

Management of potential tourist development of municipalities in Russia



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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of the analysis of the existing problems in the field of management of the tourist potential of Russian territories. The study allowed us to determine the main directions and "weak points" of municipalities in the development of tourist attractiveness of the territory. The purpose of the study is to analyze and identify key factors and resources of municipalities in terms of sustainable development of tourist attractiveness of the territory. The authors used a multi-stage stratified territorial random sample (306 municipalities). The survey was attended by heads of municipalities. The study showed that financial and infrastructure resources are given a dominant role by local authorities in the development of the tourism potential of municipalities. At the same time, their real "contribution" to solving the problems of increasing the tourist flow and improving the quality of tourist services is very low. The road network, public catering facilities, rooms, and other facilities that form the tourist potential of municipalities in Russia are in a critical state, which does not allow us to consider them as a driver for the development of domestic tourism. Among the problems of managing the development of the tourist potential of the Russian territories were identified: The lack of qualified personnel for the tourism sector, the lack of active image tourist positioning of the municipality (branding), there is a low level of awareness of potential consumers of tourist services. The general rating of problems is headed by such positions as a low level of solvency of the population and low level of business activity of local residents. As the priority tasks of managing the development of tourism potential of municipalities, the respondents noted the need to establish practices for organizing interaction between local authorities with business representatives, sponsors, patrons to attract resources for the development of tourist attractiveness of the municipality, the participation of the population in the promotion of tourist services through the use of media content. The respondents noted the need to involve volunteers and their communities in the formation and replication of tourist display objects, public and non-profit organizations, creative teams, and individual groups (farmers, craftsmen, etc.). The results of the study can be used in the international practice of developing the tourist attractiveness of small cities.

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1. Introduction

Tourism, being the most dynamic sector of the economy, in modern conditions, implements both economic and social functions. Economic functions

are related to the growth of regional and Federal budget revenues, employment, and the development of related sectors of the economy (production of goods and services, transport, medicine, and trade). Global challenges and modern trends cause a high degree of researcher orientation on sustainable development issues. The works of leading economists, sociologists, political scientists, and the representatives of other scientific areas regard tourism as a sustainable development driver for the state and its regions. In this context, the reconsideration of key aspects for the conversion of territorial development, social resources, and local

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community capital internal sources into the economy of regions becomes particularly urgent (Makeeva et al., 2017). According to experts, each job in the tourism industry leads to the creation of an average of 1.5 jobs in related industries (Morozova et al., 2015). The tourism sector is characterized by relatively stable demand in comparison with other sectors of the regional economy, which provides a stable relationship between the focus of regional authorities on this activity and the sustainability of the region's development. Social functions of tourism are connected with the organization of leisure of the population, development of the creative and educational potential of the individual.

In modern research, the development of tourism potential is considered in several ways. In the framework of sociological analysis, it is examined in terms of tourist attractiveness of the region (Frolova and Kabanova, 2017), in economic research through the assessment of notional capacity of the tourism industry, the volume of the tourist market, throughput of the region (Morozova et al., 2016).

The intensification of competition for consumers is actualized by the analysis of territorial resources, the restrictions, and the opportunities for their use to develop the demand at the tourism services market, to improve the tourist attractiveness of the territories (Rogach et al., 2017). In the context of globalization and the simplification of visa procedures, the risks of competitiveness level reduction for the domestic tourist product are quite high among Russian citizens. The effectiveness of potential tourism implementation is determined by political-administrative, socio-cultural, economic, natural-territorial, and informational factors.

The political-administrative factors of tourist potential realization are connected with such aspects as safety for life and health of tourists, state support of the tourist industry, stability of the legislative base, favorable business climate. Current researches confirm that the perceived risk of terrorism significantly affects the traveling intentions of tourists. Tourism is subject to the "compensation effect." Every time a certain direction is perceived as dangerous, travelers go to a place where they feel safe. The countries of North Africa are an example. Before the "Arab spring," Egypt in 2010 had more than 14 million arrivals, which fell to 9.6 in 2014 (-32%), Tunisia 9 million in 2010, and 6 in 2014 (minus 12%) (Rogina and Celivanova, 2016).

Latent threats associated with political instability also affect the choice of a tourist route, but to a lesser extent (Kim et al., 2019). The active policy of regional and municipal authorities is the dominant factor in the development of the tourism industry (Mikhoparov, 2019).

