

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the Philosophy Doctor (PhD) degree in the educational program 8D11101 – Tourism

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Scientific foundations of tourism environmental management in the Republic of Kazakhstan on the example of new destinations

General Characteristics of the Work. The dissertation research is aimed at providing a scientific justification of the environmental management system in the tourism sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan using the example of new tourist destinations. The study examines the interrelationship between tourism and the environment and identifies ways to ensure environmental sustainability and social efficiency. Particular attention is paid to the preservation of the natural environment, the participation of local communities, and the coordination of decisions at the governmental level. The dissertation proposes models for adapting environmental management at the local, national, and transboundary levels.

Relevance of the Study.

At the present stage, tourism has become one of the rapidly developing sectors of the global economy. However, the growth of tourist activity is accompanied by a number of environmental problems. In particular, the increasing pressure on natural ecosystems, the excessive use of natural resources, and changes in the local cultural environment are observed as negative consequences of the sector's development. National parks in Kazakhstan possess high natural potential and at the same time represent environmentally sensitive territories. In some new tourist destinations, unregulated infrastructure development intensifies the risk of disrupting ecological balance. In this context, there is a need to scientifically substantiate the principles of environmental management and to ensure their effective implementation at the level of new tourist destinations. Since this issue is directly related to the country's sustainable development agenda, the relevance of the study is clear and significant.

Ensuring environmental sustainability in tourism, rational use of natural resources, and increasing the participation of local communities correspond to Goal 13 "Climate Action" and Goal 15 "Life on Land" of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The content of the study also aligns with Goal 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities," Goal 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production," and Goal 17 "Partnerships for the Goals" through the implementation of environmental management principles [1].

Research Objective

The overall objective of the study is to develop the scientific foundations of environmental management in tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan using the example of new tourist destinations and to propose models for its implementation.

To achieve this objective, the research was carried out in four interrelated directions.

1. The scientific substantiation of the concept of environmental management

in tourism makes it possible to clarify its theoretical content and define its role within the system of sustainable development. In addition, the key components of environmental management are examined, including the rational use of natural resources, social responsibility, and factors of institutional interaction.

2. Assessment of the current state of environmental management in tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Within this direction, the development trends of the environmental management system at national and regional levels are analyzed, and its institutional, legal, and social aspects are examined. The effectiveness of environmental policy in the tourism sector and its pressing issues are considered comprehensively.

3. Identification of new tourist destinations in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This direction involves analyzing the country's natural and recreational potential, as well as its geographical and infrastructural capabilities, and developing scientific criteria for identifying environmentally sustainable new destinations. Methods for classification and evaluation of destinations are also proposed.

4. Development of environmental management models in tourism based on new tourist destinations. In this direction, scientific models adapted to local, national, and transboundary levels are developed, and their structural elements and implementation features are described. The proposed models aim to ensure environmental sustainability, strengthen cooperation between society and the state, and enhance the capacity of local communities.

Object of the Study

The object of the study is the emerging system of environmental management in the tourism sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Subject of the Study

The subject of the study comprises the mechanisms for organizing, evaluating, and implementing environmental management in tourism using the example of new tourist destinations.

Research Methods

The study employed a comprehensive combination of theoretical, empirical, and applied analytical methods. First, a systematic review of international and domestic scientific literature on environmental management in tourism was conducted, and the main concepts, principles, and models were comparatively analyzed. Strategic and regulatory legal documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the fields of tourism management, specially protected natural areas, and sustainable development were examined to identify institutional features and constraints in implementing environmental management.

At the empirical stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of national parks, tourism authorities, guides, tourism business representatives, and local government officials, which made it possible to identify key issues in destination management and characteristics of practical experience. In addition, surveys conducted among local communities and tourists enabled the assessment of destination perception, environmental sensitivity, and participation potential.

To identify new tourist destinations and evaluate their potential, an assessment

and regional comparative analysis method was applied based on indicators such as natural and recreational resources, accessibility, anthropogenic pressure, and management efficiency. As a result of the study, a multi-level model for adapting environmental management to new destinations was developed, and an environmental coordination mechanism for transboundary territories was proposed.

The scientific novelty of the work is determined by the following provisions:

1. The concept of “environmental management in tourism” is clearly defined as a new scientific category, and its content is theoretically substantiated through the principles of environmental preservation, regulation of recreational capacity, involvement of local communities, and coordination of public administration mechanisms.

2. A comprehensive assessment of the formation of the environmental management system in tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan was conducted, and for the first time the patterns of distribution of institutional, infrastructural, and organizational barriers and opportunities at national, regional, and local levels were systematized.

