

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A NEW NORMALITY

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Abstract

The article examines topical issues of the functioning of the tourism and hospitality industry in the context of the new normalcy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has led to a sharp decline in tourist flows and the need for innovative solutions to restore and further develop the tourism and hospitality industry. In the context of the new normality, the classical interpretation of the concept of the quality of tourist and hotel services and sustainable development of tourism is changing. When assessing the quality of services in tourism, the assessment of their epidemiological safety began to occupy a key place. The sustainable development of tourism is significantly influenced by global digitalization and the formation of a new category of digital tourists. The article analyzes innovative solutions to ensure travel safety and sustainable development of the tourism industry in the context of the new normalcy. It is shown that in the context of a pandemic, there was an acceleration of the processes of introducing innovations, including digitalization in the field of tourism. It is proposed to expand the understanding of sustainable tourism development by including digital information support as a prerequisite for meeting the requirements of digital tourists.

Keywords: New Normality; Innovation; Sustainable Development; Sustainable Tourism; Digitalization; Tourism Information Support.

SOLUÇÕES INOVADORAS NA INDÚSTRIA DO TURISMO E DA HOTELARIA PARA ASSEGURAR UM DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL NUMA NOVA NORMALIDADE

Resumo

O artigo examina questões atuais do funcionamento da indústria do turismo e da hospitalidade no contexto da nova normalidade causada pela pandemia da COVID-19. A pandemia levou a um declínio acentuado dos fluxos turísticos e à necessidade de soluções inovadoras para restaurar e desenvolver ainda mais a indústria do turismo e da hotelaria. No contexto da nova normalidade, a interpretação clássica do conceito da qualidade dos serviços turísticos e hoteleiros e do desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo está mudando. Ao avaliar a qualidade dos serviços no turismo, a avaliação da sua segurança epidemiológica começou a ocupar um lugar-chave. O desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo é significativamente influenciado pela digitalização global e pela formação de uma nova categoria de turistas digitais. O artigo analisa soluções inovadoras para garantir a segurança das viagens e o desenvolvimento sustentável da indústria do turismo, no contexto da nova normalidade. Mostra-se que, no contexto de uma pandemia, houve uma aceleração dos processos de introdução de inovações, incluindo a digitalização no campo do turismo. Propõe-se expandir a compreensão do desenvolvimento do turismo sustentável, incluindo o apoio à informação digital como pré-requisito para satisfazer as exigências dos turistas digitais.

Palavras-chave: Nova Normalidade; Inovação; Desenvolvimento Sustentável; Turismo Sustentável; Digitalização; Apoio à Informação Turística.

SOLUCIONES INNOVADORAS EN LA INDUSTRIA DEL TURISMO Y LA HOTELERÍA PARA GARANTIZAR EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE EN UNA NUEVA NORMALIDAD

Resumen

El artículo examina cuestiones de actualidad sobre el funcionamiento de la industria del turismo y hotelaría en el contexto de la nueva normalidad provocada por la pandemia de COVID-19. La pandemia ha provocado un fuerte descenso de los flujos turísticos y la necesidad de soluciones innovadoras para restablecer y seguir desarrollando la industria del turismo y hotelaría. En el contexto de la nueva normalidad, la interpretación clásica del concepto de calidad de los servicios turísticos y hoteleros y del desarrollo sostenible del turismo está cambiando. A la hora de evaluar la calidad de los servicios en el turismo, la evaluación de su seguridad epidemiológica comenzó a ocupar un lugar clave. El desarrollo sostenible del turismo está significativamente influenciado por la digitalización global y la formación de una nueva categoría de turistas digitales. El artículo analiza soluciones innovadoras para garantizar la seguridad de los viajes y el desarrollo sostenible de la industria turística en el contexto de la nueva normalidad. Se demuestra que, en el contexto de una pandemia, se produjo una aceleración de los procesos de introducción de innovaciones, incluida la digitalización en el ámbito del turismo. Se propone ampliar la comprensión del desarrollo turístico sostenible incluyendo el soporte de la información digital como requisito previo para satisfacer las exigencias de los turistas digitales.

Palabras clave: Nueva Normalidad; Innovación; Desarrollo Sostenible; Turismo Sostenible; Digitalización; Soporte de Información Turística.



