanctions and the sharp decline in the flows of outbound tourism resulted in the reorientation of the population to the domestic tourism program. Domestic tourism program is the most important part of the program of import substitution, the implementation of which is necessary to ensure the stability and sustainability of economic development of Russian Federation. The article analyzes approaches to the definition of "recreational potential", examines the differences between the concepts of "tourism" and "recreational potential". Author's vision of definition "the recreational potential" is offered. The structure of recreational potential is defined. The choice of a method for assessment of recreational potential and a scale of an assessment of each component is explained. The evaluation of each component of the recreational potential of the Nizhny Novgorod region using the method of expert is provided. The identified risks of tourism development for each component are shown. The formula for the assessment of recreational capacity taking into consideration the value of each component is proposed and adjusted to the development of tourism in this region. Calculation of quantitative value of recreational capacity of the Nizhny Novgorod region in comparison with a standard is made.

Keywords: Recreational potential, tourism, Nizhny Novgorod region.

The development of domestic tourism has acquired special significance for the Russian Federation during severe financial and economic crisis, introduction of sanctions and drastic reduction of outbound tourist traffic, which resulted in population reorientation towards domestic tourist programs. Development of domestic tourism is an important part of import substitution program implementation which is required to ensure stability and sustainability of the development of economy of the Russian

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Federation. The influence of the tourism industry on the economic potential of the state has been covered in the works of many Russian scientists as well as the scientists from other countries, among them one can distinguish: G. Brida (Brida, 2010), N. Voskolovich (2010), N. Sukhanova (2014), S. J. Hughes (Hughes, 2002) and others. Individual aspects of event tourism influence on the country's economy development have been covered in the works of: V. Kalney (2012), M. Layko (2012), V. Sholokhova (2012).

Based on the results of investigation carried out by information communications center "Reyting" devoted to tourist attractiveness of the regions of Russian Federation, its tourist potential and popularity among domestic and foreign tourists were revealed. The rating of Russian regions based on the size and dynamics of growth of the tourism potential presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Rating of Russian regions based on the size and dynamics of growth of tourist potential

No	Name of the region	Total, in points
1	Moscow, city with federal status	80
2	Saint – Petersburg, city with federal status	79,7
3	Krasnoyarsk Kraj	77,3
4	Republic of Crimea	75,2
5	Moscow region	74,8
6	Nizhniy Novgorod region	73,1
7	Altai Kraj	70,6
8	Republic of Tatarstan	66,7
9	Kaliningrad region	65,7
10	Primorskiy Kraj	65

Nizhny Novgorod region is one of the leaders in the rating as per the results of assessment, the dynamics of the tourism development in this region have recently rapidly increased, which makes it necessary to assess the recreational potential of the region and forecast its further development.

The purpose of this study is to assess the recreational potential of Nizhny Novgorod region. The main tasks are to:

- study the definition of "recreational potential";
- determine the structure of recreational potential;
- justify the rating scale of each component of recreational potential;
- evaluate the recreational potential of Nizhny Novgorod region.

There are a lot of approaches to the definition of term "recreation". Quite a lot of disputes arise among the researchers related to the split of definitions "recreational" and "tourist". There is also a complex term "tourist-recreational potential" which is determined as a set of natural and man-made bodies and phenomena related to this territory as well as conditions, possibilities and means suitable for generation of a tourist product and implementation of the related tours, excursions and programs.

Safaryan (2015) distinguishes the terms "tourist" and "recreational" potential, believing that "the term "recreation" assumes the sphere of rest and service of nearby places in a certain context with reference to specific territories", i.e. the orientation to

the needs of the local population is evident. While “tourist potential” assumes creation of conditions for the attraction of tourists from the other countries.

Recreational potential is “a combination of natural, culture-and-historical and social-and-economic factors to arrange recreation activity at a certain territory”, as per the opinion of Islamov (2016).

For the purposes of the study let us assume that the recreational potential is the aggregate of the resources of the region and the ability to use at full extent for the implementation of the set goals.

The recreational potential structure of the territory is a system consisting of two leading blocks: resource component which is represented by recreational resources and the social-economic component represented by material-and-technical resource basis. However, along with the above components there are natural and social-economic conditions of the region contributing or restraining recreations, limiting factors (Sukhanova, 2014).

The following elements must be included in the recreational potential structure:

1. Nature-and-resource potential,
2. Cultural-and-historic potential,
3. Economic potential,
4. Infrastructural potential,
5. Marketing potential,
6. Innovation potential (adventure tourism),
7. Workforce capacity,
8. Ecological capacity.