The socio-cultural factors of potential tourist development include subjective factors of demand for tourist products and services, such as the standard of living of the population, the structure of free time, needs and stereotypes in the perception of tourist services, as well as objective territorial factors that determine the image of the territory.

Scientists refer to objective territorial factors like material and non-material characteristics that form the uniqueness of a tourist destination, and that makes it distinctive and memorable. In particular, such a concept as a "sense of place" was introduced into scientific circulation (Jarratt et al., 2019). Factors that increase tourist loyalty include destination image, perceived value, and social self-esteem (Kaushal et al., 2019). Research results confirm the relationship between the quality of experience, emotions of tourists, and their level of satisfaction. A number of studies have concluded that gastronomy is a tourist marker of the region. The value of food consumption has an impact on the tourist's perception of the attractiveness of the territory (Choe and Kim, 2018). The tourist experience has an impact on the satisfaction of tourists who pay attention to the tourist usefulness of the tour. The current problem is how to plan a tour route to maximize the usefulness of the tourist experience taking into account the preferences of tourists in terms of attractiveness, time, and cost (Wu et al., 2017).

The effectiveness of the implementation of tourism potential is determined by economic factors, which include financial resources, private investment, and, most importantly, the level of development of tourist infrastructure. In turn, the decentralization of management and flexible tax policy create conditions for overcoming the dependence of municipalities on inter-budget transfers and form an active position of local government leaders in the development of local economic sectors and the promotion of local services (Alexeev et al., 2019). Accessibility of public transport, the comfort of movement (Perea-Medina et al., 2019), price, and quality characteristics of public catering facilities determine the tourist potential of the region (Liao and Chuang, 2019). Special attention in the research of tourism potential is paid to the tourist accommodation sector (Nguyen et al., 2019), the quality of service (Bishop et al., 2019).

Natural and territorial factors of tourist potential include environmental and climatic conditions, natural resource potential, and geographical location. Tourist mobility affects the shape, size, and structure of the networks that unite tourists by characteristics, behavior associated with the trip, and the chosen type of vacation. Scientists focus on the subjective perception of tourists' geographical location of the territory. The results show that the choice of tourist defined the role of the destination as "central" or "peripheral" within the network. Tourists build their own networks around key points, even if they are geographically remote (Asero et al., 2016). In modern conditions of the increasing pace of life and processes of urbanization, tourists, even traveling to cities with cultural and educational purposes, pay special attention to green areas, parks, landscaping (Atak et al., 2019).

Numerous studies consider the mechanisms of information promotion of the tourist potential of the

territory. The transition to a digital society and digital economy imposes new requirements on the practices of interaction with potential consumers of tourist services (Chekanov and Neizvestny, 2019). The findings are of interest that social learning and the provision of digital tools to local residents and visitors are the factors of promoting the tourism potential of natural and cultural heritage (Ricart et al., 2019). The results demonstrate that virtual reality previews evoke deeper mental images of the travel experience and a stronger sense of presence compared to the preview, resulting in improved brand perception. Such results suggest that virtual reality encourages tourists to “dream” about travel products and offers before they arrive at their destination (Bogicevic et al., 2019). Media content posted on the Internet contributes to the consolidation of new images, stereotypes, and fashion in tourist practices of various social groups and also forms the expectations and interests of consumers of tourist services (Frolova et al., 2019). At the same time, the spread of information on social networks and virtual space can have ambivalent consequences. As the amount of information in the market increases as a result of accumulated travel experience, package tours are replaced by independent tours or trips to a new location (Chen et al., 2016).

Thus, the purpose of the study is to analyze and identify key factors and resources of municipalities in terms of sustainable development of tourist attractiveness of the territory.

2. Methodological coordinates

In order to identify, interpret and systematize the existing problems in the field of management of the development of the tourist potential of Russian territories in 2019 (February–April), a sociological study was conducted. The research hypotheses are:

- The tourist potential of cities and villages in Russia is great, but it is not used due to the lack of program documents, strategies, and weak marketing experience of local authorities.
- The presence of developed infrastructure and tourist display facilities does not always determine the sustainable development of tourist attractiveness of the territory.
- The development of tourist attractiveness of the territory in Russia in the current financial and organizational conditions is possible with the focus and mobilization of efforts of local communities on the development of domestic tourism.

