

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AS A CONDITIONING FACTOR UNDERLYING THE EXPLOITATION OF AGROTOURISM AND ECOTOURISM: AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA AND BELARUS

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Abstract

This paper considers various possibilities and prospects for the development of agricultural and ecotourism in Russia. In the context of financial and logistical constraints on the Russian business, the closure of many traditional tourist destinations necessitates a reorientation of tourist flows both in terms of location and in terms of tourist interest. Currently, travelers are inclined to choose new types of tourism, including agrotourism and ecotourism. Agrotourism and ecotourism can become a significant economic component for several agricultural and natural areas. The study demonstrates that the closure of traditional tourist destinations for Russian tourists creates unique conditions for the redirection of tourist flows and the qualitative reorientation of tourism. The main tasks of regulation in this area are streamlining relations in the following combination "agricultural and natural territories – tourism business – a consumer of a tourism product (tourist)", as well as observing the legitimate interests of all participants in such relations. The authors of the article study positive global experience in the organization and regulation of agrotourism and ecotourism. They also propose some legal formulations for the formation of legal concepts aimed at supporting the development of the tourism business in both agricultural and environmental areas.

Keywords: Tourism services; Tourism business; Agrotourism; Ecotourism; Regulation.

BASES LEGAIS COMO FATOR CONDICIONANTE SUBJACENTE À EXPLORAÇÃO DO AGROTURISMO E DO ECOTURISMO: UMA ANÁLISE DAS CONDIÇÕES ATUAIS NA RÚSSIA E NA BIELORRÚSSIA

Resumo

Este artigo considera várias possibilidades e perspectivas para o desenvolvimento da agricultura e do ecoturismo na Rússia. No contexto de constrangimentos financeiros e logísticos do negócio russo, o fechamento de muitos destinos turísticos tradicionais exige uma reorientação dos fluxos turísticos, tanto em termos de localização como em termos de interesse turístico. Atualmente, os viajantes estão inclinados a escolher novos tipos de turismo, incluindo o turismo agrícola e o ecoturismo. O agroturismo e o ecoturismo podem tornar-se uma componente económica significativa para várias áreas agrícolas e naturais. O estudo demonstra que o encerramento de destinos turísticos tradicionais para turistas russos cria condições únicas para a reorientação dos fluxos turísticos e para a reorientação qualitativa do turismo. As principais tarefas de regulamentação nesta área são a racionalização das relações na seguinte combinação "territórios agrícolas e naturais - negócio turístico - consumidor de um produto turístico (turista)", bem como a observação dos legítimos interesses de todos os participantes em tais relações. Os autores do artigo estudam a experiência global positiva na organização e regulamentação da agricultura e do ecoturismo. Propõem também algumas formulações legais para a formação de conceitos jurídicos destinados a apoiar o desenvolvimento do negócio turístico, tanto na área agrícola como na ambiental.

Palavras-chave: Serviços turísticos; Negócios turísticos; Agroturismo; Ecoturismo; Regulação.

LAS BASES JURÍDICAS COMO FACTOR CONDICIONANTE DE LA EXPLOTACIÓN DEL AGROTURISMO Y DEL ECOTURISMO: ANÁLISIS DE LAS CONDICIONES ACTUALES EN RUSIA Y BIELORRUSIA

Resumen

Este artículo examina diversas posibilidades y perspectivas de desarrollo del turismo agrícola y ecológico en Rusia. En el contexto de las limitaciones financieras y logísticas del negocio ruso, el cierre de muchos destinos turísticos tradicionales hace necesaria una reorientación de los flujos turísticos tanto en términos de localización como de interés turístico. Actualmente, los viajeros se inclinan por nuevos tipos de turismo, entre ellos el agrícola y el ecoturismo. El agroturismo y el ecoturismo pueden convertirse en un componente económico importante para varias zonas agrícolas y naturales. El estudio demuestra que el cierre de los destinos turísticos tradicionales para los turistas rusos crea condiciones únicas para la reorientación de los flujos turísticos y la reorientación cualitativa del turismo. Las principales tareas de regulación en este ámbito son la racionalización de las relaciones en la siguiente combinación "territorios agrícolas y naturales - empresa turística - consumidor de un producto turístico (turista)", así como la observación de los intereses legítimos de todos los participantes en dichas relaciones. Los autores del artículo estudian la experiencia global positiva en la organización y regulación del agroturismo y el ecoturismo. También proponen algunas formulaciones jurídicas para la formación de conceptos legales destinados a apoyar el desarrollo del negocio del turismo tanto en el ámbito agrícola como en el medioambiental.