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1 INTRODUCTION

The global tourism and hospitality industry has suffered huge losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to UNWTO, in 2020, the number of international arrivals was 381 million, down 74% compared to 2019, losses in tourism reached 1.3 trillion dollars. The current state of the world socio-economic system is characterized as a new normality caused by a pandemic and global digitalization.

Many countries are undertaking various innovative solutions to support the tourism and hospitality industry. In the UK, businesses hit hardest by the pandemic were provided with loan guarantees totaling £ 330bn, with the maximum loan increased from £ 1.2m to £ 5m at 0% in the first 6 months. In Italy, tax credits were provided for companies whose revenues decreased by more than 25%. In Portugal, *Turismo de Portugal* provided tourism micro-enterprises with € 60 million in support. In South Korea, small and medium-sized travel companies were provided concessional financing totaling \$ 8.1 million at 1% per year.

Rising unemployment, economic damage and instability, and unprecedented levels of government intervention to tackle economic problems in the tourism industry confirm that travel, tourism and hospitality are pillars of many economies (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). In the *new normality* context, the regular understanding of the quality of tourist and hotel services is changing, the epidemiological safety of services becomes one of the main criteria for assessing their quality and is taken into account when choosing a travel destination.

The pandemic has accelerated the digitalization process in many areas, including the tourism and hospitality industries. Digital innovation has made it possible to provide a contactless service to travelers through the provision of a variety of online services. It is now clear that a new category of travelers is emerging called digital nomads (Cook, 2020).

For them, it is necessary to provide high-quality digital information and communication support of the trip at all its stages, from choosing a destination, a tourist product and ending with the opportunity to express their impression of this trip.

The study of innovative solutions in the tourism and hotel industry with the aim of sustainable development in the new normalcy is the actual goal of this article. In this line, the study will analyze the features of the development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the new normal, identify changes in consumer preferences of tourists in terms of travel safety, and study innovative ways to improve digital information and communication support for tourism as an important component of sustainable development.

2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 The Relevance of a Consensus in a Community of Experts

This study is based on the works of scientists who study the impact of the pandemic on various areas of human activity, including tourism, hotel and restaurant business Škare et al. (2021), Kim and Lee (2020), Gössling et al. (2020), Sheth (2020). An analysis of the impact of the pandemic on tourism is contained in the works of Wen et al. (2020), Korstanje (2020), Hopkins (2021), Pillai et al. (2021). Higgins-Desbiolles (2021) describes different perspectives on rethinking and transforming tourism in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

In work Hall et al. (2020) gave an overview of the main pandemics and disease outbreaks of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism, the economy, provided an overview of the factors and activities contributing to the change and recovery of tourism in connection with COVID-19, described changes in consumer behavior.

The authors describe some scenarios for the recovery and further development of tourism and note that changes in tourism as a result of COVID-19 will be uneven in time and space. Some destinations will rethink the nature of their tourism industry and focus more on local and more sustainable forms of tourism without significant institutional and government intervention.

Jamal & Budke (2020) note that in the pandemic crisis it is necessary to support tour operators, study changes in consumer behavior, and share knowledge. Public-private collaboration in travel and tourism is essential to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus. Global crises such as disease outbreaks and pandemics raise serious questions about the willingness of global and regional tourism-related institutions to coordinate tourism management and recovery.

Noteworthy are articles on the impact of the pandemic on the tourism and hospitality industry around the world. Faisal and Dhusia (2021) analyzed the impact of the pandemic on domestic tourism in India in terms of the travel needs and desires of local residents.

The article Afanasiev and Afanasieva (2021) analyzed the mechanisms of support for the tourism and hotel industry used in different countries, considered the prospects for the development of tourism in Russia and the world through new breakthrough ideas and technologies. Bellini (2021) and Cuomo et al. (2021) considered the directions of tourism recovery in the context of the new normalcy.

Abbas et al. (2021) notes that it is necessary to comprehensively study the impact of the pandemic on

tourism, ensure more active interaction between business structures and the government, and develop comprehensive measures for the restoration and sustainable development of tourism.

Sharma et al. (2021) highlight four important factors for making tourism more resilient: government response, technological innovation, local ownership, and consumer and employee trust. Assaf and Scuderi (2020) emphasize the need to move away from subsidizing the liquidity of the travel industry to fostering sustainable recovery and innovation.

