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## Improving the Quality of Tourist Services in Central Russia

Mejora de la calidad de los servicios turísticos en Rusia Central

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### ABSTRACT:

The Central Federal District (CFD) is a core of cultural, educational, and business tourism in the country. The regions of the CFD have a high cultural, educational, tourist, and recreational potential. The historical and cultural experiences of some regions of the north-eastern part of the CFD determine the high rates of tourism development and contribute to the active growth of the hotel property market as well as shopping and entertainment infrastructure. Experts predict further changes in this business that will bring profit and financial success only if novel contemporary routes and developments are introduced.

**KEYWORDS:** Infrastructure, regions, business tourism, geographical location.

### RESUMEN:

El Distrito Federal Central (CFD) es un núcleo de turismo cultural, educativo y de negocios en el país. Las regiones del CFD tienen un alto potencial cultural, educativo, turístico y recreativo. Las experiencias históricas y culturales de algunas regiones de la parte noreste del CFD determinan las altas tasas de desarrollo turístico y contribuyen al crecimiento activo del mercado inmobiliario hotelero, así como a la infraestructura de compras y entretenimiento. Los expertos predicen nuevos cambios en este negocio que traerán ganancias y éxito financiero solo si se introducen nuevas rutas y desarrollos contemporáneos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Infraestructura, regiones, turismo de negocios, ubicación geográfica..

## INTRODUCTION

Based on the priorities of the state policy "Development of Tourism in the Moscow Region", the main goal of the tourism sector is improving the competitiveness of the tourist market of the Moscow Region, which will meet the needs of Russian and foreign citizens in high-quality tourist services (Bokareva, Danilova et al.: 2019).

This goal will be achieved by solving three tasks

1. Developing the tourist services market, domestic and inbound tourism in the Moscow Region, and improving the quality of tourist services;
2. Promoting the tourist product provided in the Moscow region to the global and domestic tourist markets.
3. Developing tourist infrastructure.

## METHODOLOGY

Improving the quality of tourist services is today the main task of all industry participants. Russian and foreign tourists, who actively travel around the world, have accumulated considerable tourist experience, and are used to international standards of service. Domestic tourist organizations have to deal with sophisticated and demanding consumers.

One of the tools most actively used for assessing the quality of tourist services today is the classification of tourist infrastructure facilities. It is necessary to implement a unified classification system of tourist industry objects, including hotels and other accommodation facilities, ski trails and beaches, and to develop a procedure for evaluating the quality of services and assigning a category, as well as a mechanism for periodically re-evaluating already assigned category by its upgrading or downgrading.

To improve the quality of the tourist product of the Russian Federation, it is necessary to provide a wide range of tourist programs offered on the market, and periodically update them. This will heighten consumer interest in the tourist product and increase the number of repeat visits to resorts and tourist infrastructure.

The article uses techniques and tools of economic and logical analysis, as well as comparison and grouping methods.

## RESULTS

Eight federal highways pass through the territory of the CFD, and 12 international airports are located in the territory. The main waterways of the CFD are the Volga, Don, Dnipro, and Western Dvina rivers, as well as their tributaries. More than 500 tourist routes have been developed in the CFD's regions, and 1,656 companies operate as tour operators (1,247 of them are situated in Moscow).

It is home to the largest number of cultural, historical, and spiritual heritage sites, including six UNESCO monuments, more than 2,500 manors, and 1,100 museums, 37 federal buildings, more than 1,300 religious and spiritual shrines, and 60 arts and crafts. Besides, three federal resorts are situated in the CFD (Sarancha, Platonova et al.: 2014).

In the framework of the Golden Ring of Russia project, intense construction and reconstruction of hotels are underway in the north-east of the CFD. However, despite this, the CFD is experiencing a shortage in hotels and other tourist and recreational facilities of various classes. According to the Unified Interdepartmental Information and Statistical System, as of the end of 2019, there were 3,547 collective accommodation facilities in the CFD (16.9% of the total number in the Russian Federation), in which 14.7 million overnight stays were made in 2016 (29.9% of the total number of overnight stays in the Russian Federation) (Yudina, Uhina et al.: 2016).

