

Organizational and Legal Mechanisms and Limitations of the Participation of the Local Population in Developing the Tourist Attractiveness of the Territories



Elena Frolova^{1*}, Olga Rogach¹, Anton Ostrovskii², Vladimir Savinkov²

¹ Department of Sociology, Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow 125167, Russia

² Department of Management, Russian State Social University, Moscow 129226, Russia

Corresponding Author Email: frolova.e.v@inbox.ru

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ABSTRACT

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The research problem lies in the low involvement of local residents in the processes of developing the tourist attractiveness of the territories, insufficient support for the initiatives of the authorities to develop domestic tourism. The authors in their study set the goal - to study the possibilities and barriers to attracting representatives of local communities to the development of tourism. The key research method is a questionnaire survey of the population (N=732). The results of the study showed that the presence of social alienation in the interaction of the government and the population, as well as a low level of trust in local governments significantly limit the practice of involving residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory. Additional barriers are the following: information vacuum of the local community on the development of domestic tourism; organizational and legal dysfunctions of business support. There is a need provision of legal and organizational support to active representatives of the local community, subsidizing, reducing the tax burden, grant support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the most vulnerable sector, exposed to the risks of financial crises and security threats [1]. At the same time, the depression in the tourist services market affects the economic, social and cultural spheres. The state of the environment, safety and sanitary-epidemiological situation are among the basic factors that ensure the development of a tourist destination [2]. The results of research on demand for tourist destinations show the vulnerability of the market to the risks of epidemic diseases [3, 4]. In this aspect, measures of state support for local tourism initiatives are of particular importance [5, 6].

As highlighted in several studies, the global COVID-19 pandemic provides opportunities for an economic and social “reset” of the tourism industry [7, 8]. We are talking about the need to review the models of exploitation in the field of tourism, avoiding the practice of ignoring the needs of local residents and the natural environment. Managing the development of tourism attractiveness should focus on issues of social and environmental well-being, as well as meaningful human connections [9, 10]. Higgins-Desbiolles [11] presents similar conclusions in his work, which justifies the concept of a “responsible” approach to tourism based on the rights and interests of local communities. This concept includes mechanisms for “socializing” tourism in order to take into account social and environmental constraints.

The involvement of the local population in the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory becomes possible in the context of the formation of a collective identity of local communities, a common vision of strategic goals and measures to attract tourists. A special role in this direction

should be played by the education system, in particular its humanitarian environment, which reflects the cultural realities of the country, its traditions and historical experience [12]. Openness of government bodies, accountability of their activities to the control of local communities, design and visualization of local tourism products, involvement of initiative groups in their development ensure the effectiveness of management practices in the field of tourism, consolidation of efforts of business, government and the population [13, 14].

Modern scientists emphasize the need to analyze the attitude of the local population to tourism. In particular, it is interesting to study the critical values, i.e. presence indices and irritability indices, taking into account the differentiation of cultural, religious traditions, values typical for tourists and local residents. The provision of tourist services should not harm the social and economic interests of local residents, cultural and historical values, and the environment of the territory [15, 16]. In this aspect, local authorities should focus their efforts on effective waste management, employment, and price regulation [17]. It is important to avoid some of the negative consequences of tourism, including the exploitation of local cheap labor, too large tourist flows that increase the burden on the natural landscape and ecosystem, excessive commercialization, and others. Sustainable tourism development is ensured by the following factors: fair distribution of tourism revenue among key stakeholders (the state, tourism firms and local population), compliance with the principles of the “green economy”, and the formation of an ecological identity of local residents and tourists [18]. The key principle of involving local communities in shaping the tourism attractiveness of the territory is to support mutually beneficial interactions of all stakeholders that contribute to

cultural and environmental sustainability in the tourism sector without creating dependency relationships [19].

