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Tourism branding of the Russian Arctic destinations

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Abstract. The purpose of the study is to identify the main conditions for the tourism destinations formation in the Russian Arctic and to develop theoretical, methodological and practical recommendations for promotion and branding. The crucial principles of Russian state policy in the Arctic, aimed at protecting national interests, including tourism, have been determined. The factors of tourism destinations branding and the multidimensionality of tourism space in the Russian Arctic are analysed. The tourism identity of the Russian Arctic is revealed. The factors that determine the promotion and branding of tourism destinations in the Russian Arctic are considered in correlation with the fundamental principles of Arctic tourism sustainability. The research uses a dialectical method, as well as general logical, theoretical and empirical methods. The article defines the conditions for increasing the competitiveness of the domestic tourist product in the Arctic, lists tourist sites and attractors, territories and tourist products that are of the most pronounced interest for domestic and foreign tourists. The article presents the components of the image of tourism destinations in the Russian Arctic, which can become the basis for tourism branding strategy. The necessity of creating conditions in the Arctic regions of Russia for the professional implementation of tourist personnel and the influx of labour resources from urbanised and oversaturated territories is substantiated.

1. Introduction

The Arctic tourism market has begun to develop rapidly worldwide over the past decades. On the one hand, this is due to the demand factor for a unique tourist product among consumers. Still, in the concept of international relations and geopolitics, it is the dominant factor in the strategic presence in the Arctic and the level of influence on its further development. Most of the national, regional and local Arctic tourism offices (Innovation Norway, Government of Canada, Government of Denmark, US Government, Inspired by Iceland, Discovering Finland, and others) have strategies for national and regional Arctic tourism development and promotion. Tourism boards are actively working to promote national, regional and local tourism brands in the domestic and international markets, attract domestic and foreign tourists, including Russians.

When examining the development, promotion and branding of Arctic tourism, it is necessary first of all to take into account the fact that the Arctic is a very vulnerable region, where even a small number of tourists can cause irreparable harm to the environment. Tourist services are characterised by the uniqueness and comprehensiveness of the tourist offer [2], complex logistics and a high level of security and protection of individuals, tourists, biodiversity, and ecosystems involved in the production and sale of a tourist product, as well as strategic facilities and the state borders themselves. At the same time, the positioning of the state innovation policy of priority sectors of the economy in strategically important regions, which undoubtedly includes the Arctic, through the branding of



territories and tourism destinations, is considered by many scientists as a tool for spatial planning and strategic communication with the foreign public.

Tourism branding is the subject of research by the World Tourism Organization, ETC, WTTC, national and regional research institutes and tourism councils. The role of branding of territories and tourism destinations is reflected in the works of S. Anholt, S. Murdy, N. Morgan, S. Pike, S. Warren, G. Ashworth and many others. However, for the Russian Arctic territories, the issue of integrated promotion and branding remains poorly researched and requires special attention in the context of the implementation of the Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Zone until 2035 [13] and the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security until 2035. This study provides a comparative analysis of the factors that determine the formation of branding of Arctic tourist destinations, an analysis of the specific directions of organisation and implementation of tourist and recreational services and the conditions for the development of tourist destinations in the Russian Arctic. The study of the factors of branding of tourist destinations in the current needs of tourism development in the Russian Arctic is carried out based on the principles of sustainability, current legislation and state policy of Russia. The most promising tourist sites, attractors and brands of tourist destinations in the Russian Arctic have been listed.

2. The role of tourism destination branding in modern conditions

The trends of recent years are the development of tourist regions in a sustainable environment, which is ecological and is focused on conservation and creation. The stage of transformation of tourism customer society into a society of connoisseurs and custodians of unique tourism resources of countries and regions begins. The culture and philosophy of tourism consumption become a part of the image of tourism destinations and locations, forms the prestige of the tourism region. In 2020, the world community is faced with dramatic changes in the business processes of the tourism industry and the promotion of tourism destinations. In the conditions of a pandemic, border closures, travel restrictions for both international and domestic tourists, each tourism destination in one way or another was forced to conduct a certain kind of reflection, prepare for a completely new stage of its development, rethink the philosophy and strategies of its tourism brands. This compelled rethinking allowed Russian Federation to pay closer attention to the development of tourism destinations, including the Russian Arctic.