The Tula region has a direct border with the Moscow, Ryazan, Lipetsk, Oryol, and Kaluga regions, and is similar to them in several factors, so the experience of these regions is particularly relevant.

Ryazan is located 180 km (three hours to drive) from Tula. The cities are connected by a bus service through the federal highway R-132 (Kaluga - Tula - Mikhailov - Ryazan).

More than half of all tourist arrivals to the Ryazan region are made to explore cultural, historical, architectural, and archaeological sites. In particular, the region hosts unique objects, such as the Old Ryazan settlement, Ryazan Kremlin, the historical-architectural museum-reserve, the Esenin State-Museum Reserve in Konstantinovo, the House-Museum of Academician I.P. Pavlov, the first Nobel prize-winner in Russia, the General Skobelev Museum, the engraver Pozhalostin Museum of Art, and the K.Tsiolkovsky State Museum of the History of Cosmonautics, as well as the centers of folk arts and crafts (Mikhailov lace, Kadoma embroidery, and Skopin ceramics). The potential of small towns and historical settlements is of great importance for the development of cultural and educational tourism. In particular, seven historical cities (Ryazan, Mikhailov, Spassk-Ryazan, Shatsk, Skopin, Spas-Klepiki, and Ryazhsk) and one historical settlement having federal status (Kasimov) are situated in the territory of the Ryazan region (Krivosheeva, Druchevskaya et al.: 2014).

The Ryazan region is also known for medical and health tourism which is intensively developing. This concerns a resort and residential area (the village of Solotcha) with its vacation retreats, sanatoriums, recreation centers, and children's camps. For the development of eco-tourism, popular hiking and water routes are laid out in Meshchersky National Park. Water tourism is in particular demand among tourists in the Ryazan Region: trips by kayaks and catamarans on small rivers of the region are highly demanded among tourists. Since 2011, the Ryazan region has been implementing the investment project on creating a Ryazan tourist and recreational cluster. In December 2012, the first facility of the Ryazansky tourist and recreational cluster was opened as part of the hotel and entertainment complex Okskaya Zhemchuzhina (Oka Perl) – the year-round Gorki water park, and in 2013 – the Berega Park Hotel for 100 rooms. The cluster project included also the construction of the entrance zone of the Esenin State-Museum Reserve and the Fishing Village tourist complex. River tourism along the Oka River has a significant potential for tourism development in the Ryazan Region. Business tourism is another promising area of tourism development in the region. In 2017, internships for students and teachers specializing in tourism and service disciplines were held in the Ryazan Region.

The Kaluga region (Kaluga is located 100 km or one hour 40 minutes to drive from Tula), with its rich history, centuries-old traditions, and picturesque natural landscapes, has the potential to develop tourism in various forms: from business and cultural-educational to religious and rural tourism (Krivosheeva, Druchevskaya et al.: 2014).

There are 44 museums and their branches in the region. Cultural tourism development points are the State Museum of the history of cosmonautics named after Tsiolkovsky, the historical, architectural, and natural Museum-reserve Polotnyany Zavod (linen factory), and the Military-Historical Museum of the Patriotic War of 1812.

In the territory of the Kaluga Region, there are 31 monasteries, 95 active churches, of which 16 churches and seven monasteries are located in the city of Kaluga, as well as 43 churches. The most famous Orthodox shrines of the Kaluga region are two stavropegial monasteries, which are leading in the number of pilgrims, the Kozelskaya Holy Vedenskaya Optina Desert, and the Kazan Holy Ambrosievskaya Desert, known as Shamordino. The Kozelsky District, where both monasteries are located, has a well-developed infrastructure. Various accommodation options are presented – from monastic hotels to highly comfortable accommodation facilities. Recently, a restaurant and hotel complex KARS, providing comfortable living conditions and a high level of service, was built.