The problem of the study lies in the low involvement of local residents in the processes of developing the tourist attractiveness of the territories, insufficient support from the population for the projects of the authorities for the development of domestic tourism. In the research problem, such factors as: assessment of the tourist potential of the territory and the perception by the local population of the benefits, risks of tourism development in places of residence, the desired forms of participation of residents in the development of the tourist attractiveness of the territory. The authors aim to study the opportunities and barriers that limit the practice of attracting representatives of local communities to the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities in the Russian Federation. The authors have identified the following research tasks:

1. Sociological assessment of tourist attractiveness of municipalities of the Russian Federation;
2. Identification of motivational attitudes and promising forms of attracting local residents to participate in the development of tourism based on local communities;
3. Analysis of preferred forms/methods of supporting local initiatives in the field of developing the tourist attractiveness of the territory;
4. Defining the limitations of involvement of local communities' representatives into local tourism development practices.

The study hypothesizes that one of the leading factors limiting the involvement of local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities is a high level of distrust of the population to the actions of local authorities.

2. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in 2021 with the support of the Expert Council of the public organization VSMS (All-Russian Council of Local Self-Government). The sample is represented by the following regions: Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Kalmykia, Republic of Komi, Republic of Crimea, Republic of Mari El, Republic of Mordovia, Krasnodar Territory, Perm Territory, Astrakhan Region, Belgorod Region, Bryansk Region, Vladimir Region, Volgograd Region, Kemerovo Region, Kirovskaya region, Moscow region, Murmansk region, Nizhny Novgorod region, Rostov region, Ryazan region, Samara region, Smolensk region, Tambov region, Tver region, Tula region, Tyumen region, federal cities Moscow and St. Petersburg. The regions included in the sample have average statistical indicators for the development of tourism. This is due to unified practices for attracting tourists (including the level of development of the tourism business, the turnover of tourism services), the similarity of the landscape and the ecology of the region. The number of objects of religious and culture buildings correspond to the average Russian proportions. The exceptions are the Krasnodar Territory, Moscow and St. Petersburg. The choice of these territories for further analysis is due to their role in the development of beach, business and cultural tourism.

In the course of the research, the authors used a set of General scientific research methods that allowed them to generalize and systematize the data on this problem, conduct a primary analysis of sources and research practices of local

residents' participation in the development of domestic tourism. Therefore, the key method of the research is a questionnaire survey of residents of municipalities of the Russian Federation. The questionnaire was developed by the authors in accordance with the goals and hypotheses of the study. The validity of the questionnaire is determined by the logic of setting research tasks, preliminary testing of the questionnaire in the course of a pilot study. When testing the research tools, the respondents were instructed and feedback was received on the difficulties of filling out the questionnaire, the specifics of the perception of questions. The questionnaire included the following blocks: assessment of the tourist attractiveness of Russian territories, assessment of the benefits of tourism development in places of residence, motivational attitudes and promising forms of attracting local residents to participate in tourism development practices, assessment of the methods of supporting initiatives of local residents in the tourism sector, restrictions on the involvement of local residents in development practices tourism.

The authors used a multi-stage sample, which allowed to ensure representation of all Federal districts of the Russian Federation, as well as to observe the proportions of municipalities depending on their size/population. The total sample was N=732 people. The age of respondents ranges from 23 years to 61 years, which reflects the representation of the socially and economically active population. The distribution of the respondents by gender is as follows: 61.8% women and 38.2% men, which somewhat disagrees with the current gender proportions in Russia. According to official statistics, the male population is 46.5%; female - 53.5%. In general, this distribution is typical for all regions of the Russian Federation, including the regions from the sample. The gender representation of the respondents involved in the study does not fully reflect the average Russian distribution by gender. These disproportions act as a limitation of the study, but do not significantly affect the results. In Russian society, women traditionally act as the most active consumer in the market of goods and services, including tourism.

The research materials were processed using SPSS Statistics software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained in the course of the study illustrate the following picture: the dominant share of the respondents (72.1%) believes that it is premature to talk about the tourist attractiveness of municipalities in the Russian Federation today. The majority of the respondents assess it as quite low. At the same time, there is a certain pattern: the smaller the number of municipalities and the further it is from the district center/major city, the higher the percentage of the respondents who negatively assess the tourist attractiveness of the Russian territories.