The authors used a multi-stage stratified territorial random sample. At the first stage, the selection units are the regions of the Russian Federation, at the second stage municipalities. Federal cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg) were excluded from the sample due to the truncated scope of authorities assigned to local governments. The final sample consisted of 306 municipalities. The

leading method of research was an expert survey. The heads of municipalities acted like experts. The questionnaires were sent by e-mail.

The classification of municipal leaders as experts is due to a number of factors: The interest of local authorities in the development of tourism (the presence of sections in the program of socio-economic development of the territory that relates to attracting tourists); high ratings of the tourist potential of municipalities; the normative competence of local government leaders (creating conditions for the development of tourism; article 9 introduced by Federal Law of the Russian Federation from 25.12.2008 N 281-FZ).

3. Results

To reveal the tasks set in the study, the heads of municipalities were asked to answer the question of whether the orientation of local authorities on the development of the tourist potential of the territory is an integral attribute of socio-economic development and formations in Russia. According to the received materials, this opinion is shared by more than half of the experts, linking the development of the domestic tourism industry with the improvement of the investment climate, modernization of the infrastructure profile of the municipality, preservation of its historical and cultural heritage.

At the same time, many experts admit that the development of the tourism potential of the municipality is desirable but not a mandatory vector in the strategy of managing urbanized territories (75.5% of the respondents). This is due to the fact that municipal authorities are overloaded with obligations in solving traditionally acute issues in the social sphere, housing and communal services, and road transport infrastructure.

The heads of municipalities were asked to answer the question of whether their territory has tourist potential. The results of the study showed that more than 2/3 of the experts answer this question affirmatively. However, a more detailed examination of the key components of the tourist potential of Russian municipalities illustrates a significant lack or dysfunction in their functioning.

In particular, the infrastructure component of the tourist potential of Russian territories shows very low estimates (only 20.6% of municipalities have enough resources). The situation is particularly bad with the presence of tourist objects of cultural and entertainment profile, the share of municipalities that lack them is 56.9%. The same situation is with the availability of hotels, hostels, and campsites for tourists, their insufficiency was noted by 40.8% of the respondents. The smallest gap is observed in the assessment of cultural and historical heritage sites, which are traditionally considered by local authorities as to the key objects of tourist attraction (“quite enough” and “enough, but not fully” noted 32.4% and 29.4% of the experts). However, the percentage of the respondents who noted the

category “not enough” (31.1%) is still quite large. This circumstance indicates the need for a purposeful approach of local authorities to the construction of cultural and historical attractions and objects of tourist display, which have a high

attractiveness for modern tourists. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of answers to the question: “Evaluate the resources available in your municipality for the development of tourist attractiveness.”