The Kaluga region is actively developing eco-tourism. Many places in the region are specially protected natural territories. The priority direction of the Kaluga region is rural tourism represented by objects that offer a comprehensive tourist product: accommodation in cottages with all amenities, sightseeing routes, acquaintance with farming and local nature, eco-friendly food, etc. The Etnomir ethnographic park-museum (Borovsky District) is an important object of the tourist industry in the Kaluga region, which is popular not only among residents of Moscow (110 km, or two-hour drive) but also in neighboring regions. Health and recreation, as well as cultural and educational facilities in the tourism sector in the Kaluga Region, contribute to the formation of additional tourist flows. Besides, known Ugra National Park is associated with military memorial and sightseeing-educational tourist routes (Pogrebova, Glinkina et al.: 2018).

The Oryol region is located 190 km (about three hours to drive) from Tula. At this stage of the tourism industry's formation, the largest proportion in domestic tourism is occupied by cultural and educational, natural and environmental, health, and business tourism, as well as event tourism which is developing rapidly. The existence of prerequisites for the development of various types of tourism was caused by the allocation and active promotion of four priority regional tourist zones in the territory of the Oryol Region, namely, City of Orel, Orlovskoye Polesye National Park, Mtsensk-Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, and the City of Bolkhov. The main objects that attract tourists are numerous museums, primarily literary ones (the I.S. Turgenev State Memorial Museum and Scenery Preserve Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, Turgenev's State Literary Museum,

which includes six branches: the museums of I.S. Turgenev, I.A. Bunin, as well as House-Museums of Orel natives: N.S. Leskov, L. N. Andreev, and T.N. Granovsky). In addition to the cultural and educational tourism, business tourism has been actively developed in the Oryol region in recent years, which is largely facilitated by the construction of the GRINN tourist multifunctional complex. Due to the development of religious tourism in the Oryol Region, the Bolkhovskaya Starina Hotel was opened whose premises recreate the atmosphere and life of a provincial merchant city. The Oryol Polesie Park (with an area of 77.7 thousand hectares), where rare animals and birds are found, is engaged in the development of natural and ecological tourism in the Oryol region. Tourists can visit an aviary zoo, which contains more than 30 species of various animals and birds in spacious aviaries.

The Lipetsk region is located 450 km from Moscow (five hours to drive). The distance from Tula to Lipetsk is 293 km (about 4 hours). The region has enormous potential for the development of cultural tourism, which involves visits to the Leo Tolstoy memorial Astapovo, the House-Museum of T.N. Khrennikov, the Literary Memorial Museum of I.A. Bunin, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky Historical and Natural Museum-Reserve, painter N.N. Zhukov House-Museum, G.V. Plehanov House-Museum, as well as the Museum of Folk Craft and Applied Arts, and the House-Museum of Yelets Lace. The region is home to the Orthodox Culture and Pilgrimage Center of the Zadonsk town, known as Russian Jerusalem. The town of Yelets enjoys great interest among tourists, attracted by the preserved historical buildings of the merchant city and unique temples in the center of the town. In 2016, internships of students and teachers specializing in tourist and service disciplines were held in the Lipetsk region (Pogrebova: 2015). To attract tourists, the town of Lipetsk holds a regular ethnocultural festival called Reconstruction of Lipetsk Settlement Fair, which is included in the programs of domestic tourism of the largest Russian operators. Since 2011, the Lipetsk region has been implementing investment projects, such as the Yelets tourist and recreational cluster, and the Zadonshchina auto-tourist cluster. Construction of a cultural and entertainment center has started in the special economic zone of the Zadonsk town. Besides, the construction of the cottage-type hotel and health-improving complexes is underway. A cluster approach is applied to the development of tourism in the Lipetsk and Ivanovo regions within the framework of the program "Development of Domestic and Inbound Tourism in the Russian Federation (2011 - 2018)".