Palabras clave: Servicios turísticos; Negocios turísticos; Agroturismo; Ecoturismo; Regulación.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays many types of tourism that were previously considered exotic or alternative become common and mass. Thus, ecotourism attracts a significant number of tourists and is growing by 25-30% per year (World Tourism Organization, 2012), having significant potential for further development.

The most popular types of domestic tourism in Russia are agrotourism and ecotourism (Interfax, 2022). Being similar forms of tourism activities, these two types of domestic tourism fulfill general and special tasks in the economy, ecology, and social sphere, which necessitates the formation of both general and special legislation regulating the relationship between these two areas of domestic tourism.

In the context of an economic crisis with financial and logistical constraints on business, the pressure on the domestic tourism business has led them to seek solutions. One of them may be the reorientation of the use of natural areas, rural space and agricultural resources for tourism purposes (e.g. agrotourism and ecotourism), which may help in the emergence of new ways of dealing with sustainability (economic, social and environmental) in domestic tourism. Tourism businesses that actively promote these destinations have an opportunity to survive the crisis and overcome its negative consequences.

Indeed, the tourism business as a whole is dependent on political and legal impacts and financial and logistical restrictions. Domestic agrotourism and ecotourism can overcome difficulties if there are appropriate legal mechanisms for state support, including financial support, to cope with the consequences of an unfavorable foreign political and economic situation. The above-mentioned factors determine the research interest in studying prospects for the development of agrotourism and ecotourism, as well as their legal regulation. Both concepts are interrelated and stress the sustainable and developing aspects (Galuppo, Anselmi, & De Paoli, 2020; Savina, 2022) and can be used for supporting the laws regulating domestic tourism.

Despite a large number of studies in these areas, the current legislation has not adopted a clear concept, leading to difficulties in the implementation tourism businesses. Therefore, taking into consideration the current context, this study aims to determine the main trends and prospects in the development of the regulation of domestic agrotourism and ecotourism.

The research premise lays on that the current trends in the development of agriculture and ecotourism require deeper and more comprehensive legal regulation for these two areas in order to create the institutional basis for its adequate operation.

Thus, the expected contribution of the paper is to develop a systematic and integrated framework related to the legal conditions underlying the conditions necessary to implement, develop and explore Russian agricultural potential for tourism purposes and, in doing so, help generate further social and economic development for the countryside.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In modern scientific literature, much attention is paid to the classification of tourism that divides the types of tourism according to various criteria. Numerous definitions of ecotourism contain such key characteristics as responsible travel, observation, and study of nature and traditional culture; preservation of the environment; obtaining new knowledge; improving the welfare of the local population.

The variety of existing approaches shows an unrelenting interest in the study of various aspects of ecotourism. The concept of ecotourism is regarded as one of the acceptable and sustainable approaches to the conservation and development of ecosystems (Xu, Mingzhu, Bu, & Pan, 2017), a powerful tool for biodiversity conservation, support for local peoples and their culture, and a means of sustainable development (Lorimer, 2006).

Starovoitenko (2008) distinguished ecotourism among ecological and economic types aimed at the interaction between people and nature in the conditions of economic activity. Chuprikov (2012) classified biotourism, zootourism, botanical tourism, ethnotourism, agrotourism and geotourism according to their different and specific objects, but somehow related to a broader concept and umbrella perspective of ecotourism.