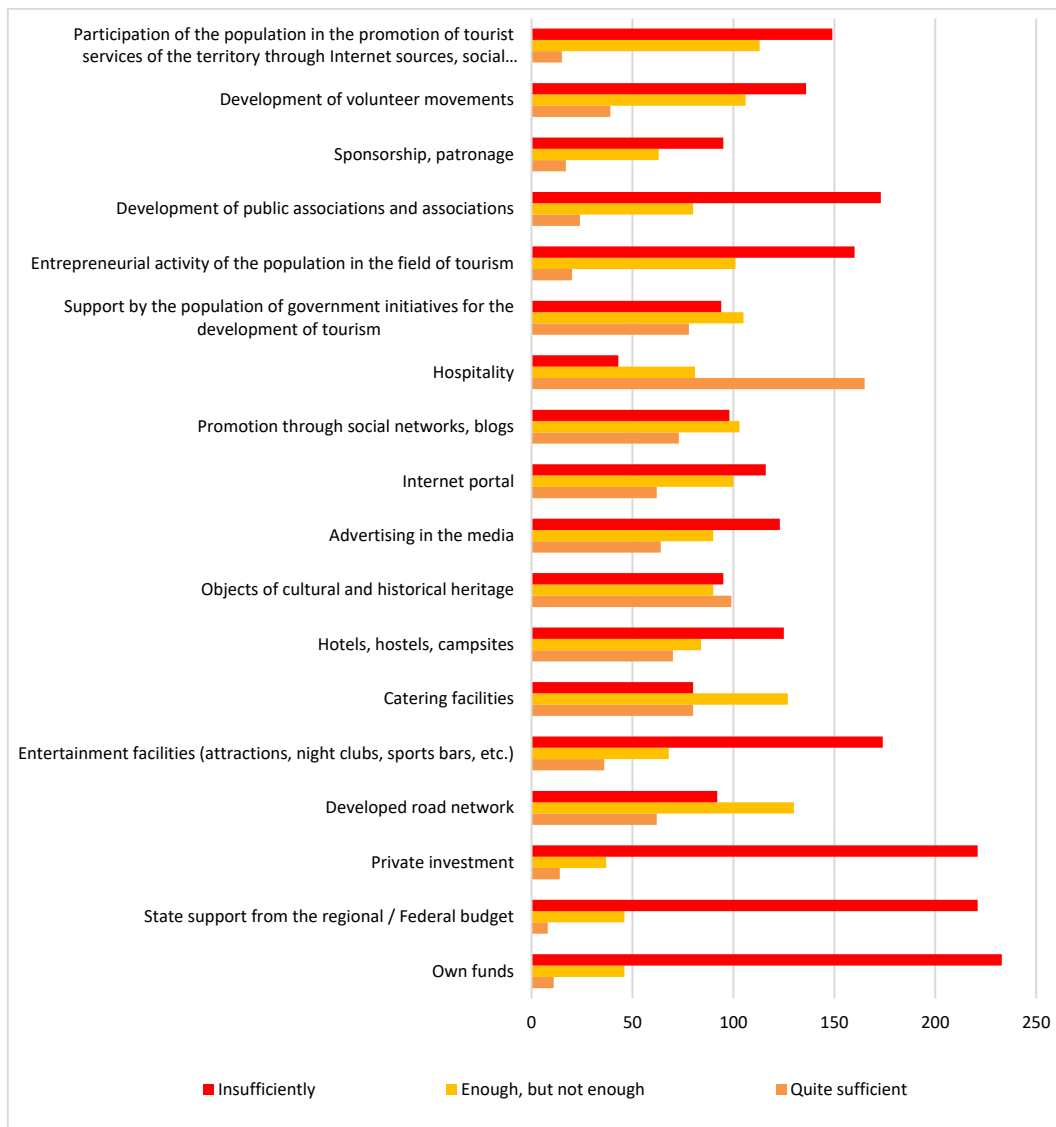


Fig. 1: Distribution of answers to the question: “Evaluate the resources available in your municipality for the development of tourist attractiveness.”

When evaluating certain categories of tourism potential of municipalities (for example, catering facilities), a relatively high proportion of the respondents found it difficult to describe them (6.5%), which when averaged estimates in the categories “quite enough” and “not enough” (26.1% and 26.1% respectively), may indicate that some heads of municipalities do not have accurate data for examination.

Information resources for the development of tourism potential of the territory demonstrate a clear lack of “advertising in the media” and “Internet portals” as drivers in the promotion of tourist products and services (40.2% and 37.9%, respectively). The situation is slightly better with “the promotion of tourist products/services through social networks, blogs” (“quite enough” and “enough but not fully” was noted by 23.9% and 33.7% of the

experts). The received answers testify to the purposeful work of municipal authorities in the information and communication space, taking into account the trends of the mediatization of the tourism industry.

Along with that, “the participation of the population in the promotion of tourist services in the territory through the Internet sources, social networks, messengers, forums, etc.” shows one of the lowest values (“not enough” was noted by 48.7% of the respondents). It can be assumed that this is due to the low information support of the local authorities for civil initiatives and the lack of any incentive for the population to be included in the processes of promoting the tourist product of the territory.

According to a number of indicators, social resources also show a significant shortage for the

development of the tourist potential of municipalities. The most acute issue, according to the experts, is the “sponsorship/patronage” of local residents (noted 63.7% of the experts). The given position correlates with a number of studies in which local residents point to the limitation of their importance in solving issues of local importance to the role of “sponsor,” “donor for the government,” (Medvedeva et al., 2018). This approach to interpreting the contribution of the local residents to the solution of territorial development issues becomes a barrier to establishing a constructive dialogue between the authorities and representatives of local communities in order to develop the tourism potential of the region.

According to more than half of the experts, the management of the tourism potential of municipalities involves the formation of “public unions and associations.” However, according to the research materials, today, they are clearly not enough. “Not enough” was noted by 56.5% of the heads of municipalities.