Quite a lot of works have been devoted to the issues of sustainable development of tourism. In an article by Rasoolimanesh et al. (2020) emphasizes that indicators of sustainable tourism are an integral part of tourism planning and management, the most stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism development are local residents, and tourists are less involved in this process.

Dreizis et al. (2020) discuss sustainable tourism development at the destination level. The authors say that in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development of tourist areas, it is necessary to set goals for preserving regional recreational resources, ensuring mutual consideration of the interests of both the local population and tourists.

Innovative solutions in the field of tourism are considered in the works of De Souza et al. (2016), De Oliveira Saboia et al. (2022) and others. One of the breakthrough innovations in tourism and hospitality is associated with the use of digital technologies (Stankov & Gretzel, 2020). Technology has become a major driver of sustainability in tourism (Hall et al., 2017).

The authors Xu, Nash and Whitmarsh (2020) note that a critical turn in tourism research is associated with the use of big data analytics, examines the possibilities of using Big Data to analyze the movement of tourists, predict their needs and manage the sustainable development of the destination.

In their article, Gretzel et al. (2020) noted that the pandemic has raised new questions about how tourism can respond to and emerge from this crisis and how travel and tourism will evolve. With the advent of the Internet, information technology has become an important tool, catalyst and, in some cases, disruptor for travel and tourism. The new reality poses both huge challenges and exciting opportunities in terms of scientific research and technological innovation.

Research in e-tourism is needed to better predict markets, model tourism scenarios and understand risks. They identified six pillars that are particularly important for conducting research in transformative e-tourism: historicity (remembering the past and the value of continuity), reflexivity (being aware of the factors influencing the creation of knowledge), transparency (speaking frankly about our values), fairness (sensitivity to different opportunities for participation in research and the different impact of its results), pluralism (openness to a variety of topics and approaches) and creativity (willingness to be creative).

Thus, considering this context, modern research in tourism should be interdisciplinary, especially e-tourism, which by definition is at the intersection of IT and tourism. Table 1 shows the causal relationships on which this study was based.

Table 1. Study causality

| Factors | Impact on tourism | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | Changes in tourist behavior | Change in infrastructure | Features of tourism management | Sustainable development |
| COVID-19 pandemic | Increasing requirements for travel safety | Modification of business processes in the service of tourists | Strengthened control over travel safety | Safety has become an essential condition for sustainable development |
| Global digitalization | A prerequisite for digital travel support | Development of digital information and communication infrastructure for tourism | Digital tourism ecosystem | Digital information and communication support as an element of sustainable development |

Source: own elaboration.

3 METHODOLOGY

The new normality means increased attention to sanitary and epidemiological safety, and as a result, minimization of contact interaction in the service economy, the growth of online services, and the acceleration of the digitalization of many business processes.

In the conditions of the new normality, the mobility of the population is sharply reduced, remote employment is developing, and an explosive growth of virtual events is observed. However, so-called virtual tourism and virtual travel arrangements will never replace traditional tourist travel, they can only serve as a preliminary study of the destination that attracts potential travelers.

To identify the impact of the pandemic on the Russian tourism market, let us consider the dynamics of tourist flows in recent years. Table 2 presents data

on the number of inbound and outbound tourist trips for 2014-2020, which clearly demonstrate the downward trend in tourist flows.

Table 2. Number of tourist trips (thousand)

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of outbound tourist trips of citizens of the Russian Federation to foreign countries | 42921 | 34390 | 31659 | 39620 | 41964 | 45330 | 12361 |
| Number of inbound tourist trips of foreign citizens to the Russian Federation | 25438 | 26852 | 24571 | 24390 | 24551 | 24419 | 6359 |
| Difference of numbers | 17483 | 7538 | 7088 | 15230 | 17413 | 20911 | 6002 |

Source: made by the authors based on Rosstat data <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/23457>.