Savina (2022) introduced the concept of agroecotourism which combines the concepts of agrotourism, ecotourism, green tourism, guest tourism, and other types associated with staying outside the city, aimed at familiarizing oneself with the surrounding nature, rural life and agricultural production. Smimova (2015) proposed her own classification according to the development of territories: tourism in protected areas; "into the wild" tours; tourist trips to cultivated territories. In our opinion, the latter type should be called agrotourism, which is somewhat different from ecotourism but still related to it in many aspects.

It is worth recognizing that the inclusion of certain types of tourism in classifications is controversial. For example, Lysenko (2013) singled out natural and green tourism in terms of environmental activities while traveling in Japan. Natural tourism refers to tourists observing nature and admiring it, volunteering to clean tourist destinations, hunting, and fishing. Green tourism is understood as spare time spent in the countryside,

as well as communication with the local population and acquaintance with local culture and nature (Lysenko, 2013). The inclusion of hunting and fishing in specially prepared areas should not be attributed to ecotourism as these features fit the concept of agrotourism.

In a recent study Vysochan et al. (2022) showed that despite the several concepts used to describe and analyse the different forms of tourism in connection with natural areas, the concepts of ecotourism and agrotourism are the most popular ones when making reference to the sustainable development economies; being the former typically used in the Anglo-American world (USA, Australia, and UK) while the latter is mainly used in Eastern Europe. Besides, both are commonly mobilized to connect the tourist with the natural areas and generate income, social changes, mobility and development.

Several authors identified ecotourism as crucial in the fight against poverty and hunger in low-income countries such as Latin America. For example, a country that effectively develops cost-effective and non-conflict nature management (including ecotourism) is Costa Rica (Fennell & Eagles, 1990).

Since the mid-1980s, when ecotourism was popular, Costa Rica has been turning specially protected natural areas into profitable enterprises as 20% of its territory was given to national parks. The consequence of ecotourism development was the increase in areas covered with natural vegetation. By the beginning of the 1990s, about 10% of the land had been allotted for protected areas. At present, almost a third of the country is occupied by protected tropical vegetation. Since 1993, tourism, including ecotourism, has brought more money to the state budget of Costa Rica than any other sector of its economy (Menkhaus & Lober, 1996). Now ecotourism in Costa Rica is moving in the direction of creating eco-resorts that provide high-quality recreation without harming the environment due to the reuse of waste, energy saving, etc. Along with small eco-resorts, a new model of comfortable ecotourism is being implemented through the creation of an eco-friendly, receptive to culture and authentic resort of Cacique on an area of 260 ha (Maksanova et al, 2019).

Latin America also has a unique experience in creating an interstate eco-tourist route that runs from the Yucatan Peninsula through Petén, the mountains of Guatemala, and the forests of Belize. The 2,400 km long route runs through the once-existing ancient Maya empire. The biosphere reserve of the same name is located in its center and is protected by UNESCO. Thus, the experience of organizing transboundary ecotourism is formed through the efforts of several states (Astani, 2019).

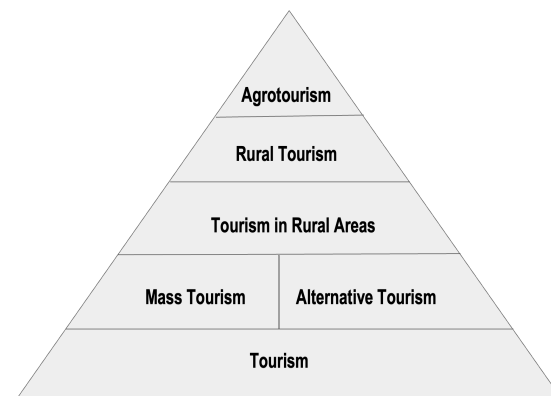
Agricultural tourism (agrotourism) is also

developing rapidly in countries where, in addition to natural attractions, there is developed agriculture. A good example is Argentina, the second-largest country in Latin America. In Argentina, tourists have an opportunity to immerse themselves in exotic nature since ecotourism is developed and hiking trails are made to the Andes, the glaciers of Patagonia, and the meadows of Pampas (Pavlova, 2021). Argentina is a country of highly developed agriculture, especially animal husbandry and winemaking. This combination allows the active development of agrotourism. Gastronomic tourism (common to Argentina) or wine tasting in the province of Mendoza can spark interest in agricultural production among travelers.