Note that among all the components of the tourist potential of municipalities, only the social resource has demonstrated a sufficiently high level of development in terms of “hospitality and friendliness” of the local residents. “Quite enough” was noted by 53.9% of the respondents. This circumstance allows us to conclude that the majority of Russians are tolerant of tourists and show such characteristic features of the mentality as friendliness, hospitality. It can be assumed that the presence of “hospitality” with the right approach of the local authorities will allow to include the local residents in the development of the tourist potential of Russian territories.

Special attention was paid to historical sights/museums in assessing the tourist potential of the municipalities. Here, the respondents were asked to assess the “state of cultural and historical heritage,” “museum expositions,” and “private museums.” The results obtained illustrate the low representation of private museums in the municipalities of the Russian Federation. 59.4% of the experts noted that this component of the tourism potential is not available on their territory. Another 7.4% of the respondents noted that the development of the practice of organizing private museums on their territory corresponds to the assessment “bad.”

The state of objects of cultural and historical heritage is also estimated by the heads of municipalities in the medium-low range: “Bad” and “satisfactory” was noted by 6.8% and 30.3% of the respondents, respectively. A significant number of experts (12.2%) noted the absence of this component of tourism potential in their territory. This answer raises some doubts and, most likely, can be interpreted as the lack of well-maintained objects of cultural and historical heritage, the objects that can become the center of tourist attraction.

Museum expositions in the municipalities received higher expert ratings in comparison with other categories in the section “historical sights/museums.” 31.1% of the respondents rated them “excellent” and 30.5% “good.” However, 14.9% of the municipalities are characterized by their complete absence. In this category were the municipalities with a total population of fewer than 50 thousand people.

The development of folk craft could compensate for these dysfunctions and become an object of display demonstration of the culture of everyday life of local communities, authentic features of the territory of the municipality. However, the results of the study showed that 7.8% of the heads of municipalities do not know what folk crafts were spread on their territory. Another 15.6% of the experts say that this component of the tourist potential of the territory is completely absent. In addition, 14.9% and 21.3% of the experts assess the degree of development of folk crafts in the categories “bad” and “satisfactory.”

The results of the study illustrate that 27.3% of the heads of municipalities do not carry out work on popularization of national traditions in the framework of tourist services; another 34.7% of the experts assess such work in the medium-low range. Only a small part of the Russian territories (19.3%) have a corresponding positive experience of purposeful work on the popularization of national traditions within the framework of the development of the tourism industry.

Special attention in the assessment of the tourist potential of the municipality should be paid to the “state of roads” and “transport accessibility.” According to the respondents, these categories of tourist potential of the territory are in the average estimated range. There is quite a complicated situation with tourist accommodation (hotels, hostels, etc.). According to the experts’ estimates (37.9%), hotel complexes in the municipalities that could receive tourists during their trips are completely absent or in a crisis state. Fig. 2 shows an assessment of the level of development of tourist potential of municipalities on a 5-point scale (5-excellent, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-bad, 1-this position is missing), people.

The selection of tourists in the direction of high-income citizens is not supported by the appropriate quality of the room fund. Almost 56.8% of the experts assess the quality of the room stock in the range of medium and low ratings. 16% of the experts found it difficult to answer this question at all. This circumstance illustrates the lack of possibility of creating a tourist network in the municipalities: the lack of tourist displays facilities, low transport accessibility of most territories in the absence of a lack of accommodation for travelers will not allow maintaining the tourist flow. For low-income categories of citizens, such trips become an excessive luxury at all.