In current conditions, the development of innovative, practical and at the same time easy-to-implement technologies for branding tourism regions, destinations, tourism and recreational complexes, locations is an important area of intensive development. Identification and interpretation of tourism identity, the formation of the image of the territory, promotion through the developed branding strategy of the tourism destination, integration into the national tourism brand are inextricably linked with the processes of complex social, cultural and economic development, technological progress, innovative achievements, environmental safety, business activity, favourable investment climate, human resources. All of the above factors in the development of the tourism sector should also be taken into account in planning and forecasting the growth of tourism destinations in the Russian Arctic, as well as in the design of tourist and recreational areas in order to determine the anthropogenic load. This will allow predicting possible development scenarios, identifying the target and niche markets for a tourist destination, as well as bringing a high-quality and competitive tourist product to the market. The tourism development and tourism branding in the Arctic are also impossible without creating the necessary conditions for building an effective communication system. All the business participants involved in the production, promotion and sale of the Russian Arctic tourism product, as well as governments, investors, locals, stakeholders from industries related to tourism and hospitality, and potential tourists, should be integrated into the communication system.

The rapid response to dramatically scaling up 2019-nCoV pandemic and declaring the state of emergency by the World Health Organization on January 31, 2020, was shown by the World Tourism Organization. Due to worldwide lockdown, UNWTO recommended limiting any travelling, especially

to the centres of acute epidemiological situation. In March 2020, the World Tourism Organization predicted a decrease in tourist arrivals of at least 20-30% in 2020, which means a decline in revenues (exports) of international tourism by USD 300-450 billion. The World Tourism Organization claims that, given the past market trends, COVID-19 will cause damage to the tourism industry equivalent to 5-7 years of the tourism market operation. [14] In June 2020, UNWTO informs that in March 2020, the decline was 55% of international tourist arrivals. In April 2020, widespread travel restrictions resulted in a 97% drop. Between January and April 2020, the number of foreign tourists dropped by 44%, resulting in a loss of about \$ 195 billion USA in the form of receipts from international tourism [15]. Uncertainty in the development of the situation with the pandemic caused by 2019-nCoV, the inability to conduct short-term and medium-term planning, unpredictable sales, a crisis in financial relations and mutual settlements between the subjects of the tourism market, hospitality, aviation, and other industries make adjustments to the forecasts of tourist arrivals. According to the author's preliminary estimates, at least 60% -75% reduction in the total number of tourist arrivals for 2020 should be expected compared to 2019. After such a collapse, the stabilisation of the situation on the tourism market is impossible without its transformation, the search for new forms of sales, distribution channels and a revision of branding strategies. The expected active struggle for a potential consumer may affect the socio-economic development of tourism destinations and force a rethinking of tourism pricing policy. At the same time, practical and innovative branding will play a key role in attracting tourists and transferring communicating messages to potential markets. Undoubtedly, the crisis in tourism and hospitality, aviation, related markets and the global economy in general, caused by 2019-nCoV, influenced the development of Arctic tourism in Russia and the dynamics of tourist arrivals. Tourism as a connecting thread of the economy, diplomacy, cross-cultural relations of countries and regions has suffered from the pandemic more than other industries. Still, today it can become a catalyst for the recovery of communities and regions.