Also in Brazil, tourism has been taken up by the Brazilian government as an alternative to rural development. However, according to Pimentel & Pimentel (2015) the discussion about rural and urban and the urban in Brazil is associated with the historical process of formation of the nation, where the use of natural resources is articulated spaces and relations in a mixture of social and economic activities. Thus, these productive systems are not only economic activities, but maintain traditional activities, but also maintain traditional and cultural ties. The authors present and discuss three main approaches to guide the socioeconomic development based on rural space and socioeconomic and cultural relations: a) the “end of rural”, b) the “new rurality” and c) the “local spatial economy”. They argue that the correct placemaking of the issue is necessary in both, empirical and also theoretical way, in order to be able to concretely specifying and identify the factors involved and the possibilities of mutual contribution in these two layers to a more effective development.

Souza, Klein & Rodrigues (2019) provide a good framework organizing the issue related to tourism and rural space, activities and concepts. In their view, the agrotourism is a specific form of rural tourism, which are inserted in a broader picture of rural spaces (areas).

Figure 2. Scope pyramid of tourism-related terms.



Source: reproduced from Souza, Klein & Rodrigues (2019: 29).

In short, while rural tourism is a more generic category which places the rural (not urban) as the main element, agrotourism has a more specific content in terms of saying that the activities must be related to the agriculture. Ecotourism, by its turn, adds a content related to the substance – an ethical one – of tourism.

If one cannot use indistinctly the concepts, because they have their own particularities, they all have in common the fact they are concerned to the natural environment, the countryside life and the alternative (if we put them together) form of tourism. Table 1 summarizes their main characteristics.

Table 1. Main characteristics of rural tourism, agro-tourism and ecotourism

Rural Tourism	Agrotourism	Ecotourism
All forms of tourism that take place in rural communities or rural communities	Tourism activities directly related to agriculture	Nature-based form tourism, the main motivation of the tourists being the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas
Practiced in small family-owned establishments	Practiced in a farm or household as a secondary source of income	Service providers tend to be small, locally owned businesses
Highlights natural areas, local practices, culture and gastronomy	Educational activities are undertaken, aiming at highlighting and explaining aspects of agricultural lifestyle	Has educational and interpretation features, increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets
Often referred to as “agro-tourism”, “nature-based tourism”, “farm-based tourism” and “village tourism”	Often referred to as “farm-based tourism”, “rural tourism” and “village tourism”	Often referred to as “sustainable tourism”, “responsible tourism” and “green tourism”
Independent activity integrated in the tertiary sector of the economy, alternative/complementary form of mass-tourism	Entirely integrate within rural tourism	Perfectly described as “niche tourism”, differs from rural tourism by the closeness to nature and the more rational exploitation of tourism resources.
Potential customers are nature-lovers	Potential customers are interested in farming, crafting, folklore, natural agricultural products and gastronomy	Potential customers are interested in meaningful community participation, slow travel, high-quality experiences, picturesque, nature-made elements, gastronomy, traditions and routes that allow them to feel as if they were locals.

Source: reproduced from Maria-Irina (2017: 3-4).

3 METHODS

The problem identified is the lack of legal institutional framework dedicated to rural (and natural) domestic tourism in Russia and Belarus. Throughout the research, we used the following empirical methods for obtaining data: studying the current regulation and scientific papers and conducting an expert and sociological survey.

The main method was an expert survey conducted in three regions of central Russia which summarized different opinions of the expert community. The study was carried out by a research network constituted by researchers from the Kosygin State University of Russia, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), Tyumen State University and Russian State University of Tourism and Service.

In total 30 experts were interviewed, including employees of tourism enterprises (tour operators and travel agencies) and regional tourism departments. Data was collected between February and June 2022. The expert sampling was based on the following criteria: the interviewed expert is the author or co-author of at least three articles on this topic published in journals included in the Scopus or Web of Science citation databases or has at least 10-year experience in

organizing tours in agricultural and environmental areas.