3. A multi-level model for implementing environmental management in tourism based on new tourist destinations was developed, proposing an integrated management framework that unites local communities, business structures, and public administration institutions.

4. For the first time, a coordination mechanism for environmental management in transboundary territories was substantiated, and directions for strengthening interregional cooperation, including joint use of shared natural resources and management of ecotourism routes, were scientifically justified.

Theoretical Significance of the Study

The theoretical significance of the work lies in expanding the scope of research on environmental management in tourism. The dissertation considers environmental, social, and economic factors in an integrated manner and, on this basis, develops a scientific model consistent with the principles of sustainable development. This model proposes new directions in tourism theory for ensuring coherence between environmental responsibility and regional planning.

Practical Significance of the Study

The results of the research can be applied to improve environmental management in Kazakhstan’s tourism sector, to provide scientific justification for state programs, and to support the environmentally sustainable development of new destinations. The proposed model can serve as a practical tool for national park administrations, tourism departments, and local executive authorities.

Main Scientific Provisions Submitted for Defense

1. The concept of environmental management in tourism is scientifically substantiated and presented as a comprehensive theoretical and methodological system integrating environmental conservation, effective regulation of recreational capacity, community participation, and coordination of public administration mechanisms.

2. A comprehensive assessment of the formation of the environmental management system in tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan identified patterns in

the distribution of institutional, infrastructural, and social factors influencing its effectiveness.

3. An evaluation methodology for identifying new tourist destinations in Kazakhstan was developed, on the basis of which pilot destinations were selected.

4. A multi-level model for implementing environmental management in tourism based on new tourist destinations was proposed.

Author's Personal Contribution

The main stages of the research were carried out with the direct participation of the author. First, a methodology for evaluating and identifying new tourist destinations within the territory of Kazakhstan was developed, and on the basis of this methodology pilot destinations were selected. This process was implemented through the identification of indicators, analysis of data sources, and comparison of evaluation models. During the research, the author systematized the theoretical and methodological foundations of environmental management and identified scientific approaches applicable to the management of new destinations.

For the pilot territories, environmental, social, and infrastructural indicators were collected and processed, and analytical materials determining their development potential were prepared. The author developed a methodology for applying a multi-level weighted model to assess the environmental suitability of destinations and designed an expert framework for calculating the degree of participation of state bodies, scientific institutions, and tourism communities.

During the study, field data collection, survey administration, statistical data processing, and assessment of regional tourism development dynamics were carried out with the direct participation of the author. In addition, visualization methods were applied to create cartographic representations of pilot destinations and to conduct comparative analyses.

Based on the results of the research, the proposed environmental management model was formulated as a scientifically grounded framework aimed at the sustainable development of new tourist destinations. The writing of the dissertation text, formulation of scientific conclusions, processing of research results, and their approbation were fully ensured by the author's personal contribution.

Approbation of the Work

The main conclusions and results of the dissertation research were presented and discussed at international scientific conferences held in Kazakhstan and abroad:

- "Sustainable management as a tool of tourism development in Kazakhstan" Economic and Management Congress: Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Comprehensive Event (Belgorod, November 1–2, 2023) / ed. by V.M. Zakharov. – Belgorod: Belgorod State University Publishing House, 2023;

- "Theoretical framework of environmental management in the Kazakhstan tourism industry" Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of Students and Young Scientists "Farabi Alemi". Almaty, Kazakhstan, April 6–8, 2022. – Almaty: Qazaq University, 2022;

- "International experience of environmental management in the tourism industry" Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of Students and Young Scientists "Farabi Alemi". Almaty, Kazakhstan, April 6–8, 2023. – Almaty:

Qazaq University, 2023;

- “Development of sustainable tourism management in Kazakhstan” Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference of Students and Young Scientists “Farabi Alemi”. Almaty, Kazakhstan, April 4–6, 2024. – Almaty: Qazaq University, 2024.

Publications and Review

Based on the results of the research, an article entitled “Positive Outcomes of Cross-Border Tourism Development Cooperation: A Case of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan” was published in the Scopus-indexed journal Region, No. 11(2), 2024.

An article entitled “The role of environmental infrastructure in enhancing place affection and quality of life: Evidence from a mountainous tourism destination in Lenger town of Kazakhstan” was published in the Scopus-indexed journal Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites, No. 61(3), 2025.

In addition, six articles corresponding to the dissertation topic were published in journals included in the list recommended by the authorized national body.