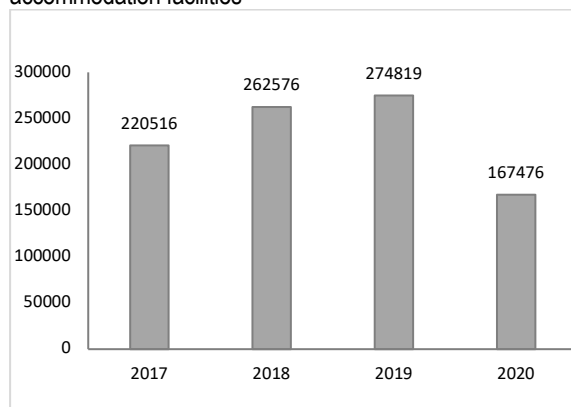
The predominance of outbound tourist flows over inbound ones has existed for almost all recent years, which is explained by a number of objective and subjective reasons:

- Russian citizens prefer to spend their holidays in regions with a warm climate, respectively, they choose countries such as Turkey, Greece, Italy and the like,
- foreign destinations have a developed tourist infrastructure and the level of service in them is often significantly higher than in Russian tourist destinations,
- the cost of travel abroad from a number of remote regions of Russia turns out to be lower than similar Russian tourist products, which is due to the high cost of transportation within Russia.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, there was a sharp decrease in international inbound and outbound tourist flows, which is associated with the suspension of international air travel and the closure of borders.

The number of overnight stays in collective accommodation facilities (DAC) in 2020 decreased sharply by 39% compared to 2019 and amounted to 167,476 thousand overnight stays (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of overnight stays in collective accommodation facilities



Source: made by the authors based on Rosstat data <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/23457>.

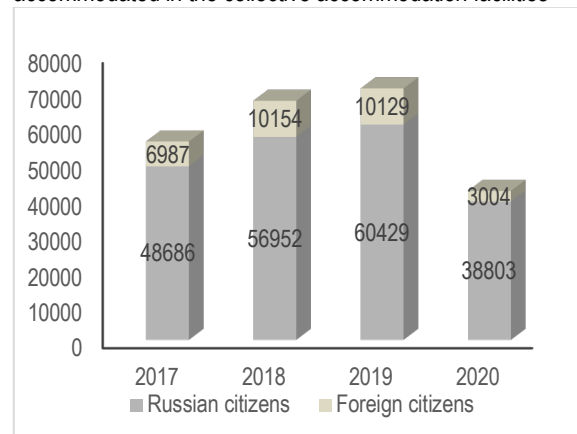
In 2020, the number of persons accommodated in collective accommodation facilities amounted to 41,807 thousand people, which is 40.7% less than in 2019.

Due to the closure of borders and a decrease in inbound tourist flow in 2020, the number of foreign guests accommodated in collective accommodation facilities has sharply decreased from 10,129 thousand people in 2019 to 3,004 thousand people in 2020.

Moreover, the main incoming flow was generated in the first quarter of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has virtually halted international tourism. The number of inbound tourist trips of foreign citizens to Russia in the first half of 2021 amounted to only 2817 thousand, the number of outbound tourist trips of Russian citizens to foreign countries - 5853 thousand.

Figure 2 shows the number of Russian and foreign guests accommodated in collective accommodation facilities.

Figure 2. The number of Russian and foreign guests accommodated in the collective accommodation facilities



Source: made by the authors based on Rosstat data <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/23457>.

Tourist flows have decreased in many regions of Russia (Table 3).

Table 3. Tourist flows to the regions of Russia in 2020

| Region | Number of tourist trips (million) | Change from 2019 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| St. Petersburg | 2 | -80% |
| Moscow | 7 | -72% |
| Moscow region | 11,5 | -50% |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| Republic of Tatarstan | 2 | -44% |
| Altai region | 1,3 | -40% |
| Republic of Karelia | 0,5 | -40% |
| Krasnodar region | 11,5 | -33% |
| Kaliningrad region | 1,3 | -30% |
| Crimea | 6,1 | -18% |

Source: made by the authors based on Rosstat data <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/23457>.

In 2020, excursion tourism suffered the most due to the fact that a huge number of cultural and historical sites were closed, the overall decline in demand was about 40-60% compared to 2019. In order to restore cultural and educational tourism, funds were allocated to maintain a soft pricing policy, additional benefits were established for the purchase of tickets to theaters, museums and exhibitions.

The attraction of the youth audience was carried out with the help of various interactivity and well-known Internet personalities, who in social networks told young people about art, culture, architecture. The Moscow government has allocated grants for the development of various cultural centers, the creation of new interesting programs, festivals, competitions, master classes.

In 2020, the government of the Russian Federation allocated 20 billion rubles from the federal budget for subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises for measures to prevent new coronavirus infection. The subsidies were received by companies operating in the service sector, including hotel companies. The amount of the subsidy for initial expenses was 15 thousand rubles and 6.5 thousand rubles for each employee. These payments are related to the provision of sanitary and epidemiological measures for the prevention of coronavirus and the provision of masks and gloves to all employees.