However, the representatives of local communities generally believe that their territories have the necessary potential for the development of domestic tourism (Figure 1). According to the survey, 1/3 of the respondents suggested that churches, monasteries, and other religious buildings could become objects of attraction in their municipality. 18.4% of the respondents believe that folk crafts can become a reference point for tourism development, as a semantic element of the tourist network. Approximately equal proportions of the respondents (10.4% and 10.1%, respectively) believe that

natural beauty embedded in the landscape, marked tourist trails, as well as objects of mass culture can form the basis for a tourist offer.

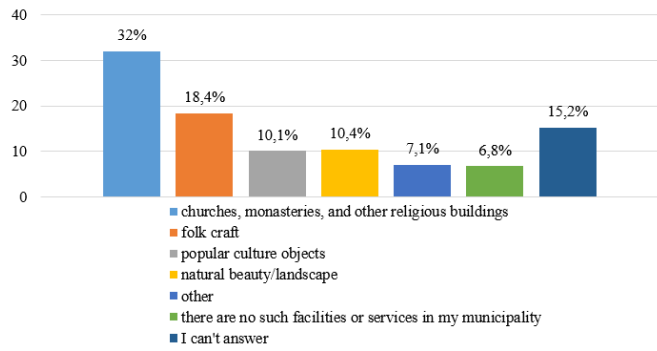


Figure 1. Distribution of responses to a question: "Specify the objects/services that make up the tourism potential of your municipality, and which could become a reference point for the development of domestic tourism in your territory", %

The regional cross-section of assessments did not show significant differences in the opinions of respondents. A slight decrease in the average values is demonstrated by Moscow, the Moscow region and St. Petersburg in the assessments of such objects as churches, monasteries and other places of worship. It can be assumed that, despite the presence of a large number of objects of religious and cultural heritage, the inhabitants of these territories are oriented towards trips to provincial cities for cultural and educational purposes.

Note that a fairly large percentage of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question or believe that there are no such reference points for tourism development on their territory (15.2% and 6.8%, respectively). This distribution of responses can serve as indirect evidence of a low assessment of the actions of local authorities to develop the tourist attractiveness of the municipality, and the lack of accurate information about tourist display objects located on their territory.

The results of the study showed the ambiguity of the public's position on the development of the tourism potential of municipalities. Some respondents believe that the development of local tourism will have a negative impact on the development of the social sphere. These respondents attribute this to the fact that the formation of tourist attractiveness of a municipality will require significant financial investments and material expenditures from local authorities and representatives of local communities, whereas in the conditions of the crisis in the social sphere of most municipalities, this approach is not rational. This group of the respondents believes that the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory will require significant expenditures on upgrading the infrastructure profile of the municipality (35.5%), developing the transport and road network (38%), and increasing the cost of ensuring the safety of local residents (24.7%) (Table 1).

The concerns of local communities are understandable. According to this group of the respondents, "new" expenses will be imposed on residents in the form of new taxes and deductions, which is naturally assessed in a negative way.

However, among the respondents there are those who link the development of tourist attractiveness of the municipality with socio-economic growth. In their responses, the respondents note possible preferences from the development

of tourism, namely the emergence of new jobs, increasing the diversity of cultural life, attracting large investments in the development of the territory, improving the conditions and quality of life of the local community.

