

Экономика природопользования и охраны окружающей среды

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ECOTOURISM AS A PRIORITY DIRECTION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The current state of environmental pollutants in the all countries is a testament to the need to resolve the issues of efficient use of natural resources. Another important issue for Ukraine is the international integration to the world economy. On the one hand it is a sustainable development of industrial areas. On the other hand, there should be given the need for simultaneous combination of economic and environmental interests of Ukraine. That's why the problem of developing ecological tourism not only in Ukraine, but also all over the world is crucial nowadays.

Ecotourism is a growing niche market within the larger travel industry, with the potential of being an important sustainable development tool. With billions of dollars in annual sales, ecotourism is a real industry that seeks to take advantage of market trends. At the same time, it frequently operates quite differently than other segments of the tourism industry, because ecotourism is defined by its sustainable development results: conserving natural areas, educating visitors about sustainability, and benefiting local people [1].

While over the last decade there has been considerable progress in deepening the practices of ecotourism, it still remains far too common [2] and it is frequently classified with and equated to other forms of tourism such as “sustainable”, “responsible”, “nature”, “green”, “low impact”, “geo”, “adventure” tourism among others. This complicated the picture and created confusion to the tourism industry and the public in general.

Various aspects of the development of ecological tourism were studied by such scientists as G. Miller, A. Drozd, A. Beidik, G. Guzhin, M. Belikov, E. Ledovskih, A. Kosolapov, V. Klimenok , M. Maya, M. Birzhakov, L. Slepokurov, V. Emelyanov, A. Dmitruk, V. Sergeev, V. Stepanitsky, J. Olejnik, V. Getman, O. Lyubitseva, K. Staschuk etc.

Although ecotourism may share some of its aspects with other forms of tourism, it should be viewed as distinct from the other categories of tourism (Table 1). When properly understood, ecotourism goes further by striving to respect and benefit protected areas as well as the people living around or on the land [2]

Table 1[3]

Categories of tourism

Nature tourism	Travelling to unspoiled places to experience and enjoy nature. It involves moderate and safe forms of exercise such as hiking, biking, sailing and camping.
Wildlife tourism	Travelling where the main attraction is to watch animals, birds and fish in their native habitats.
Adventure tourism	Nature tourism which requires physical skill and endurance (rope climbing, deep-sea diving, bicycling, water rafting or kayaking) and involves a degree of risk taking, often in little-charted terrain
Alternative tourism	Tourism with a small or specialist market, or product that is distinct from mainstream or mass tourism.
Green tourism	An early term essentially synonymous with ecotourism, but never very well defined.
Cultural tourism	Tourism that focuses on exposing or introducing tourists to different local cultures.
Outdoor tourism	All forms of tourism that take place outdoors including high-impact and consumptive tourism such as motorized vehicles, hunting etc
Sustainable tourism	Sustainable tourism is “envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”

A clear distinction should be made between the concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism (Figure 1). The term ecotourism refers to a sub-sector within the tourism industry that focuses on minimising environmental and cultural consequences, contributes to conservation, community projects and environmental

education. On the other hand sustainability principles apply to all types of tourism activities, operations, establishments and projects, including conventional and alternative forms [4].

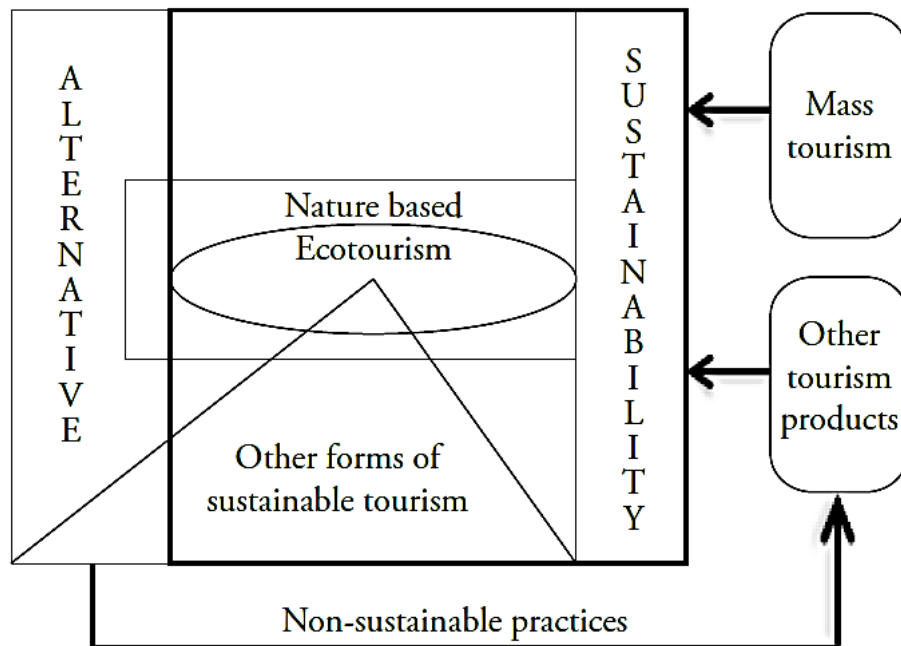


Fig. 2. Position of ecotourism within the tourism spectrum[3]

Because ecotourism was originally just an idea, not a discipline, many business and governments promoted it without an understanding of its most basic principles. The international Ecotourism Society has tracked the results of stakeholder meetings since 1991 to develop the set of principles, which are being embraced by a growing constituency of non-governmental organizations, private sector business, governments, academia and local communities[1]. These principles are shown on Figure 2.

Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of ecotourism is to create a sustainable resource that protects both the people and the nature involved, we can say, that it can provide a great amount of money.

Thus, tourism is an excellent vehicle to transfer income from developed countries to developing countries. Ecotourism is especially effective in this transfer since travelers often venture into remote and economically disadvantaged regions. Since tourism is a relatively barrier-free service export, it can be a more effective means of transferring income from the developed world relative to other forms of

foreign investment such as export-processing zones in which profits may be largely repatriated [5].

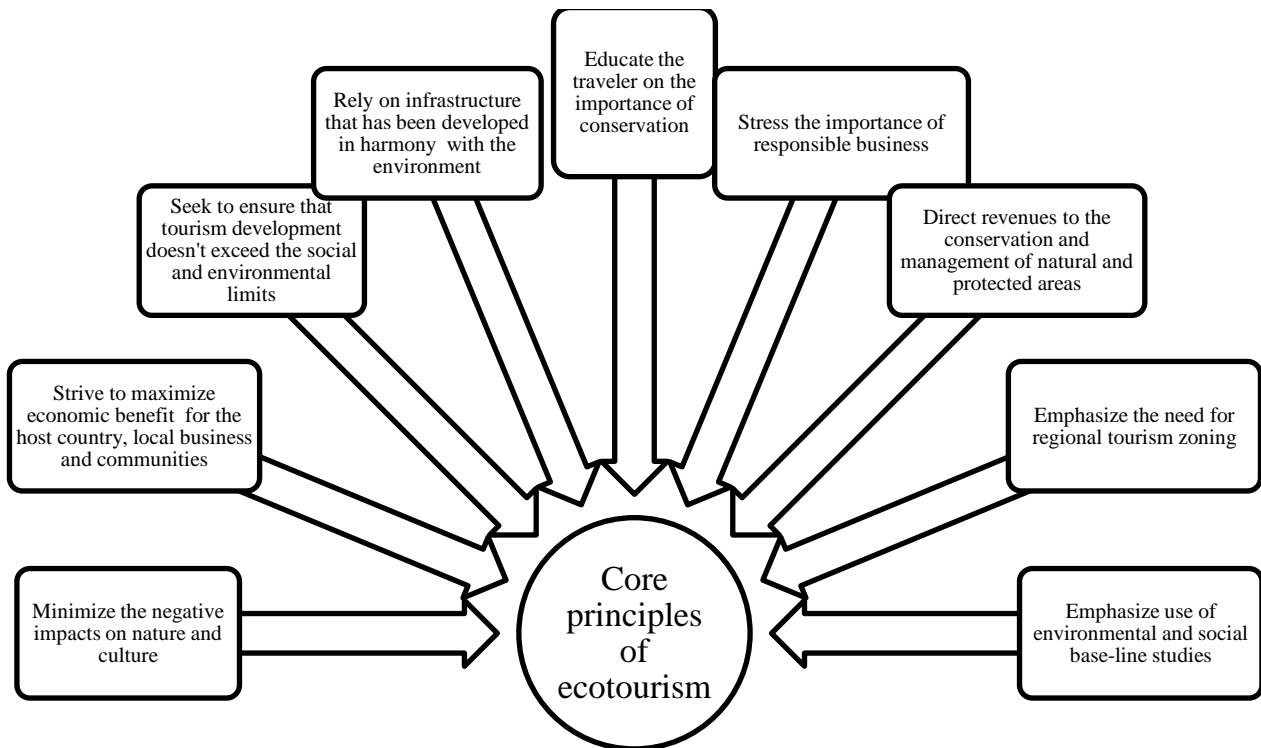


Fig. 2. Principles of ecotourism

The benefits of ecotourism flowing to local businesses are also dramatically higher than those from mass tourism. Standard all-inclusive package tours typically deliver just 20 per cent of revenue to local companies, while airlines, hotels and large tour companies capture the rest. In contrast, ecotourism operations that are based and hire locally can return as much as 95 per cent of in-country expenses to the local economy [6].

The ecotourism industry also has opportunities for the collection of conservation fees and donations for visits to protected areas. Most eco-tourists have above-average income and are willing to pay entrance fees that will enhance conservation and are shared with local communities. This revenue can be used by protected area authorities and local communities for conservation measures and sustainable practices [5].

There are quite favorable conditions and resources for the development of ecotourism in Ukraine. Unfortunately, underdeveloped tourism infrastructure has led

to the fact that ecotourism stays behind global trends. As many scientists estimate, there is a great potential for the development of ecotourism in protected areas. However, it is important to remember, that ecotourism is not only a holiday reserved territories but also preserve "wilderness" in the mountainous and woodland territories of Ukraine. Ukraine has great recreational potential, and with the right approach ecotourism can become a great part in the process of the replenishment of the state budget.

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