They were asked to assess the impact of agrotourism and ecotourism on the state of the territories visited in order to get acquainted with nature and agricultural production. The experts were informed about the research topic and its hypothesis.

They received e-mails with the relevant questions, as it follows: a) What impact on the development of territories have agrotourism and ecotourism? b) What do you think the main challenges of developing agrotourism and ecotourism in Russia? c) Based on your opinion, what directions (trends) of developing agrotourism and ecotourism do you see in Russia?

The conclusions and proposals for improving the regulation of agrotourism and ecotourism are formulated using theoretical logical analysis, the formal legal method, mathematical calculation, and comparative analysis. Theoretical logical analysis involved examining the theoretical framework of the agrotourism and ecotourism, analyzing the logical connections between ideas, and drawing conclusions based on these connections. The formal legal method authors have used to analyze legal texts, such as statutes and cases, and interpret their meaning (Tikhomirov, 1996; 2002; Chirkin, 2021). Authors have

also used mathematical calculation to analyze data and test hypotheses. This involves using mathematical formulas, statistical tests, and data analysis software to interpret data and draw conclusions (Карманова, Кайрова & Малолетко, 2012). Comparative analysis involved comparing and contrasting different phenomena, concepts, and practices to identify similarities and differences of tourism in different countries (Aoki, 1991; Albov et al, 2021). Overall, these methods were important in research because they provided systematic and rigorous approaches to analyzing data and drawing conclusions, also these methods helped to ensure that research findings are accurate, reliable, and valid.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of the Context of Research

Russia and Belarus are both countries with rich cultural and historical heritage, offering a variety of attractions for tourists. In Russia, visitors can explore the world-famous cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, both of which are known for their stunning architecture, museums, and cultural landmarks. Other popular destinations include the Golden Ring cities, which are a series of ancient towns located northeast of Moscow, and the Trans-Siberian Railway, which is one of the world's most famous train journeys. Belarus, on the other hand, is known for its unspoiled natural beauty, with over a third of the country covered by forests and an extensive network of rivers and lakes. The country also boasts a number of cultural attractions, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Mir Castle and Nesvizh Palace, as well as several museums and galleries.

However, in recent years, both countries have been working to promote sustainable tourism practices and attract more visitors. This has included the development of ecotourism initiatives, such as hiking and nature trails, as well as efforts to promote cultural tourism, such as festivals and exhibitions. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry in both Russia and Belarus, with travel restrictions and reduced demand leading to a decline in visitor numbers. Despite this, both countries are continuing to invest in the tourism sector and are working to develop new initiatives to attract visitors once travel restrictions are lifted.

4.2 Russia

In Russia, the government has implemented a number of initiatives to promote ecotourism, including the creation of national parks and protected areas, and the development of hiking and nature trails. According to

the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the number of visitors to national parks and other protected areas increased by 25% between 2018 and 2019.

Similarly, agrotourism is becoming increasingly popular in Russia, with many farmers and rural communities offering farm stays and other activities to visitors. According to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, the number of agrotourism operators in the country has doubled in the past five years, and the sector is expected to continue growing in the coming years.

Indeed, Russia has historical, geographical, and socio-economic prerequisites for the development of agrotourism and ecotourism. However, the legal regulation of agrotourism and ecotourism seems to be insufficiently developed and unclear.

Federal Law "On the Fundamentals of the Tourism Business in the Russian Federation" of November 24, 1996, No. 132-FZ (State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 1996) does not define the basic concepts of "agricultural tourism" [agrotourism] and "ecotourism" as areas of tourism and tourism activities, the classification of tourism objects, including hotels and other accommodation facilities, ski slopes and beaches (Article 5 of Federal Law No. 132); does not contain the concepts necessary to designate tourist objects of agrotourism and ecotourism: a farm, a farmstead, an eco-trail, an eco-resort, etc.

Under such conditions, travel agencies working in agricultural and environmental directions carry out their activities on the basis of legislation on farming, the circulation of agricultural land, etc., which do not consider the relations in question. The rights of consumers of tourism services are often violated, and it is difficult to bring violators to justice due to the lack of a legal framework.