The Ivanovo region ranks first in the CFD in terms of the folk-art crafts development, since it preserves about 10 types of folk art and crafts, which form the basis of ethnographic interest in the region, as well as to authentic souvenirs. The towns of Ivanovo, Palekh, and Plyos are an integral part of the Golden Ring of Russia.

The Yaroslavl region is one of the CFD regions with the most interesting experience in tourism development, which, like the Tula region, shares a border with the Moscow Region. The distance from Yaroslavl to Moscow is 282 km (180 km from Tula). Tula is 450 km, or seven hours to drive from Yaroslavl. The determining factor in the development of cultural and educational tourism in the Yaroslavl region is a high historical and cultural potential. Thus, four towns of the region are included in the Golden Ring of Russia tourist route, the landmark named Historical center of the city of Yaroslavl is included in the list of UNESCO world heritage sites, the region includes 4,681 cultural heritage objects, of which 3,022 have been identified. At that, the number of various museums amounts to 250. The huge potential of the cultural and historical heritage of the Yaroslavl region will always be demanded by tourists.

The town of Myshkin shows an interesting experience in attracting tourists. The town with a population of about five thousand residents has 20 museums and five theaters attracting the tourist flow of 200 thousand people annually. One of the few remaining living villages in Russia (where about 200 indigenous inhabitants live in 58 huts representing the world of today's peasant) is situated in the west of the Yaroslavl region. Related types of tourism, developing in the Yaroslavl Region, include cruise, medical and recreational, business, event, green and rural tourism, as well as paid hunting and fishing. Tourism, related to active

forms of movement and event tourism is developing rapidly. In 2015, internships of students and teachers specializing in tourist and service disciplines were held in the Yaroslavl region.

The Vladimir region occupies a central place in the Golden Ring of Russia route, and therefore, the main type of tourism in this region is cultural and educational tours, which is developing in the following areas: support for museum tourism and event tourism, inclusion in tourist routes visits to folk art enterprises, promotion of existing, and creation of new tourist brands. In 2017, internships of students and teachers specializing in tourist and service disciplines were held in the Vladimir region.

Tula is connected to Kursk (343 km) by the Lastochka high-speed train which runs twice a day. The journey takes 3.5 hours, which is two hours faster than a car trip. Thus, easy transport accessibility will attract tourists from the Kursk region.

The Belgorod region is located 500-700 km from Moscow. The distance from Tula to Belgorod is 485 km, the travel time is 7.5 hours. The main type of tourism is cultural and educational tours. Points of tourist attraction to the region are the Prokhorovka Field State Military and Historical Museum-Reserve, the Belgorod State Philharmonic, the Belgorod zoo, and the Belogorye State Nature Reserve.

The Voronezh region is the largest in the CFD after the Moscow region in terms of territory and population. The region has unique places of interest, such as the Voronezh State Biosphere Reserve and the Khopersky State Sanctuary, the Divnogorye Museum-Reserve, the Kostenki National Archaeological Reserve Museum, and preserved palace and ensemble architectural complexes. At the same time, the region (Voronezh has the title of the City of Military Glory) is known by a popular route to the battle sites of the Great Patriotic War, which was included in the collection of Military Historical Routes of Russia, published by the Russian Military Historical Society. According to expert estimates, the Voronezh region offers about 100 objects of rural tourism. The number of visitors served by such facilities reaches 400 thousand people a year. Especially popular are places of interest, such as Kudryarov Stan, the Museum representing Village of the 17th-19th centuries, the Lomovskoy Nature and Landscape Park, and the Kolodezhanskaya Water Mill. Projects are being implemented based on agricultural enterprises to acquaint visitors with food production technologies, such as the brand of Academy of Dairy Science of EkoNiva-APK Holding, and Yudanovskie Prostory of EcoMilk.