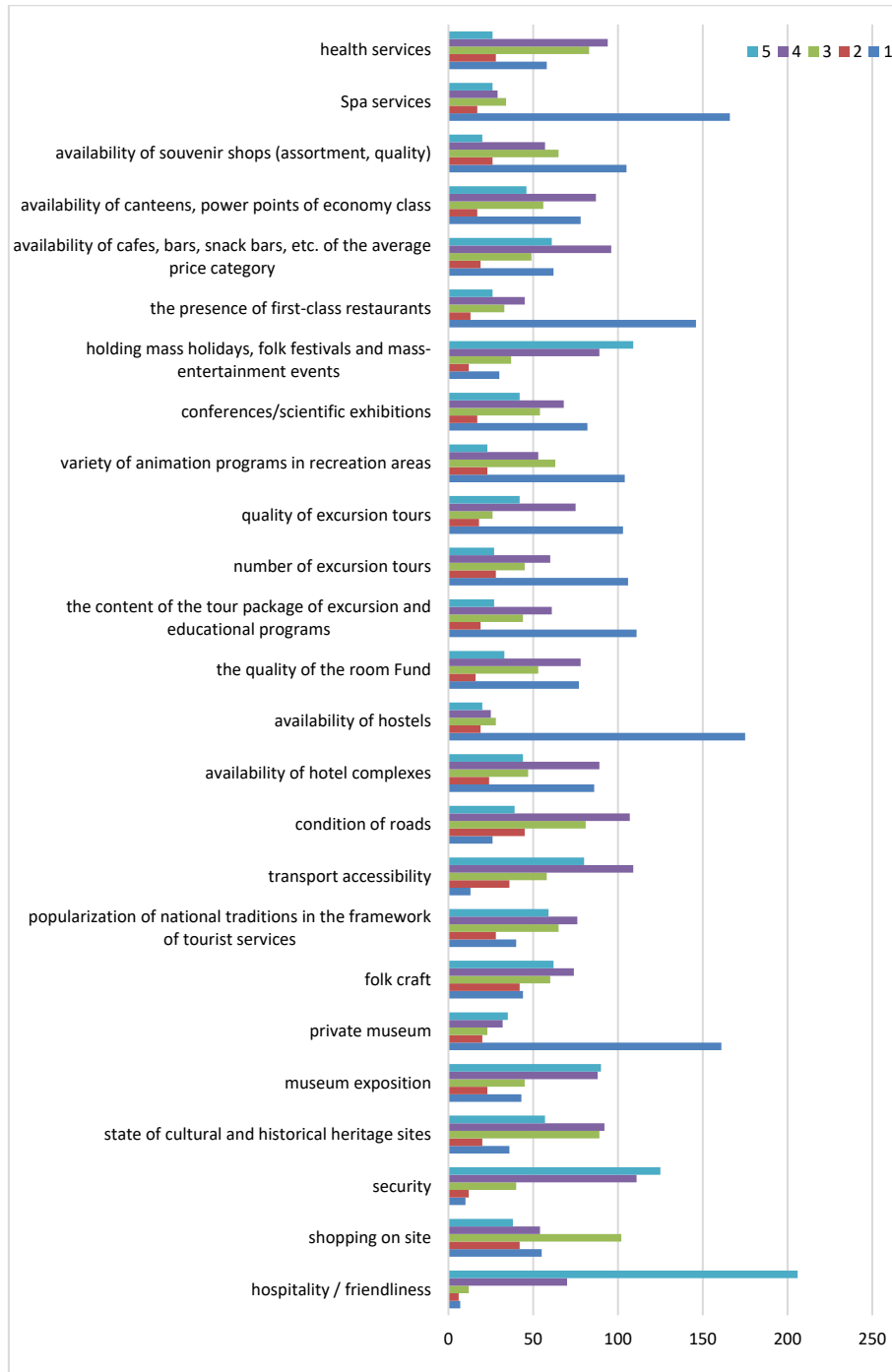


Fig. 2: Assessment of the level of development of tourist potential of municipalities on a 5-point scale (5-excellent, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-bad, 1-this position is missing)

The tourist potential of the territory includes various characteristics of excursion services for tourists. At the expert evaluation of its components, there is a fluctuation in the proportion of the respondents (from 13.1% to 14.4%), who found it difficult to answer the question. This may indicate that the heads of the municipalities do not have full information and/or do not conduct purposeful work to support the tourism industry in their territories.

According to the received data, almost 40% of the experts note the lack of tourist excursion services in the municipalities. The results of the study illustrate the poor quality of the tours offered to tourists. This is stated by 55.7% of the experts. Low ratings also earned such positions as: "Variety of animation

programs in recreation areas" and "content of excursion tours" (71.4% and 67.3%, respectively). Most of the tour packages offered in the domestic tourist market for tourists of the age category over 50 years include a limited set of services, such as transportation to the place of rest, transfer, food, accommodation. Excursion programs often do not take into account the age characteristics of tourists, which together has a significant impact on the level of satisfaction of tourists with this component of the tour.

The assessment of such an indicator of the tourist potential of the territory as "holding mass holidays, folk festivals and mass entertainment events" also shows values in the medium-high range: "Excellent"

and “good” was noted by 39.4% and 32.1% of the experts, respectively. In 10.8% of the municipalities, mass entertainment events are not held, for 4.3% of the municipalities are characterized by a unified approach to the organization of folk festivals, their low competitiveness in comparison with neighboring territories. At the same time, mass holidays traditionally serve as a space for the accumulation of social interactions and for the communication of local residents.