4.3 Belarus

In Belarus, the government has also been working to promote ecotourism, with a focus on developing hiking and cycling trails, as well as nature reserves and national parks. The country has also implemented initiatives to promote sustainable tourism practices, including the certification of tourism businesses that meet certain environmental and social standards.

Agrotourism is also growing in popularity in Belarus, with many rural communities offering farm stays and other activities to visitors. According to the Belarusian Ministry of Agriculture, the number of agrotourism operators in the country has increased by 10% in recent years, with the majority located in rural areas.

Overall, both ecotourism and agrotourism are important sectors for the tourism industry in Russia and

Belarus, offering visitors the opportunity to experience the natural beauty and traditional way of life in these countries. However, as with all forms of tourism, it is important to promote responsible and sustainable practices to ensure that these activities do not negatively impact local communities and ecosystems.

Due to the interconnectedness of agrotourism and ecotourism, scholars (Savina, 2022), and legislators in several countries combine these two concepts. In the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the concept of agroecotourism was enshrined thanks to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 372 "On Measures for the Development of agroecotourism in the Republic of Belarus".

According to this document, agroecotourism is understood as the temporary stay of citizens of the Republic of Belarus, foreign citizens, and stateless persons in rural areas or small urban settlements in order to receive services provided by the subject of agroecotourism for recreation, health improvement, familiarization with the natural potential, national cultural traditions without engaging in labor, entrepreneurial and other activities that are paid and/or bring profit (income) from a source at the place of stay.

Over the following years, the legal framework for this type of economic activity has been formed, which, among other things, provided for benefits and a simplified procedure for registering entrepreneurial activities for the provision of services in the field of agroecotourism (*Belorusskoe obshchestvennoe obedinenie "Otdykh v derevne"*, n.d.).

The country has not only established a preferential regime for the creation of agroecotourism entities; its law also provides lending benefits and guarantees to the development of infrastructure in this area. Individual farmers and agrotourism organizations, including agricultural production cooperatives and farms, can receive such support from the state.

The development of the legislative framework for agroecotourism in the Republic of Belarus led to an increase in the activity of local residents who decided to work with tourists and made efforts to create tourist attractions in the region (four new caches of the "Geocaching" global tourism game were laid, the eco-

museum called "From stylus to pen" was founded, the Old Postal Route was built, etc.), as well as promote their tourist projects.

As agroecotourism develops, it has a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in the country, but the main achievement from the implementation of this state program was the reduction in the outflow of rural residents to cities: migration loss among the rural population in Belarus decreased by almost two times in 2006-2019 (from -14,320 people in 2006 to -7,486 people in 2019) (National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, n.d.).

This is mostly explained by an increase in living standards in the countryside. The improvement in the financial situation of Belarusian villagers is also evidenced by data on cash expenditures, in whose structure the share of savings increased by more than 1.5 times in 2011-2019 (from 6.0 to 9.1%) (National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, n.d.).

One more factor that switched the population to the rural way of life is the active improvement of rural areas. The growing satisfaction of rural residents with their living conditions is facilitated by the development of agroecotourism since the expansion of employment opportunities, the active modernization of engineering and social infrastructure as part of programs to increase the tourist attractiveness of rural areas increase the standard of living (Bainev & Tarando, 2022).

The Republic of Belarus has a procedure for bringing to justice people who provide poor-quality services. This procedure is in line with the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Belarus (of April 21, 2003 No. 194-FZ) and establishes the responsibility of agroecotourism entities for violating the procedure for providing services in the field of agroecotourism (Article 23.74) (The House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2003).

4.4 Results of the Expert Survey

According to the experts' answers, we compiled a table (Table 2).

Table 2. The impact of agricultural tourism [agrotourism] and ecotourism on the development of territories.

Living environment	Economy	Environment	Social sphere
Factor/Distribution of experts' answers about its significance, %	Increasing the income of agro-industrial territories, 56%	Possibility of increasing the cost of environmental conservation, 48%	Increasing the attractiveness of small business by combining agricultural and tourism activities, 41%
	Improving the sustainability of agricultural business and tourism enterprises, 24%	Integration of business and environmental activities, 31%	Increasing employment in tourism and related sectors, 40%
	Promoting agro-industrial products, 20%	Promoting respect for the environment as an object of tourist attraction among the population, 21%	Creating and preserving cultural and ecological values of the territory, 19%

Source: own elaboration.