The Smolensk region is interesting for its experience in the functioning of the information center for culture and tourism, which since 2013 has been located in the historical center of the city in the form of a stay-alone stylized Smolensk Terem offering direct communication with tourists. This helps to expand the geographical spread of visitors both from Russian cities (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kaluga, Bryansk, Yeisk, and Kaliningrad) and abroad (USA, Germany, France, Brazil, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan). Smolensky Terem attracts visitors by offering free expert advice on the tourist and recreational potential of Smolensk and the region, booklets about the region's attractions, Mobile guide, tourist maps, and route schemes, as well as a tourist passport, which contains information about the main museums, hotels, public eating places, cinemas, and shopping centers, as well as events taking place in the city and the Region.

In the Smolensk Terem, visitors can order both group and individual sightseeing and thematic tours of the city and the region, buy souvenirs and books.

The number of tourists in the Tver region is growing every year because the region has become a venue for several significant cultural, sports, and tourist events having Russian and regional status. In the region, several main tourist zones have formed which are well known in the Russian tourist market.

Numerous tourist routes pass through the Tver region, connecting recognized tourist centers, such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Veliky Novgorod, and the towns of the Golden Ring. Therefore, tourists make stops and overnight stays to visit tourist sites located near the Moscow-St. Petersburg highway. In 2016, internships of students and teachers specializing in tourist and service disciplines were held in the Tver region.

The Moscow region. To date, 5,825 cultural heritage sites are located in the Moscow Region.

Among them, 1,339 cultural heritage sites have federal status, 2,076 sites are of the regional significance, and 2,410 identified sites relate to common cultural heritage.

Priority areas of the state policy in the tourism sector are:

- promoting tourism activity and creating favorable conditions for its development;
- identifying and supporting priority areas of tourist activity;
- creating the foundations of the contemporary tourism and recreation services industry, and improving its competitiveness in the international market;
- supporting and developing domestic, inbound, social, and amateur tourism.

To implement the priority project on creating a single comfortable cultural and tourist complex of the Moscow region and increasing the tourist and sightseeing flow to the Moscow Region, 14 walking routes 15.3 km long, and bike paths 14.5 km long were created. These are:

- walking tourist route named Klin Sounds – from the Klin railway station to Tchaikovsky Museum;
- Dmitrov walking tourist route – from the Dmitrov railway station to the Dmitrov Kremlin;
- walking tourist route Pilgrim's Path – from the Novo-Jerusalem railway station to the Voskresensky New Jerusalem Stavropegial Male Monastery of the Russian Orthodox Church, and New Jerusalem Museum and Exhibition Complex of the Moscow Region;
- Khotkovo walking tourist route
- from the Abramtsevo railway platform to Abramtsevo State Historical, Artistic and Literary Museum-Reserve, and from the Khotkovo railway station to Pokrovskoe Khotkovo Stavropegial Female Monastery of the Russian Orthodox Church;
- eight walking tourist routes – from the Sergiev Posad railway station to the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius;
- Kolomensky Posad walking tourist route – from the Kolomna railway station to the Kolomna Kremlin Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve.

This allowed increasing the tourist and sightseeing flow in the top 10 territories of the Moscow region to 14.1 million people.

Two tourist and recreational clusters are being implemented in the Moscow Region, namely, Sergiev Posad – the Golden Ring Gates, and the Russian Palestine. About 150 thousand tourists visit the Museum and monastery every year.

The Podmoskovie (Moscow suburbs) tourist information centers were created in the Moscow region to serve tourists. To date, 36 Podmoskovie centers are operating in the Moscow region providing tourists and visitors with independent up-to-date consolidated information about the tourist potential of the Moscow Region, as well as existing tourist routes, cultural and historical sites, attractions and events, and services provided in hotels, retail outlets, catering enterprises, etc.