In 2020, the Government of the Russian Federation implemented innovative activities aimed at supporting enterprises in the tourism and hospitality industry in a pandemic:

- more than 3.5 billion rubles were allocated to reimburse the costs of tour operators for non-refundable tickets and tariffs and for the export of Russian tourists from countries with an unfavorable epidemiological situation,

- tour operators were able to use the personal responsibility fund to return money to tourists for failed tourist trips,

- the contribution to the reserve fund of the Association "Tourist Assistance" for 2020 was set at 1 ruble,

- a deferral is allowed for the provision of financial statements and the submission of information on

ensuring the financial responsibility of tour operators until May 12, 2020,

- expenses were reimbursed to airlines carrying out the export of Russian citizens from foreign countries,

- Russian citizens who find themselves abroad and have documents for return in the period from March 16 to May 31, 2020 were provided with financial assistance,

- for payment of wages, interest-free loans were provided for 6 months,

- small and medium-sized enterprises were paid one minimum wage for each employee, if 90% of employees were retained, this money could be spent on salaries, urgent needs, utility bills, - a deferral for lease payments has been granted,

- introduced a moratorium on bankruptcy for the affected industries for a period of 6 months,

- a moratorium on tax sanctions has been introduced, the submission of tax returns has been extended by 3 months, the dates for the start of various tax audits have also been postponed,

- introduced a moratorium on tax, field and customs inspections until June 30, 2020,

- tax holidays, deferrals or installments for taxes, advance payments, except for value added tax, excise taxes, etc., have been introduced for enterprises affected by the pandemic;

- measures to collect tax arrears from small and medium-sized enterprises in the affected industries have been suspended,

- extended tax payment deadlines for small and medium-sized enterprises,

- insurance premiums have been reduced.

Support measures were also taken for large enterprises of the tourism industry:

- provided interest-free loans for salary payments,

- introduced a moratorium on bankruptcy and various tax sanctions,

- tax holidays have been introduced,

- subsidies were provided for the resumption of activities.

The most effective measures for enterprises in the tourism and hospitality industry turned out to be the following:

- deferral of obligations for tourism products purchased before the closure of borders, which could not take place due to the pandemic. Travel companies that entered into an agreement with tourists before March 31, 2020, within 60 days, could send a notification to provide the tourist with an equivalent tourist product,

- an innovative cashback program for the return of part of the funds for the purchase of tourist products in

Russia, payment was carried out using the MIR payment system. The maximum cashback amount was 20,000 rubles. The cashback program also covered children's tourism.

In February 2021, the Russian Federation began a program to issue concessional loans for up to 15 years for the construction of hotels at low interest rates from 3% to 5% per annum. Investors who received these funds can direct them to the construction of new buildings or the reconstruction of old ones to accommodate hotels with an area of at least 5 thousand square meters or a fund of at least 120 rooms.

It is important to note the innovative solutions to support tourism in Moscow, which in 2019 entered the TOP 20 most visited cities in Europe along with London, Paris and Amsterdam. The Moscow government has allocated grants to hotels in the amount of 1.7 billion rubles and paid for the accommodation of medical workers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Also, representatives of the hotel business got the opportunity to rent vacations: from March 1 to June 30, more than 140 hotels received exemption from rent, saving more than 130 million rubles. To support tourism in Moscow, a digital travel service for organizing travel Russpass was developed, which is intended for residents of Russia and foreign citizens.

The sectors most affected by the pandemic were also supported at the regional level. In Kazan and Ryazan, rent incentives have been introduced. In the Chelyabinsk Region, enterprises were granted loan deferrals.

A special Center for Small and Medium Business Support was opened in Bashkiriya. In the Kemerovo region, taxes have been reduced for small and medium-sized businesses. In the Amur Region, the costs of purchasing equipment to comply with the sanitary and epidemiological regime were subsidized, grants of up to 1 million rubles were provided, which are aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the domestic tourist product and services.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Innovative tools to support the tourism industry have had a positive impact and have helped many businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry to weather the crisis. Now we can say that Russian domestic tourism has recovered and it is necessary to ensure its further sustainable development in the context of a new normalcy.