The research conducted allowed us to identify the main trends in the development of agrotourism and

ecotourism in Russia and present them in the form of a table.

Table 3. The main challenges and directions (trends) of developing agricultural and ecotourism in Russia.

No.	The main trends of developing agricultural and ecotourism in Russia
1.	Creating specialized farms, estates, eco-trails, eco-resorts, etc., focused on accepting tourists
2.	Creating an information field to spark tourist interest in the field of agricultural and ecotourism
3.	Forming a unified specialized legislation regulating agricultural and ecotourism

Source: own elaboration.

5 DISCUSSION

While realizing the importance of the development of agroecotourism as a promising area of domestic tourism, many scholars offer their own solutions to the existing problems. For the dynamic development of this industry, it is proposed to improve the legal framework governing activities in the field of rural tourism and related areas (Kuznetsova, Saitova, & Akhmetyanova, 2017); to develop a concept for the development of agroecotourism in the region; to provide financial support measures for entrepreneurs involved in agrotourism services, including credit benefits, tax deductions, tax holidays, etc. (Tikhonova, 2018); to teach farmers and other parties involved the basics of hospitality; to make an inventory of and, if necessary, modernize road, engineering and social infrastructure facilities in rural areas visited by tourists (Bainev & Tarando, 2022).

Thus, the attractiveness of agroecotourism depends on the information disseminated about it and will grow if the exact addressee of the appeal is determined. According to the Agency for the Development of Rural Initiatives, the number of agrotourists amounts to 22% of all tourists traveling around the country, the largest share of them are tourists from regional centers, as well as the cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg (Lebedeva & Kopylova, 2019).

In other words, advertising messages should be directed primarily to this target audience. According to Bainev and Tarando (2022), to promote agro-tourism in each region, it is advisable to *develop special familiarization routes* that combine several closely located farms into agro-tourism chains. It is important to assess the collective accommodation of guests.

As noted above, the main consumers of agrotourism services are residents of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other cities accustomed to everyday comfort. This circumstance should be considered and develop a service that meets the requirements of this category of citizens. Housing premises located in the territory of a farm should be suitable for the long-term staying of city dwellers demanding living conditions and simulate rural conditions that convey the atmosphere of a farmer's daily life.

Inspiring cognitive interest in the field of agrotourism and ecotourism is constrained by the lack of information in mass media, i.e. this is the main issue that needs to be solved with the help of information technologies. The brand image of any region is formed using modern marketing technologies (Glinskaya, 2016). The use of promotions, political and social advertising, festivals, exhibitions, event marketing, and Internet projects, including forums and conferences, can contribute to the formation of a positive image of both the country as a whole and individual objects of agrotourism and ecotourism in a particular region.

The *information provided to consumers* of tourist services should meet the following criteria: objectivity, reliability, completeness, accuracy, relevance, and usefulness. It is prepared for tourists with different levels of education and different needs. To attain this end, large tourist sites, such as national parks, should build tourist information centers where tourists are offered more detailed information orally (guide's story) or visually (viewing an exhibition, collections of plants and animals, videos, etc.). It also seems expedient to organize classes and hold discussions using equipment for showing slides, films, audio and visual demonstration of scientific materials, etc. (Dzagoeva, 2014).

Considering the current trends in data digitalization, it is necessary to initiate and encourage the creation of databases for entering blocks of information from various regions of Russia (i.e. the constituent entities of the Russian Federation) related to agricultural and ecotourism. Presented in the form of files interconnected by a system of hyperlinks, this open information mentions various agro-tourism facilities located in rural settlements.

It is worth mentioning the proposal to develop a service, i.e. an information electronic journal on socially and economically significant tasks of rural areas of Russia within the framework of crowdsourcing and noosourcing, an information platform interface for collecting ideas and collective innovations for the development of tourism infrastructure in rural areas of the Russian Federation on a specialized website (Muraveva, 2013).