The Tambov region. Currently, the Tambov region is not associated with the regions with traditionally developed tourism sector, since its positive image as a tourist attraction yet has not been created. At the same time, the region has many promising opportunities for the development of various types of tourism. Currently, the region's tourism infrastructure is under development. At present, 55 companies, including two tour operators and 53 travel agencies operate in the tourist market of the Tambov region. In the region, there are 67 collective accommodation facilities for 9,803 people, as well as 15 large shopping, entertainment, and leisure complexes, and a widely developed structure of public catering facilities.

A variety of attractions play a significant role in the development of regional cultural and educational tourism. There are 1,443 cultural heritage sites in the Tambov region, of which 84 have federal status.

Experts of the National system of training and advanced training believe that it is important to improve the quality of services to fully unlock the tourist potential of the Tambov Region. One leading role in this issue is played by professional education. It is also necessary to create a single information platform on the Internet, which would combine, structure, and make available all the information for tourists, up to the

menu in hotel restaurants. A special place should be given in this program to festival events in municipalities, such as the Michurinsky Apple Festival, the Sampura Egg Festival, and the Bondarsky Kvass Festival.

The Bryansk region occupies a special place in the tourist market of the CFD, and Russia in general. It has good tourist and recreational opportunities. Significant historical and cultural potential and rich literary heritage open up prospects for the development of tourist and sightseeing activities and educational tourism.

The Bryansk region is promising for tourism development primarily due to its unique economic and geographical location, since the region is located on the border of three states, namely, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Highways, railways, and air routes connect the region with many countries in Europe and Asia. Favorable natural conditions, a mild climate with no sharp temperature changes contribute to the organization of medical and recreational holidays and certain types of sports tourism. These types of tourism services are especially relevant for the areas of Bryansk region affected by the Chernobyl accident, allowing residents of these areas to improve their health without leaving the region. The diversity of folk traditions, the location of the region at the junction of three Slavic states create conditions for promoting the event and ethnographic tourism. Today, the Bryansk region offers several tourist routes for guests interested in local antiquity: The Svenskiy Monastery of Holy Dormition, Krasny Rog, Ovstug, Vschizh, the Resurrection Cathedral (Voskresensky Sobor) in Pochep, the Dormition Cathedral in Mglin, the historical towns of Trubchevsk, Karachev, Dyatkovo, and Sevsk. In total, there are 16 settlements in the territory of the region, whose age, according to chronicle data, is 800-900 years.

The Bryansk region is particularly proud of its heroic partisan past during the Great Patriotic War. Partisan movement in the Bryansk region is memorialized by memorial sites, such as Partizanskaya Polyana (Partisan Glade), Khatsun, Sheshinsky Museum of the International Underground in the Dubrovsky District, Navlya Museum of Partisan Glory, which are the sites of numerous visits and sightseeing. In November 2014, the government of the Bryansk region decided to create a Crystal City tourist and recreational cluster in the territory of the Dyatkovsky District.

Tourist resources include also natural objects in the territory of the region: rivers, lakes, forests, hydromineral deposits (mineral water Zatishije (Lull), and two types of therapeutic mud – peat and sapropel in the Bryansk, Pochepsky, and Klintsovsky districts). Tourists are offered 65 hotels and similar accommodation facilities, 16 health-improving institutions, and 16 out-of-town recreation camps. More than 4,500 people work in regional tourist organizations and hotels. The number of restaurants, cafes, and other catering establishments is constantly increasing (especially in Bryansk). Developing domestic tourism in the Bryansk region and improving the quality of tourist services requires the development of new tourist and sightseeing routes. Here, one possible direction may be developing an interregional tourist product (including tours to neighboring Smolensk, Kaluga, Oryol, and Kursk regions).

The Kostroma region. Competitive advantages of the Kostroma region in the cultural sector, which are the basis for successful and sustainable development of the industry in the current context, are the variety of cultural and tourist brands, historical sites, places related to outstanding historical events and people, local arts and crafts, unique museum collections and traditional culture, and identity of rural settlements, preservation and use of the historical and cultural heritage of Kostroma and small towns in the region.