A special feature of the travel industry is that the tourist must physically arrive at the destination of his choice. In the context of the new normality, the responsibility of travel organizers for the safety of tourists is increasing, i.e. the conditions for the

implementation of tourist activities and hospitality are radically changing.

One of the tools for the restoration of the tourism and hospitality industry is to build trust of tourists in this sector in terms of ensuring travel safety. In the context of the new normality, not only the attractiveness of a tourist destination, but also its safety becomes the most important motive for travel (Morozov & Morozova, 2016).

Researchers studying tourist behavior during a pandemic have noted that travel motivations and preferences for human-technology interactions are redefined in relation to health interventions (Borges-Tiago et al, 2021). In addition to the social distancing strategy, tourists prefer digital communications in all possible ways.

An innovative solution for the tourism and hospitality industry is a radical overhaul of the organization of safe travel. In 2020, the WTTC has developed special Safe Travels protocols, which present the basic requirements for organizing safe travel. They are aimed at ensuring the safety of both tourists and workers in the tourism and hospitality industry. In Russia, the Safe Travels movement has been joined by tourism and hospitality enterprises from Moscow (Safe Travels Discover Moscow), St. Petersburg (Safe Travels SPb) and other cities.

In May 2021, the ISO PAS 5643 specification "Tourism and related services - Requirements and guidelines for reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the tourism industry" was created, developed by ISO / TC 228 Tourism and related services. This document contains measures to ensure the safety of tourist travel in the new normalcy for 20 different areas (sectors) of tourism.

In the conditions of the new normality, it is necessary to ensure the trust of tourists in the chosen tourist product from the point of view of its safety. To this end, the European Commission has developed the COVID-19 European Tourism Safety Seal, which aims to restore customer confidence in tourism and hospitality services in the face of the new normal.

Sustainable development is viewed from a systemic perspective and includes economic, social and environmental aspects. Sustainable tourism development involves maintaining a balance in the following areas:

- interests of present and future generations,
- the interests of travelers, the local population of the tourist destination, business, the state and all stakeholders interested in the development of tourism,
- economic growth, social development and environmental preservation (environmental sustainability).

The main directions of restoration and sustainable development of tourist destinations are as follows:

- increasing the efficiency of tourism activities at the level of tourist destinations, which will contribute to sustainable economic development of tourism and improve the socio-economic state of this destination. The efficiency of tourism activities should be increased both at the meso-level (the level of tourist destinations) due to the rational use of tourist resources and infrastructure, and at the micro-level, which is expressed in an increase in the efficiency of a separate enterprise in the tourism industry (market entity of the tourism system),

- the social component of sustainable tourism is expressed in the fair distribution of income and other benefits from tourism development among all stakeholders, including the local population of the destination. We are talking not only about additional tax deductions to the budget due to the growth of tourist activity, but also due to the possibility of using the tourist infrastructure by the local population, participating in various event tourism events, improving the quality of life, etc.,

- when organizing tourist activities in the destination territory, it is necessary to increase the level of environmental responsibility of business structures for violation of legislation related to environmental activities, etc.

In order to ensure the efficiency of tourist activities, it is necessary to reduce the influence of seasonality and ensure the year-round operation of the tourist infrastructure. This can be achieved by creating new tourism products, expanding tourism activities, and increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations (Morozov & Morozova, 2016).

Environmentally sustainable tourism contributes to the preservation and development of the ecological health of a tourist destination, providing the opportunity to use tourist and recreational resources for a long time. With a reasonable combination of tourist activities with tourist and recreational opportunities of the destination, competent maintenance of the main ecological processes, preservation of biological diversity and biological resources can be ensured (Morozov & Morozova, 2018).

The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital innovation in the travel industry. In the tourism and hospitality industry, the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, geolocation services or virtual systems, and augmented reality have become widely used (Pencarelli, 2020). The advent of mobile devices that enable the use of a variety of digital services have fundamentally changed many business processes in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The introduction of innovative transport solutions can also have a significant impact on tourism. Cohen, and Hopkins (2019) studied the possibilities of using connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs), also called self-driving vehicles, in urban and tourism environments.