3. Tourism development in the Russian Arctic. Sustainability Principles and Public Policy. Tourism potential.

The tendencies of following principles of sustainable tourism development in the last two decades have become standard for many tourism destinations. This phenomenon was caused by the global trend of sustainable development, characteristic of a modern intensive economy with the use of socially responsible management. The territory of the Arctic countries is home to 532 million people, of which 4.6 million people live in the Arctic. [1] The leadership of the Russian Federation has always considered the Arctic as a strategically important object of its presence and future development. Russia has steadily strengthened its positions in the Arctic zone, while simultaneously defining the critical tasks for the future development of these territories at each new stage. [2] There is no doubt that tourism in the Russian Arctic as a complex system of economic, cultural and social relations should simultaneously serve the purposes of supporting the local economy, local population, recreation, humanistic and intellectual education, as well as protecting, preserving and renewing biodiversity and natural resources. The benefits obtained from tourism should be used rationally and ensure the socio-economic sustainability and environmental friendliness of the tourist business in the Arctic zone. The branding of tourism destinations in the Russian Arctic should reflect an uncompromising commitment to sustainability in tourism development over the long term.

The creation of the State Commission for the Development of the Arctic in February 2015 marked a new stage in the history of Russia's Arctic development. [3] By Decree No. 164 of March 5, 2020, the President of Russia V.V. Putin approved the Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Zone until 2035, according to which six vital national interests in the Arctic region were identified. [13] Particular attention is paid to the provision of state support to the economically active population of Russia, ready to move to the Russian Arctic in order to carry out labour activities. Earlier, the idea of mass resettlement to the Arctic was made by the corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences V.P. Fedorov [4] The concept of positive labour

migration and the development of depressed regions of the Arctic was further developed. On July 15, 2020, the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East came up with an initiative to distribute land to the inhabitants of the Arctic zone of Russia on the model of the "Far Eastern hectare". If the bill is passed, residents of the Arctic regions will be able to receive land plots in the Arctic in order of priority for the first six months. Then any citizen of the Russian Federation will have the right to acquire land plots. Under favourable economic conditions, this initiative most likely will attract investment in the Arctic regions, and allow for revising approaches to ensuring the quality of life in the Arctic and the management of depressed territories. In turn, this will contribute to improving economic activity, increasing labour migration processes of Russians, driving a positive effect on the image of the Russian Arctic regions and domestic tourism. By decree No. 526 of August 25, 2020, Vladimir Putin approved the Regulations on the Interdepartmental Commission of the Security Council of the Russian Federation on the issues of ensuring the national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic. The Commission was formed in order to fulfil the tasks assigned to the Security Council of the Russian Federation to develop measures aimed at ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation in the Arctic and the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as to coordinate the activities of state bodies of the Russian Federation, local authorities and organisations in the implementation of these measures. The Commission is entrusted with the functions of analysing the state and prospects of development of the international situation, including the military-political and the socio-economic development in the Arctic zone. The Commission takes into account the need to ensure the national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, assessing the implementation of the strategic national priorities of the Russian Federation in the Arctic; identifying internal and external threats to national security in the Arctic. The Commission is authorised to prepare proposals and recommendations to the Security Council on the economic and social situation in connection to the Arctic resource base expansion, transport, information and telecommunications infrastructure development. It is worth noting, that one more crucial issue of Commission is the ensuring environmental safety, taking into account global climate change, protecting the population and ecosystems of the Arctic zone from pollution, eliminating of accumulated harm to the environment, rational using of natural resources, developing a system of specially protected natural areas. Besides, the Commission analyses scientific support for the implementation of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, the organisation of complex scientific research, and many other vital issues. [17] The comprehensive approach of the Commission will have a beneficial effect on the development of tourism in the Russian Arctic. It will make it possible to comprehensively and efficiently solve the diverse tasks of the Arctic tourist destinations in Russia, including international cooperation, sustainable development, promotion and branding.