Table 1. List of related expenses for the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities of the Russian Federation (you can choose several answers)

Item of expenditure	Share of respondents, %
modernization of the infrastructure profile of the municipality	35.5
development of the transport and road network	38
the need to reorient the business sector to the needs of the tourism industry	44.3
increasing the cost of ensuring the safety of local residents	24.7
increased expenses for street cleaning/waste collection, garbage collection, etc.	19.5
conducting an active advertising campaign outside the municipality to attract tourists	16.4
other	7.6

Table 2. Positive consequences of the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities in the Russian Federation (multiple answer options are available)

Consequence	Share of respondents, %
creating new jobs	35.6
emergence of new business structures/development of the business sector	65.5
attracting large investors/developing the investment climate of a municipality	37.2
improving the quality of life of local residents	33.9
urban development	47.8
development of the city's infrastructure profile	45.1
preservation and promotion of cultural and historical heritage	49.2
other	5.1

It can be noted that respondents from groups that negatively and positively assess the consequences of developing the tourist attractiveness of municipalities, highlight the same (or similar) consequences (Table 2). However, the vector of their assessment is related to the entity that bears the costs of tourism development: in the first case, it is the local population, in the second – local authorities or large investors. The group of "social optimists" believes that the actions of the authorities to develop tourism on the ground will improve the investment climate and create a basis for the development of the business sector, which will allow the development of not only those structures that are fully focused on the needs of tourists, but commerce in general.

The share of the respondents who positively assess the changes that result from the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory is significantly higher in municipalities that have an active policy in the field of tourism. Every second of them noted that the formation of internal tourist flows allowed the city to avoid the decline and degradation of cultural and historical potential.

According to the study, 2/3 of the population of municipalities rather highly assess their role in the

development of tourist attractiveness of the territories. According to the respondents (56%), this is due to the native Russian culture of hospitality, friendliness, mutual assistance and solidarity. It is the locals who meet tourists, show them “their culture of everyday life”, and help tourists meet the demand for the consumption of impressions from the trip.

Despite the high assessment of the importance of the active role of local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities, residents of large cities are not ready to participate in such practices. This can be determined by a broader range of career, professional, and life paths that are not related to the tourism industry. Without seeing the connection between their life and the tourism sector, residents of such municipalities have latent orientations for interaction with tourists (they are ready to point the way, but are not ready to show excessive hospitality). Moreover, as evidenced by a number of social studies, residents of large cities are more closed, wary of strangers, less focused on mutual assistance.

Residents of small cities in Russia in the majority (57.7%) are ready to participate in the development of tourist attractiveness of the municipality. At the same time, according to the respondents, the key forms of participation of local residents should be social partnership projects (36.6%), subsidizing social initiatives in the field of tourism (65.4%), the development of business structures and micro-entrepreneurs operating in the field of tourism (76.9%), volunteerism (68.5%), public associations and associations whose activities will be aimed at the development of tourism (40%), creative teams, creative clusters (59.7%), etc. (Figure 2).

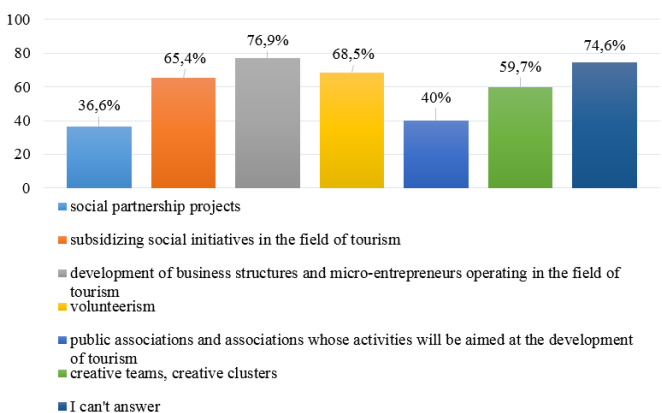


Figure 2. Distribution of responses to a question: "Specify the desired forms of participation of local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of territories", %

According to the obtained data, we may conclude that the motivational attitudes of local residents to participate in the development of tourism based on local communities are built on two needs:

- obtaining commercial benefits from the implementation of projects/business ideas in the field of tourism;
- realization of the internal need for professional/creative self-realization, volunteerism.

At the same time, based on the identified promising forms of participation of local residents in the development of tourism based on local communities, it can be assumed that the dominant motivation is the desire to earn income/commercial profit in the short term. In particular, we are talking about such forms of participation and support from local authorities as subsidizing the initiatives and business ideas of representatives of local communities, commerce (including micro-entrepreneurship), reducing the tax burden on business

structures that participate in the development of domestic tourism, and so on.