The tourism industry of the Kostroma region has all the necessary resources for the active development of almost all types of recreation. The region offers tourists more than 60 hotels, 11 historical towns, more than 2.5 thousand historical and cultural monuments, three museums, and 16 branches of the Kostroma State Historical, Architectural, and Arts Museum-Reserve. Currently, the natural reserve fund of the Kostroma region includes 84 specially protected natural territories. Of these, one territory has federal status, 83 territories have regional status, including 56 nature reserves, 18 natural monuments, and nine tourist and recreational areas.

With significant tourist and recreational resources, the Kostroma region occupies a modest place in the Russian market of tourist services, although its potential allows (provided appropriate development level of

the tourist industry) hosting about one million tourists a year. In the Kostroma Region, tourism activities are under restructuring and development. The available tourist resources are not fully used, however, the dynamics of the tourist market in the region indicate trends towards an increase in the number of tourists (Konovalova, Yudina et al.: 2018).

The Tula region. Due to geographical location (in the center of Russia, near Moscow, international airports, and on the most important Russian communications routes) and universal complex of cultural, historical, and natural attractions, the Tula region is a promising destination for the development of domestic and inbound tourism. Yasnaya Polyana, Kulikovo Field, Polenovo, Tula Kremlin, museums of weapons, samovars and gingerbread, Zasechnaya trait, Vyatichi settlements, Priokskaya recreational zone, literary and historical sites of Krasivomechya and Chernsky District, ancient monuments of Belev, Krapivna, Likhvin, Bogoroditsk, Aleksin, and Odoev have always attracted and continue to attract a large number of tourists from different parts of the world.

The famous Tula tree entanglements, which are strips of broad-leaved forest that crosses the territory of the region from west to east, are unique in their beauty. The most picturesque landscapes are river valleys, namely, the upper reaches of the Oka with tributaries (Upa, Osetr, and Zusha), as well as the upper reaches of the Don River with its Nepryadva and Krasivaya Mecha tributaries. Natural resort resources are mainly represented by mineral waters and medicinal peats. The most valuable deposits of mineral water and freshwater peat suitable for mud treatment are located in the Suvorovsky District (Krainka resort) (Krivosheeva, Druchevskaya et al.: 2014).

Currently, there are about 250 places of interest in the region, which include museums, monasteries and temples, manors, active recreation facilities, monuments, and other attractions. There are more than 3,700 historical and cultural monuments in the Tula Region, many of them are unique.

Thus, the Tula region offers tourists 70 museums and their branches, including four museums having federal status. These are Yasnaya Polyana State Memorial and Nature Reserve Museum-Estate of L.N. Tolstoy, the State Museum of Military History and Natural Reserve Kulikovo Field, the State Memorial Historical-Art, and Natural Museum-Reserve of V.D. Polenov, and Tula State Weapons Museum. Among them, two museums (Yasnaya Polyana and the Kulikovo Field) are a particularly valuable cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation (Silaeva: 2016; Caldito, Dimanche et al.: 2015).

Local crafts, such as the artistic decoration of hunting weapons, samovar and accordion production, Tula gingerbread, and brightly colored Filimonov ceramic toys are of great interest to tourists and vacationers visiting the Tula Region. In this regard, the state institution of culture of the Tula region named Association of centers for the development of art, folk culture, and tourism, which operates the museum complex of Tula Window Trim, Ethnodvor Levsha, and Tula Forge, is of particular interest to visitors.

The region has a developed transport network. Important federal highways pass through the Tula Region, namely, M-2 Crimea, M-4 Don, P-132 Kaluga-Tula-Mikhailov-Ryazan, a section of M-6 Caspian Sea highway, the Kaluga-Peremyshl-Belev-Orel regional highway that allows tourists conveniently reaching Tula and the region by car or by bus. Besides, there is a regular train service, for example, Lastochka high-speed trains pass twice a day and take just two hours to get Tula from Moscow.