The countries of the Arctic Council have established experience of following the principles of sustainability in the conservation of biodiversity, support and protection of indigenous peoples, observations of climate change, economic development and in many other aspects. [11] The basic principles of sustainable development of the Arctic regions of Russia are translated by the Security Council of the Russian Federation, including during international events with the countries of the Arctic Council. In light of the intensive development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the Arctic regions of Russia, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the Arctic Council are discussing the issues of sustainable, safe and environmentally friendly tourism, the routes of which, in one way or another, pass through the places of residence and traditional economic activities of the indigenous peoples. One of the critical issues in the conduct of tourist and recreational activities in specially protected natural areas of the Arctic regions of Russia, as well as the assessment and scenario forecasts of possible risks from the mass development of tourism. Today, the Arctic is a territory of low political tension and the successful development of multilateral international cooperation. [4] In these conditions, the development of international activities aimed at enhancing international cooperation in tourism and mutual tourist exchanges with northern tourism destinations, as well as promoting the potential of Arctic tourism and

hospitality in the domestic tourism market, remains relevant. The development of the Northern Sea Route, the simplification of tourism logistics and visa formalities, the development of tourism infrastructure, the issues of tourism personnel shortage in the Arctic regions, environmental issues, security issues, as well as the provision of search and rescue operations, are the factors that affect the development, promotion and branding of tourism in the Russian Arctic. The above issues related to the intensive development and branding of tourism in the Arctic cannot and should not be solved only by the efforts of the tourist business community and public associations, without state participation. This is primarily due to the peculiarities of the development of the geopolitical situation in the Arctic region, which is changing in connection with the exacerbation of world international relations. It should be noted that scientific and political interest in the Arctic is initiated by speeches of the country's top leadership on a regular basis, media coverage of events related to the presence in the Arctic region. It helps to attract public attention and foreign players in the geopolitical arena to the expansion of the Russian presence in the Arctic. Thus, a reliable basis for broadcasting these provisions through the communication messages of the national, Arctic and tourist branding of Russia is created.

Organised tourism in the Russian Arctic is not a large market. However, the number of tourists in the Russian Arctic is increasing every year. The number of tourist visits along the Arctic routes is influenced by the Arctic climate, as well as the ice melting period. Russian tour operators and employees of all services providing Arctic routes provide comfortable conditions for tourists. At the same time, it should be noted that the brands of tourism destinations in the Arctic are actively formed by the tourism destinations themselves. In the absence of a unified branding strategy and the development of Arctic tourism in Russia for the period 2011-2018 the national park "Russian Arctic", which is one of the most famous brands of the Russian Arctic, was visited by more than 6.5 thousand people from 70 countries. In the tourism season of 2018, 1,079 tourist arrivals were recorded [2]. In 2019, 1306 visits were recorded, of which Russians made 262. [5] The Arctic tourism product is characterised by the complexity of the tourist offer, complex logistics and a high level of security and protection of both tourists, biodiversity, and ecosystems involved in the production and sale of a tourism product, as well as strategic objects and the state borders themselves. There is no doubt about the high role of indigenous peoples in the branding of tourism destinations in the North and the formation of the tourism identity of the Arctic territories. All this should be reflected in the tourism destination branding of the Russian Arctic.

One of the successful examples of identifying the tourism and recreational potential of tourism destinations of the Russian Arctic is the All-Russian competition for the creation of tourism and recreational clusters and the development of ecotourism in Russia (period 16.06.2020-15.11.2020). Eight federal districts (68 constituent entities of the Russian Federation) took part in the competition, which in total sent applications for the development of 231 protected areas, of which: 63 - national, 168 - regional significance. [16] As a result of diligent work, the regions were able to cover a broad segment of the population and target market who were not previously informed about the tourism and recreational potential of Russia, including northern Russian destinations. The Russian Arctic regions took an active part in the competition project. The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug announced "Natural Park" Polyarno-Uralsky" for the competition, Nenets Autonomous Okrug - the projects "Natural Monument "Pym-Va-Shor" and "Integrated Natural Park of Regional Significance Northern Timan". The Murmansk region has applied with the tourism cluster uniting the Khibiny National Park, the Polar-Alpine Botanical Garden-Institute named after N.A. Avrorina, "Astrophyllites of Eveslogchorr Mountain", "Eutrophic bog of the southern Khibinya", "Yuxporlak", "Cryptogram gorge", "Aikuayvenchorr gorge", the state natural complex nature reserve "Kaita". The Arkhangelsk Region presented the tourism cluster of the Golubino Park. Krasnoyarsk Territory announced the project "Tourism and Recreational Cluster Arctic. Putorana Plateau". Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) - "Lena Tourism Cluster". Chukotka Autonomous Okrug - the Arctic Riviera Tourism Cluster, which unites the Vostochny (Uelenskie Goryachie Kluchi), the Lorinskie (Kukunskie) hot springs, the Klyuchevoi (Senyavinsky thermal mineral springs). The Komi Republic presented the tourism and