The legal regulation of agrotourism and ecotourism seems to be insufficiently developed and unclear. Federal Law "On the Fundamentals of the Tourism Business in the Russian Federation" of November 24, 1996, No. 132-FZ (State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 1996) does not define the basic concepts of "agricultural tourism" and "ecotourism" as areas of tourism and tourism activities, the classification of tourism objects, including hotels and other accommodation facilities, ski slopes and beaches (Article 5 of Federal Law No. 132); does not contain the concepts necessary to designate tourist objects of agrotourism and ecotourism: a farm, a farmstead, an eco-trail, an eco-resort, etc.

Under such conditions, travel agencies working in agricultural and environmental directions carry out their activities on the basis of legislation on farming, the circulation of agricultural land, etc., which do not consider the relations in question. The rights of consumers of tourism services are often violated, and it is difficult to bring violators to justice due to the lack of a legal framework. In the Republic of Belarus, this procedure is in line with the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Belarus (of April 21, 2003 No. 194-FZ) and establishes the responsibility of agroecotourism entities for violating the procedure for providing services in the field of agroecotourism (Article 23.74) (The House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, 2003).

It also seems appropriate to develop software and legitimize a web platform for investments in the tourism infrastructure of rural areas, as well as a database of methodological support and legislation for the development of tourism infrastructure in rural areas of the Russian Federation (at both federal and regional levels) (Muraveva, 2013).

To effectively develop domestic tourism, in particular agricultural and ecological areas, it is necessary to form a legal framework following the example of the Republic of Belarus, in the form of a basic law "On agricultural and ecotourism in the Russian Federation".

5 CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to determine the main trends and prospects related to the development of the regulation of domestic agrotourism and ecotourism. Being two types of domestic tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism are of great importance since they should reorient the interests of tourists from traditional types of recreation, thereby contributing to the development of the economy and social sphere of certain regions, farms, and environment.

The effective solution to these tasks will depend on the development of legal regulation, the organizational and administrative impact of local authorities, their cooperation with tourist enterprises, creating the interest of farm owners in combining agriculture and tourism services, and many other factors.

In the context of tourism, legislation is particularly important because it helps to establish standards and guidelines for the operation of tourism-related businesses and activities. This can include regulations for safety and health standards, environmental protection, and cultural preservation. Legislation can also help to promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices, by encouraging businesses to operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and by discouraging harmful practices that could negatively impact local communities and ecosystems.

Legislation also plays an important role in protecting the rights and interests of tourists, by establishing guidelines for the provision of services and the resolution of disputes. This can include regulations for fair pricing and advertising practices, as well as guidelines for addressing complaints and providing compensation for any harm or damages incurred during a tourist's stay. Overall, legislation is essential for promoting a safe, responsible, and sustainable tourism industry, and for protecting the interests of both tourists and local communities.

The interconnection of domestic agrotourism and ecotourism indicates the expediency of forming a unified legal field. Thus, the study has shown the evidences supporting the argument that there is a lack on legal and institutional framework as a conditioning factor underlying the exploitation of agrotourism and ecotourism in Russia and Belarus. However, this study has not covered such important aspects as information support for agrotourism and ecotourism, the branding of tourist sites, etc., which can become research subjects in subsequent studies.

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Table. CRediT author statement

Term	Definition	Author 1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
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	+	+	+	+	+	+

Source: adapted from Elsevier (2022, s/p), based upon Brand et al. (2015). *Legend: A = author.

Processo Editorial / Editorial Process / Proceso Editorial

Editor Chefe / Editor-in-chief / Editor Jefe: PhD Thiago D. Pimentel (UFJF).

Recebido / Received / Recibido: 17.08.2022; Revisado / Revised / Revisado: 21.09.2022 – 30.10.2022 – 19.11.2022; Aprovado / Approved / Aprobado: 16.12.2022; Publicado / Published / Publicado: 31.12.2022.

Seção revisada às cegas por pares / Double-blind peer review section / Sesión revisada por pares ciegos.