To assess the recreational potential of Nizhny Novgorod region it is required to specify the evaluation scale or select a standard which will be used as a reference for evaluation of recreation resources of the assessed region. As a standard we suggested to select Moscow, the city of federal importance, which got the first place in the National tourist rating 2016. The assessment was done based on 100-point scale where 100 points correspond to the component of the potential of Moscow.

1. Nature-and-resource potential of Nizhny Novgorod region. Geographical location of Nizhny Novgorod region is unique. It is located on the territory of three natural zones: taiga, broad-leaved forests and steppe. 400 specially protected natural territories in the region including 17 reserves, 1 conservation area, 1 natural park, more than 8000 rivers (from small rivers to the largest transport arteries of Eastern Europe, namely the Volga and the Oka rivers), 2700 lakes and ponds provide the conditions for development of ecological, hunting-and-fishing and adventure tourism (Dekabrskaya, 2015). With regard to the territory the region is located in the center of East European Plain; this reduces the risk of natural disasters almost to 0. The prevailing climate is moderately continental; this ensures comfortable tourist rest for all. Compared to the natural potential of Moscow it is also very high and ensures a lot of possibilities for tourism development. Can be assessed to score 100 points.

2. Cultural and historical potential. Nizhny Novgorod region is rich with the objects of cultural and historical heritage, represented with more than 3 thousand historical, cultural and architectural landmarks, 396 of which are the landmarks of federal importance. The ancient towns and cities like Nizhny Novgorod, Arzamas, Gorodets were founded in the Middle age period, and a lot of architectural monuments were kept there. The region is the center of pilgrimage from all over Russia to Zheltovodskiy monastery,

Diveevskiy monastery. Different events attracting tourists (fairs, craftwork exhibitions, master-classes, etc.) are held very often in the region. The cultural and historical potential of Nizhny Novgorod region is by no aspects concedes to historical-and-cultural development of Moscow and can also be evaluated as scoring 100 points.

3. Economic potential. Nizhny Novgorod region is the largest industrial center. The main contribution into formation of gross regional product (GRP) is done by industrial production which forms approximately 32% of regional product. Then come construction and electric power generation. The key fields of the industry of the region are oil refining, automobile manufacturing, steel industry and food industry. The industrial production index (IPI) for the whole range of the enterprises and companies of Nizhny Novgorod region made 102.4 % in 2015, while in Russia the IPI makes 96.6 %. As of today tourism makes 1-1.5% of GRP. It is necessary to point out that there are risks related to tourist field development, which can include power shortage in the region, low society living level and high migration outflow of young people from Nizhny Novgorod region to the other regions. Thus, the economic potential will make 80 points. Risks – 30%.

4. Infrastructure potential. The researchers point out to high level of infrastructure development: good transport communication with Moscow via M7 highway, high possibility of the roads, density of all roads of the region calculated per 1000 citizens is about the same level as in Russia and calculated for 1000 sq. km of territory – even 5 times exceeds the value in Russia on the whole. However, it is noted that the roads are of low quality, there is no service rendered along the roads, and some towns located over the Volga river are very hard to access. Compared to Moscow the infrastructure can be assessed as scoring 65 points. The risks will make 15%.

5. Marketing potential. Formation of touristic cluster was announced in the Program of tourism development in Nizhny Novgorod region for 2012-2016, however currently its functioning has not been covered in the press. The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Entrepreneurship of Nizhny Novgorod region has planned to integrate the region into interregional and international routes such as: "The Great Volga River Route", "The Great Tea Road", "The Great Silk Road", "Red Route", "Ornaments of the towns Plus", "Russian Estates", "Moscow round-the-world trip", "People's Unity Route", etc. The targets announced for year 2017 include development of event and children tourism, entrance to Chinese tourist market, as well as preparation of tourist field for Football Championship FIFA 2018 in Russia (Zykova and co-authors, 2017). World Football Championship FIFA 2018 will be the largest international event in the history of Nizhny Novgorod and will leave significant heritage. New stadium "Nizhny Novgorod" will accommodate 45 000 football fans. Thanks to the World Championship 15th metro station will be opened in Nizhny Novgorod. A number of state programs aimed at support and development of tourism in the region and to the preparation for the Football World Championship have been enforced recently. However, it is required to point out to low information transparency of Nizhny Novgorod region, absence of formed brand of recreational territory, low level of advertizing in the press even on the level of the country, as well as on the international scale. In addition, it should be pointed out to the level of the hotel service which is not very high and there is not enough accommodation for tourists. Statistics shows the increase of the number of hotels and tourist accommodation in Nizhny Novgorod region; however, the above figures have not yet reached the target values stated in the Program for tourism development in Nizhny Novgorod region for 2012-2016. The marketing potential compared to Moscow can be evaluated by 50 points; the risks will make 10%.