The public less supports social partnership projects that are considered by the authorities today as an effective technology for socio-economic development. This may be due to the low awareness of representatives of local communities about real successful practices of social partnership. In particular, the respondents say that there are no unified information portals that would accumulate materials about the legal and organizational bases of social partnership, risks and preferences of the subjects of partnership relations; there is a lack of consulting assistance in choosing forms of social partnership. According to the respondents, local authorities should actively use information and communication technologies, social networks and blogs. Many respondents also note a high level of distrust of local authorities as partners. All this together creates additional barriers to attracting local residents to projects to develop the tourist attractiveness of municipalities.

The issue of trust in the inclusion of local residents in projects to develop the tourist attractiveness of municipalities is one of the central ones. However, the majority of the respondents report a low level of trust (68.4%), a negative attitude to the initiatives of local authorities (37.7%), and alienation from the practices of interaction with local authorities (31.2%). It is fair to note that the low level of public confidence in the actions of local authorities is typical not only for the tourism sector. This is an all-Russian trend, which many researchers note.

As mentioned earlier, representatives of local communities appreciate such forms of participation in the processes of developing the tourist attractiveness of municipalities, which allow them to realize their professional/creative or volunteer potential. In particular, we are talking about creative clusters, creative teams, and volunteer movements. More than 2/3 of the respondents believe that creative clusters create a unique tourist space that meets the need of tourists to get new experiences. The opportunity to offer the traveler a tourist product that has authentic features of local culture and traditions, supports the tourist brand of the territory, ensures the formation of a sustainable tourist demand. It should be noted that many researchers share this opinion, as creative clusters launch new formats for promoting tourism products and services, bringing to the local community the practical implementation of the ideas of cooperation, solidarity and hospitality [20].

The results of the survey showed that 40% of the respondents support the idea of forming public unions and associations whose activities will aim to develop domestic tourism. To date, there are no statistics describing the effectiveness of public associations in the field of tourism in Russia. However, it can be assumed that this form of association of local residents will also help to maintain the ideas of solidarity, cooperation and hospitality, which will ensure the growth of trust between representatives of the local community.

Special attention should be paid to such forms of participation of representatives of local communities in the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities as volunteerism. The survey materials illustrate the fact that the dominant majority of the respondents (68.5%) are confident that volunteerism is one of the key resources for the development of domestic tourism in Russia. This is due to the possibility of mass involvement of residents of the local

community in the processes of constructing tourist space, preserving and replicating cultural and historical heritage, popularizing the ideas and traditions that make up the geographical myth of a particular territory. The key areas for attracting volunteers in the field of tourism that the respondents indicated are: cleaning and decorating streets (58.3%), restoration of historical and cultural heritage as objects of tourist attraction (54.4%), organization and holding of folk festivals/fairs/mass events (34.6%).

Special attention in the study was paid to the definition of restrictions on the involvement of representatives of local communities in local tourism development practices. Thus, according to the survey, 60.7% believe that outdated mechanisms and tools for managing the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities are a significant barrier. In particular, it is noted that the local authorities do not use modern information and communication technologies (including blogs, social networks, virtual reality technologies, etc.) to increase public awareness of practices and projects in the field of tourism. Fragmentary attempts to include the local population in the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory are limited by organizational and legal dysfunctions. Almost 43.9% of the respondents faced violations of their rights as representatives of the business sector, 80.3% - with bureaucratic delays of local authorities. The respondents also note that there is a lack of financial support for initiatives, openness and clarity of policy, and a high level of social exclusion and distrust of the actions of the authorities. The presence of these problems becomes a barrier that limits the practice of including local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of the Russian territories.