recreational cluster "Virgin Komi Forests", which included the Yugyd Va National Park and the Pechora-Ilych State Biosphere Reserve. The purpose of the competition is to identify territories for the development of ecotourism in terms of creating a shopping and entertainment complex within the framework of the integrated development of specially protected and adjacent natural areas and stimulating the growth of entrepreneurship. The regions participate in the competition for co-financing of tourist clusters. It is evident that such targeted work carried out by the destinations to identify tourism potential, form and promote the shopping and entertainment complex and prepare project documentation will facilitate the arrival of investors, contribute to the growth of employment and incomes of the local population, and the development of new or underutilised territories. In the conditions of adherence to the principles of tourism sustainability, the development of the shopping and entertainment complex will lead to systematic and comprehensive protection of the resources of protected areas, ecological and tourist communication, the development of communication between government, business and residents. The solution to the issue of the competitiveness of the Russian tourist product in the Arctic can be the promotion of combined tourism, which in various variations, depending on the target audience, mixes in a group or individual offer the most promising types of tourism in the Russian North: business tourism, MICE tourism, ecological, photo tourism, historical, archaeological, ethnographic tourism; research, scientific and educational and educational tourism, adventure tourism; active and extreme tourism (racing, parachuting, quad biking, helicopter flights, ice diving, hot air ballooning, snowkiting, etc.); thematic tourism (themes of the Soviet heritage, indigenous peoples' lifestyle, gastronomy, musical culture, berry picking, etc.); licensed fishing; military-patriotic tourism, routes of reindeer transport echelons, etc. [2] In the present conditions, it is necessary to create an umbrella tourist brand "Russian Arctic" for positioning and successful promotion in the world tourism market.

4. Peculiarities of tourism destination branding in the Russian Arctic

Exogenous factors of the economy, along with developed and dynamically developing socio-economic and industrial sectors, are elements that affect the definition of the identity of a tourism destination, the formation of the region's image and the choice of a scenario for further branding. The concept of competitive brand identity for the territory of S. Anholt [10] can be applied in branding and promotion of the Arctic regions of Russia. The Russian Arctic is perceived as a territory of unique resources, biodiversity, a territory of challenge, overcoming, influence, struggle, an environment of natural resources, historical and cultural heritage of Russia and the world. The image of the Arctic includes extreme conditions of survival and coexistence with various ecosystems in a natural environment uncontrollable by humans. A large number of monuments of world importance, unique objects of history, archaeology and architecture are presented in the Arctic region of Russia. The evidence of the historical past of the Arctic inspires the organisation of the first trip to the Arctic, further exploration of the northern regions of Russia and return visits. The image of the Russian Arctic can be described as cold, wild, fierce, attractive, sedate, silent, rich, pure, unforgiving. The identity of tourist destinations in the northern regions of the Russian Arctic, which is determined both by natural objects and the traditions of the peoples inhabiting them, elements of human culture, originality, craft, local cuisine, artistic incarnations of the Arctic in rituals, folklore, folk costume, holidays, and dwellings of northerners. Traditional games, fun, everyday routine, as well as elements of shamanism, are of great interest to tourists.