Let's pay attention to such an indicator of the tourist potential of the territory as food. Previously, the respondents were asked to assess the sufficiency of food outlets for tourists (“quite enough,” 26.1%, and “not enough” 26.1%). Now the respondents rated “having the first-class restaurants,” “availability of cafes, bars, eateries, etc. middle price category,” “availability of canteens, food outlets economy class.” The results are shown in Fig. 3.

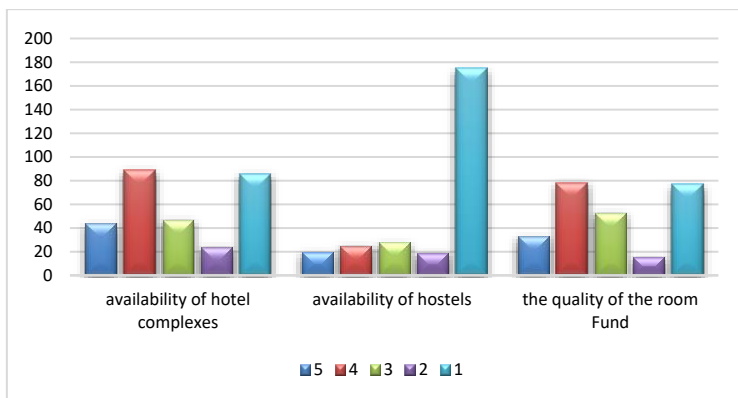


Fig. 3: Distribution of respondents ratings by categories of tourist potential of municipalities ("availability of hotel complexes," "availability of hostels," "quality of room stock") on a 5-point scale (where 5-excellent, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-bad, 1-this position is absent)

In addition, the respondents were asked to assess the key problems that hinder the development of the tourism potential of the municipality. Fig. 4 shows the distribution of respondents' ratings by categories of tourist potential of municipalities “availability of

luxury restaurants,” “availability of cafes, bars, snack bars, etc. of the average price category,” availability of canteens, food outlets of economy class”), on a 5-point scale (where 5-excellent, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-bad, 1-this position is absent), people.

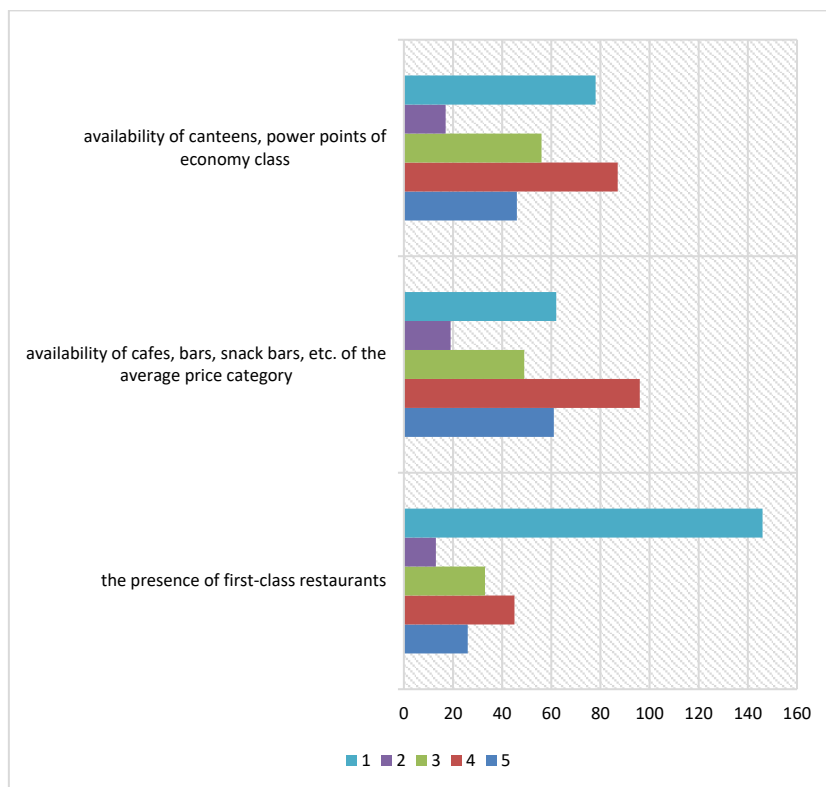


Fig. 4: Distribution of respondents ratings by categories of tourist potential of municipalities "availability of luxury restaurants," "availability of cafes, bars, snack bars, etc. of the average price category," "availability of canteens, food outlets of economy class"), on a 5-point scale (where 5-excellent, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-bad, 1-this position is absent)