6. Innovation potential is characterized as an ability to implement the regional opportunities in the innovation field or with the help of innovations. There are organizational, marketing and product innovations. In Nizhny Novgorod region the first group is represented by the intention to create tourist cluster "Citadel" based on the project of Nikita Mikhalkov. It is expected that "Citadel" will be a recreational-and-health and cultural center, which will include Cinema Academy, Entertainment center, Sport Center, a hotel and a hostel for students.

Product innovation is innovative tourist suggestions. The media points out development of extreme tourism in the region. For example, flights on fighter planes "MiG" for VIP-guests, tracking and caving, screen planes flights to the Gorky sea, extreme parks, etc.

Event tourism should be also pointed out. Events devoted to the artistic craftwork ("Golden Khokhloma", "City of Craftsmen"), holding fairs, historical events, related with the region, ancient towns or manorial estates are frequently held in Nizhny Novgorod region. That is, for example, Pushkin balls in Bolshoe Boldino (in the name of A.S. Pushkin) are held on a yearly basis now.

Innovation potential of Nizhny Novgorod region was evaluated by the experts by scoring 70 points.

7. Workforce potential. Despite the high dynamics of the increase of the number of hotels and group accommodation facilities, the researchers point out the low qualification level of the personnel and low hotel service level. The outflow of the population from the region has been caused by low level of salary of the employees, which is associated with high production costs in many fields of activity. This determines the low level of life in the region. Such economic base cannot stimulate self-education and the motivation for improvement of employees' qualification and without any doubt requires effective intelligent policy for attracting of the personnel and its strict selection with regard to compliance to high standard requirements. The workforce potential was assessed by 45 points.

8. Ecological potential of Nizhny Novgorod region is quite low. The industrial production of the region influences in a certain way on the nature. Pollution of the atmosphere in some towns of the region is 4 MAC (maximum allowable concentration). Innovative development unfortunately does not touch creation of new technologies of production reducing the polluting emissions to the atmosphere. As per the statistic digest "Nizhny Novgorod region in figures of year 2016" the emissions to the atmosphere are increasing year by year, generation of the wastes increases which requires direct interference of the Government of the region and implementation of ecological policy in the region. Main factors characterizing the influence of the commercial activity on the environment and natural resources for Table 2.

Table 2 Main factors characterizing the influence of the commercial activity on the environment and natural resources

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Contaminated waste water discharge, mio m3	461	451	525	397	...	531
Emission of pollutants into the atmosphere, thous. tons	142.3	145.9	125.9	125.6	132.7	141.3
Production and consumption waste generation, thous. tons	2686.9	4098.5	2834.0	2895.3	3297.2	3687.0

The ecological situation in Nizhny Novgorod region is the most important risk of tourist industry development. The ecological potential compared to Moscow was assessed by 60 points. Risk - 40%

Assessment of recreation potential of Nizhny Novgorod region was done as a sum of points of all items updated in accordance with the risk level as per the below formula 1:

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^n (P_i * (1 - r_i))$$

where P_i is a value of the recreation potential component;

r_i – risk of tourism development in the region;

n - number of components of recreation potential.

$$P = 100 * (1 - 0)0 + 100 + 80 * 0.7 + 65 * 0.85 + 50 * 0.9 + 70 + 45 + 60 * 0.6 = 507.25$$

Total recreation potential of Nizhny Novgorod region made 507. 25 points which makes 63% of the reference, i.e. compared to the recreation potential of Moscow. The result is quite good. Taking into account that potential is an ability of usage of the available resources it is necessary to point out to exceptional wealth of the region with natural-and-climatic as well as cultural-and-historic resources, however the risks in the economic, human resource and ecological components do not give the opportunity to show the existing potential in full. For successful tourism development in Nizhny Novgorod region it is required to involve municipal and federal authorities, investors for co-financing of development of tourist programs, provision of infrastructure (not only the roads, but also houses, kinder gardens, living area) to increase the population assimilation level. In this case Nizhny Novgorod region will become a popular tourist point for internal and international tourism.

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