Short Article  the Reality of a Tourism Product Formation
Within the Transboundary Region “The Greater Altai”

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Abstract: This paper presents the scientific analysis of aspects of the interstate border cooperation within the region “The Greater Altai” from the position of forming an international tourism product based on natural, historical and cultural resources are examined. The characteristic of the potential, objects and analysis of tourism in the region are given. The proposal for the development of conservation strategies and sharing the potential of natural and cultural heritage for the development of tourism is formulated.

Keywords: Altai • The Greater Altai • Transboundary international tourism product • Protected area

INTRODUCTION

International tourism is currently one of the factors of world integration processes, with the tourism business being one of the fastest growing sectors of economic activity. Within the framework of international tourism a special place occupies transboundary tourism [1, 2]. The Russian scientists in the field of geographical studies of transboundary issues define cross-border cooperation as a form of interstate cooperation in various fields, leading to the formation of cross-border regions, which include neighboring states and operate according to agreed plans, taking into account the interests of each party. The essence of recreational and geographical research of transboundary tourism is to study the complex of natural and economic relationships between adjacent territories, aimed at meeting the recreational needs and leading to the formation of a single tourism space [3 - 5].

Statement of the Problem: The sphere of tourism as an economic activity and in particular international/ transboundary tourism, involves interaction of a wide range of stakeholders - governments and government agencies at the federal, regional and local levels, tourists and economic sectors, providing infrastructure and services in the tourism system. It is the interaction and cooperation that can ensure the development of this sector and maximize the benefits and other effects for all parties involved. One of important tasks of international/transboundary tourism is creating an attractive and high-quality tourism product [6]. The basis of any tourism product is the necessity to meet any demand or a set of demands.

To the regions with the increasingly active formation of a tourism product refers Altai - a mountain system located in the heart of Eurasia. Within Altai, territories of Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China come close, creating favorable conditions for border and cross-border international cooperation. Cross-border cooperation of four states in Altai is conditioned by historical background. For centuries, the giant mining space (at 30 thousand sq. km.) has been united by cultural, ethnic, trade and economic, political and migration ties. At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries there appeared a favorable situation for the development of mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation of subjects of administrative-territorial divisions located here: Altai Krai and Altai Republic (Russia), East Kazakhstan Province (Kazakhstan), Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (China), Bayan-Ulgii and Hovd aimags (Mongolia).
APPROACHES AND DISCUSSION

Altai as a natural rock formation located in the heart of a vast continent is characterized by significant geographical singularity, being considered by many researchers who have studied it as uniqueness and a phenomenon of the region. Here climatic, hydrological, atmospheric processes spreading over vast areas of Central and North Asia are formed. From the Altai glaciers originate the largest rivers: Irtysch, Ob, Yenisei, Khovd.

A high level of biodiversity and preservation of the most part of the landscape with little changes caused by human activities became crucial for the selection of Altai in the end of the XXth century as a Global 200 ecoregion as a virgin or a little altered region of the Earth ("Global-200") and received the international status of an ecoregion.

One of the priority areas of cooperation implemented by all countries of the Greater Altai is environmental activities, including biodiversity conservation and the environmental imperative. In all countries in the Greater Altai border areas there is a network of specially protected natural areas (SPNAs) represented by the state natural reserves, national and nature parks, complex reserves. Since the mid-90s of the XXth century all countries of the Greater Altai have been implementing a WWF project "The Altai-Sayan Ecoregion", aimed not only at protecting the environment, but also at creating transboundary specially protected natural areas, with priority of Katun State Biosphere Nature Reserve (Russia) and Katon-Karagay National Park (Kazakhstan), "Sailugem" National Park (Russia) and "Siylugemiyn Nuruu" National Park (Mongolia) [7, 8].

The Greater Altai is rich in archaeological, historical and cultural values, ethnic and cultural diversity and traditional way of life of its peoples that has survived to the present day. Here come into intercultural interaction representatives of Slavic, Turkic, Mongolian and Chinese ethnic groups [9]. Today Altai is a kind of center for Eurasian ethno-cultural consolidation. The importance of natural and cultural values of Altai is confirmed by inscription on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List nominated as "Golden Mountains of Altai" (Russia), consisting of five clusters: Altai and Katun State Biosphere Nature Reserves, "Beluhska" Nature Park, "Ukok" Nature Park and Lake Teletskoye.

RESULTS

The facts and factors mentioned above can themselves explain the keen interest to the Greater Altai from a number of perspectives and primarily as a very promising region in terms of tourism development, including international / transboundary tourism. The tourism industry within the Greater Altai has currently a certain level of the development in all countries situated here. It is mainly based on ecological and natural potential, makes use of features of natural attractions of each country, as well as the factor of ecological well-being of the region. The strategy of the Russian Government in the field of environmental finance, as well as of other countries in the Greater Altai, is to focus the existing SPNAs on the development of the tourism industry. The highest preparedness to form tourist nucleus within the Greater Altai have the following reserves: Tigireksky, Katun and the Altai (Russia), Markakolsky (Kazakhstan), Kanas (China); National and Nature Parks: Beluksa (Russia) and Lake Rakhmanovskoe and Katon-Karagay (Kazakhstan), Altai Tavan Bogd, Siylugemiyn Nuruu (Mongolia) [10].

The development of international/transboundary tourism within the Greater Altai is a priority and paramount area of cooperation of countries situated here. A transboundary circular route called "Altai - the Golden Mountains" has been developed and now is being tested, passing through the most attractive areas of Altai Krai, Altai Republic, Hovd and Bayan-Ulgii aimags of Mongolia, East Kazakhstan province and Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang of China. The appearance of such a route can be considered as an objectively formed transboundary tourism product that can play a great role in economic and humanitarian cooperation in the Greater Altai.

Thus, we can conclude that the competitiveness of the transboundary tourism product of the Greater Altai is affected by both positive and negative factors. It is gratifying to note that there are prerequisites and efforts from both the authorities and the population, which help to reduce or eliminate problems that occur.

CONCLUSION

To strengthening the belief that the Greater Altai may be a single international tourism region with cross-border routes, can contribute the adoption of an agreed strategy
for conservation and sharing the potential of natural and cultural heritage of the region, as well as the framework of interaction of adjacent regions for the development of tourism and recreation that implies creating an appropriate coordinating structure or a management body.

The development of good neighborly international relations and the formation of an international tourism product within the border region of the Greater Altai meet the interests of all the four states, favor the sustainable socio-economic development, preservation of the environment, improve the living standards of the population, not only in the border areas and is essential for the consolidation of peace and stability on the entire Eurasian continent.

REFERENCES