Strengthening Russia's multipurpose presence in the Arctic and the socio-economic development of this region largely depends on transport communications. [12] In 2019, a number of federal administrative decisions were made to develop the Northern Sea Route until 2035 [6] At the same time, there are obvious opportunities to increase the number of tourist cruises in the seas of the Arctic Ocean along the NSR route. [7] The image of the NSR can also become an integral part of tourism destinations brands in the Russian Arctic. The Northern Sea Route is a unique, historically formed national transport artery of Russia in the Arctic. Today it is the only shortest sea route between the European part of Russia and the Far East. [12] The development of Arctic shelf deposits, the

development of shipping, navigation systems, the improvement of the infrastructure of supporting ports and an increase in the level of security have created favourable conditions for the development of Arctic tourism. Russia regularly conducts search and rescue exercises in the Arctic and raises the level of training of responsible and support specialists. Modern icebreaking support, if necessary, can organise year-round navigation along the NSR.

The iconic brand of the Russian Arctic is Yamal, where the peoples of the Far North have arranged their home and a particular order of life. Yamal has a rich historical and cultural heritage. For centuries Yamal, Obdorsk, Salekhard were the outpost of the Russian North. In the 20th century, oil and gas and the innumerable riches of the Polar Urals brought world fame to the region. The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug is located in the Arctic zone of the world's largest West Siberian Plain. It occupies an area of 769,250 km², of which more than half is beyond the Arctic Circle.

Franz Josef Land brand. Flora and fauna of the Franz Josef Land are not very diverse. However, the territory has been preserved in its original form since the Ice Age and is an invaluable natural monument.

A unique tourism brand of the Russian Arctic is Barneo, a research camp which organised on an ice floe. The base allows to conduct scientific research and accommodate travellers and tourists simultaneously. In 1937, the first plane landed on an ice floe at the North Pole. This voyage marked the beginning of the first drifting station SP-1, which successfully operated on the ice for nine months. Since that time, the improvement of flight technologies and camps began. Barneo made Arctic tourism more accessible. Today, branding technologies for Russian Arctic destinations should be consistent with the Fundamentals, Strategy 2035 and the general vector of intensive development of the national economy.

The tourism destination branding of the Russian Arctic should reflect ample opportunities for meeting the needs of potential visitors in ecological, active, cultural, sports, ethnographic, industrial, business, scientific, educational and extreme tourism.

5. Conclusion

When conducting marketing research and tourism destination branding in the Russian Arctic, it is necessary to take into account the conditions of the Arctic climate at the stages of planning, organising and implementing tourist routes. A well-developed algorithm for crisis communication in tourism, security issues should be reflected in the branding strategy of tourist destinations in the Russian North. [9] Analysis of the situation with staffing in the branding of the tourism sector shows the need to improve pedagogical approaches to increase the competitiveness of tourism personnel, [8] which is especially important in the Arctic Region. The creation of stable conditions for attracting tourism professionals from oversaturated territories will lead to an increase in the attractiveness of the region. It will form flows of labour migration among the Russians. Tourism can give a powerful impetus to the development of the Russian North, depressed areas, as well as the system of protected areas. State policy in the Arctic creates favourable conditions for the development and maintenance of tourism. Integration of untapped natural and tourism-recreational potential into the regional economy will provide socio-economic development. From the standpoint of ensuring the effective implementation of the branding strategy of tourism destinations in the Russian Arctic, it is necessary to integrate interregional, regional and local brands of the North into a master plan for promoting Arctic tourism destinations in Russia and further - the national tourist brand. In this case, the identity of Russia's Arctic tourism destinations will be built into the core brand and information field of the country in all its diversity and attractiveness. The development, promotion and tourism destination branding in the Russian Arctic are impossible without an integrated approach and have prospects only in the context of a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensionality of the tourism space of the Russian North, the national, cultural and biological diversity of the northern latitudes of Russia.

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