The overall rating is headed by such positions as “low level of solvency of the population” 27.5%; “low level of business activity of local residents” 24.5%. The identification of these problems as key ones indicates that experts have transferred responsibility for the formation of tourist attractiveness of the territory from municipal authorities to local residents. For the heads of the municipalities, it seems preferable to create business structures and micro-entrepreneurs from among the residents of the local community, which would ensure the maintenance and increase of the tourist flow.

Only 7% of the experts noted the deterioration/absence of objects of cultural and historical heritage, while when detailing the tourist potential of the territory, the vast majority of the respondents noted their absence on the territory of municipalities. Only 4% of the experts noted the low level of organizational support of the offered tourist services (booking, transport, transfer, excursion, and cultural-entertainment programs). It is noteworthy that the low qualification of the municipal officials in the field of formation of the tourist brand of the territory and promotion of the tourist products and services were not noted by the respondents as a problem in the formation of tourist attractiveness of the municipalities. At the same time to the question: “Will it be relevant to conduct training courses for municipal employees on the development of tourist attractiveness in the municipality?” 55% of the respondents answered in the affirmative.

4. Discussion

The tourist potential of the Russian territories presents a wide range of opportunities for the development of such areas of tourism as environmental, active, extreme, cultural and educational, business, medical and health, recreational, rural, event, gastronomic (Vetrova et al., 2018).

Despite the variety of possible directions of tourism development in the Russian Federation, the country’s tourism potential is not fully used. The lack of a well-developed tourist strategy as a program document in a number of regions of the Russian Federation limits the growth of the tourist market. Another problem is the lack of experience of municipal authorities in promoting territories on the regional and Russian market of tourist services (Natal’ya et al., 2016). Local government leaders should play an active role in mobilizing local initiatives (Kumar, 2008). The promotion of local tourist products in modern conditions is exclusively in the area of interests of private organizations working in the tourist market. These trends lead to the fragmentation of the efforts of the subjects in the sphere of realization of the tourist potential of the territories of the Russian Federation. Of particular importance in modern conditions are the practices of cooperation between government, business, and

non-profit organizations implemented at the local level (Vinichenko et al., 2019), including the practice of municipal-private partnership (Frolova and Rogach, 2017).

The tourist potential of Russian regions in the current conditions remains largely unclaimed since it is necessary to solve such problems as creating a system-based end-to-end cycle of production and sale of products and services, integration of science, education, entrepreneurship, industry and agricultural territories.

5. Conclusion

The study showed that in the total number of resources for sustainable development of tourist attractiveness of territories, the resources of the local community have a low share of representation. Financial and infrastructure resources are given a dominant role by local authorities in the development of the tourism potential of municipalities. At the same time, their real “contribution” to solving the problems of increasing the tourist flow and improving the quality of tourist services is very low.

The road network, public catering facilities, rooms, and other facilities that form the tourist potential of municipalities in Russia are in a critical state, which does not allow us to consider them as a driver for the development of domestic tourism. Among the problems of managing the development of the tourist potential of the Russian territories were identified: the lack of qualified personnel for the tourism sector, the lack of active image tourist positioning of the municipality (branding), there is a low level of awareness of potential consumers of tourist services. The general rating of problems is headed by such positions as a low level of solvency of the population and low level of business activity of local residents.

According to the received data, the heads of municipalities highly appreciate the practice of focusing the resources of local communities on the development of domestic tourism. In particular, the respondents noted the need to involve volunteers and their communities in the formation and replication of tourist display objects, public and non-profit organizations, creative teams, and individual groups (farmers, craftsmen, etc.). As the priority tasks of managing the development of tourism potential of municipalities, the respondents noted the need to establish practices for organizing interaction between local authorities with business representatives, sponsors, patrons to attract resources for the development of tourist attractiveness of the municipality, the participation of the population in the promotion of tourist services through the use of media content (Internet portals, specialized sites aggregators, social networks, messengers, blogs, etc.). Along with that, the real contribution of local authorities to these processes is limited by the deficit of local budgets. In particular,

the municipal authorities practically do not provide financial, infrastructure, and other support for the entrepreneurial activity of local residents.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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