The current practices of developing the tourist attractiveness of municipalities in Russia allow us to conclude that there are a number of problems and discrepancies that prevent the involvement of local residents in these processes. At the same time, the analysis of the preferred forms and methods of supporting local initiatives in the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory showed the demand for such actions on the part of local authorities as: building partnerships between government, business and the local population (42.7%); providing legal and organizational support to economically and socially active representatives of the local community by local authorities (44%); conducting an open and clear policy in the field of tourism (35.3%). Such forms of support for local initiatives as subsidizing, reducing the tax burden, grant support, and project activities of local authorities (social design and construction of tourist space) have earned high recognition. 87.3% of the respondents state this.

The study partially confirmed the hypothesis that one of the leading factors limiting the involvement of local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities is a high level of distrust of the population to the actions of local authorities. The respondents' responses showed the presence of social alienation in the interaction between the government and the population. This problem is essential for the development of the tourism industry. As highlighted in a number of studies, the population acts as a resource for marketing strategies to attract tourist flows. In the conditions of regional competition for resources, the information struggle for the promotion of territorial brands is intensifying. However, local residents do not always make a choice in favor of the region of their residence, which does not allow effectively developing the tourist attractiveness of the territory [21].

The results of the study showed a bipolar opinion of the local residents on the issue of assessing the role of tourism in the development of the territory. On the one hand, there is a positive perception of the tourism industry as a catalyst for socio-economic development of the territory. On the other hand, a certain part of the respondents are afraid of negative consequences associated with the increase in expenditures for the modernization of the tourist infrastructure of the municipality (35.5%), the development of the transport and road network. Similar conclusions are found in other studies. For instance, K. Wang's work examines the negative consequences of medical tourism. The influx of tourists brought significant problems and caused concern among local residents, who reported "ambivalence" towards these processes [22, 23]. In addition, the population is often concerned about the ecological state of the territory and the destruction of its cultural and historical heritage due to intensive recreational activities [24]. In this aspect, the activities of local governments that provide "safe" conditions for the development of the tourism industry and institutional conditions for the conservation of environmental and cultural resources of the territory are of great importance [25].

An additional restriction on the mobilization of local tourism initiatives is the low awareness of residents about the priorities of the authorities in the tourism industry, the presence of legal and organizational difficulties in organizing tourism business.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study allow us to draw the following conclusions. The population has a fairly low estimate of the level of tourist attractiveness of their territory, but believes that their municipality has the necessary resources and potential to attract potential tourists.

Residents of small cities in Russia take an active position in the development of tourist attractiveness of the municipality. Priority forms of participation of local residents are social partnership projects, implementation of social initiatives provided they be subsidized, support for small businesses and micro-entrepreneurs operating in the field of tourism.

The key needs of local residents, which form their motivational attitudes to participate in the development of tourism, are the following: obtaining commercial benefits and self-realization in professional/creative activities, volunteering.

The preferred forms and methods of supporting local initiatives in the field of developing the tourist attractiveness of the territory are providing legal and organizational support to economically and socially active representatives of the local community by local authorities; building partnerships between government, business and the local population; conducting an open and clear policy in the field of tourism. Such forms of support for local initiatives as subsidizing, reducing the tax burden, grant support, and project activities of local authorities (social design and construction of tourist space) have earned high recognition.

The analysis of restrictions on the involvement of the local population in the development of tourist attractiveness of the Russian territories showed the dominance of such factors as: outdated mechanisms and tools for managing the development of tourist attractiveness of municipalities; information vacuum of the local community on the development of domestic

tourism; organizational and legal dysfunctions in working with representatives of the tourist market; lack of financial support for initiatives. The presence of these problems becomes a barrier that limits the practice of including local residents in the development of tourist attractiveness of the Russian territories. A limitation of the study is disproportions in the formation of the sample population (a slight shift in the gender proportions of respondents), incomplete coverage of the regions of the Russian Federation (28 out of 85 regions of the Russian Federation). A promising direction for further research may be the study of the prospects for the development of hospitality commercialization technologies, the participation of the population in the development of creative tourism industries, the role of education in the formation of tourism business initiatives.

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