The use of CAVs as tourist transport will fundamentally change the urban tourism landscape. CAVs have been experimentally tested at Heathrow Airport (UK) as shuttles and have shown a high level of efficiency and environmental friendliness. In addition, by reducing the number of driver errors, up to 90% of road accidents are eliminated, which is extremely important when transporting tourists. However, the use of self-driving vehicles in tourism can lead to significant job losses for professional drivers providing transportation services to tourists.

The concept of sustainable tourism development is proposed to be supplemented with a new component: information and communication support for tourism. This is the increasing role of digitalization and the formation of new principles and methods for ensuring sustainable tourism activities.

The adoption of digital technologies in the tourism and hospitality industry has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. To provide contactless service for guests in the tourism and hospitality industry, robots, mobile applications, chat bots and other innovations have begun to actively use that increase the level of customer safety by minimizing contacts.

The development of information and communication support for a tourist destination based on modern digital technologies in coordination with the activities of the local administration is one of the most important mechanisms for ensuring sustainable tourism development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the development of the tourism industry, changing the trend of its development. In this regard, most countries have adopted a number of tourism-supporting measures, which have proved to be quite effective and made it possible to provide a way out of the crisis situation.

However, in the new reality, these measures are not enough for sustainable recovery and development of tourism. For many Russian regions, sustainable economic development of tourist activity can be ensured by smoothing out the seasonality in tourism. It is proposed to neutralize the influence of seasonality by creating new tourist products focused on the low season.

This will ensure a more efficient use of tourism infrastructure and ensure the stability of tourism activities. Sustainable development of tourism in a new

reality necessarily requires compliance with the protocols of safe tourism, which must also be taken into account at the level of national tourism standards.

As a result of the study, the main innovative solutions were identified that will ensure the sustainable development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the new normal (table 4).

Table 4. Innovative solutions to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the new normal

| Innovative solution | Influence on the sustainable development of tourism and hospitality |
|--|--|
| Implementation of a variety of online services, including the Russpass travel management service | Provides a contactless service to improve travel safety and tourist confidence |
| Digitalization of business processes based on the use of IoT, AI, AR, etc. | Improving the quality of business process implementation and the quality of traveler service |
| Cashback Program | Increasing Tourist Flows |
| Preferential loans for the construction (reconstruction) of accommodation facilities | Modernization of hospitality infrastructure |
| Transport Innovations (CAVs) | Eco-Friendly and CostEffective Tourist Transportation |
| Creation of new tourism products | Reducing the impact of seasonality and increasing the stability of tourism activities |

Source: own elaboration.

According to the authors, to expand the understanding of sustainable tourism development by including digital information support, which is necessary to meet the requirements of digital tourists.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In the conditions of the new normality, the role of innovative technologies is growing in all spheres of social and economic activity, including the tourism and hotel industries. Information technology is revolutionizing the tourism industry and shaping the strategy and competitiveness of tourism organizations and destinations (Buhalis, 2019). Of particular importance is the information and communication component of tourist activity as a key tool for forming travelers' awareness of the level of safety both in the destination area and during the trip.

Digital communication strategies need to take into account changes in travel behavior during and after the pandemic, mainly tourists prefer to travel within their country and to destinations considered safer in relation to COVID-19 (Borges et al., 2021). During the pandemic, people began to actively use social networks for social interaction and as an information source about travel. The pandemic has changed the behavior and motivation of tourists, who choose less crowded places that are trustworthy in terms of epidemiological safety when choosing a destination.

In the context of the new normality, the role of innovative digital technologies is increasing, changing many business processes in the tourism and hospitality industry. In this regard, it is advisable to add another component to the concept of sustainable tourism development - digital information and communication support of tourism activities, which will take into account the needs of the so-called digital tourists. It is this category of travelers that will determine the trends in the development of tourism and the hospitality industry in the near future.

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Table 1. CRediT author statement.

| Term | Definition | Author 1 | Author 2 |
|----------------------------|---|----------|----------|
| Conceptualization | Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims | + | + |
| Methodology | Development or design of methodology; creation of models | + | + |
| Software | Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components | | |
| Validation | Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs | + | |
| Formal analysis | Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data | | + |
| Investigation | Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection | + | + |
| Resources | Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools | | |
| Data Curation | Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse | | + |
| Writing - Original Draft | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation) | + | + |
| Writing - Review & Editing | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre-or post-publication stages | + | |
| Visualization | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation | | + |
| Supervision | Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team | + | |
| Project administration | Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution | + | |
| Funding acquisition | Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication | | |

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