In recent years, the tourist flow is characterized by sustainable growth by 5-7%. In 2014, the tourist flow to the Tula region amounted to 496.8 thousand people, while in 2015 – 541.5 thousand people, and in 2016– 580 thousand people. In 2016, the total volume of services rendered in the tourism sector increased by 6.3% to 2,320 million rubles. This is facilitated by improving urban spaces, repairing roads, and improving the quality of road infrastructure, building new hotels and catering facilities, and most importantly, creating and developing new places of interest (Afanasiev, Afanasieva et al.: 2018).

At present, more than 300 travel companies are operating in the Tula Region, of which 22 companies are included in the Unified Federal Register of Tour Operators. An analysis of the geographical distribution of tourists visiting the region shows that tourists from about 30 regions of the Russian Federation come to the

Tula region every year through the travel agencies. The largest number of tourists come to the Tula region from the following regions of Russia: Moscow and the Moscow region – 69% of the total number of tourists, St. Petersburg (6%); the Ryazan region (4%), Kaluga region (3%), Saratov region (3%), and other regions, namely, the Arkhangelsk, Penza, Kirov, Bryansk, Lipetsk, Yaroslavl, Nizhny Novgorod, Belgorod, Samara regions, etc. (15%). The relevant statistics show a low rate of tourist traffic from the surrounding regions of the CFD, which can be changed by the activation of the corresponding destinations and the redistribution of tourist flows from the Kaluga, Lipetsk, Ryazan, and Oryol regions.

The target audience for the Tula region is individual middle-aged tourists with children, as well as young people with above-average incomes. Average tourist receipt (hotel accommodation, meals, purchase of souvenirs, and entrance tickets to museums) is about 4500 rubles per day (Yudina: 2015).

According to the territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service for the Tula Region, to date, there are more than 150 collective accommodation facilities in the Region, including 50 general-purpose collective accommodation facilities, of which 43 are hotels, 34 special-purpose collective accommodation facilities, of which 22 are health resort facilities. The conducted monitoring has shown that at the end of 2016, the total number of collective accommodation facilities was 178 with the total number of rooms equal to 5,143 designed for one-time accommodation of 12,757 people.

The cost of living in collective accommodation facilities on average ranges from 2,500 rubles per day, while there is an option to stay at hostels where comfortable living conditions are provided for 500 rubles per day. To improve the quality of tourist services, targeted work is being done to classify collective accommodation facilities. In the Tula Region, four hotels are classified according to international standards. These are five-star SK Royal Hotel Tula, four-star Armenia Hotel, three-star Fortuna Hotel, and two-star Podvorye Hotel.

To ensure transport accessibility of places of interest and improve transport infrastructure, work is underway to monitor access roads to the main tourism objects in the region based on information from federal and regional museums, as well as municipal administrations of the Tula Region. In 2016, the road to the Nikolskoe-Vyazemsky (Chernsky District) estate of Tolstoy family which is a branch of the state museum- estate of Tolstoy in Yasnaya Polyana, was repaired. This contributed to the inclusion of the object in the existing tourist routes, as well as to promotion of the destination for individual tourists, who come by their vehicles. Visiting this and several other sites by individual tourists traveling without a personal vehicle is often difficult due to the lack of public transport links. One feature of the Tula region is holding various attractive events throughout the region, which are presented mainly in the form of festivals and fairs (Yudina: 2018).

Event tourism, focused on family vacations, is increasingly gaining popularity in the Tula Region. In this regard, the International Nettle Festival, organized annually in early summer in the village of Krapivna of Shchekinsky District of the Tula Region, is quite interesting to tourists. During two days, various events are waiting for tourists at different sites of the city, revealing the traditions and customs of an old provincial village and its inhabitants. Another festival of military-historical reconstruction on Kulikovo Field is one of the most striking events of the military-historical movement in Russia, which can be attributed by its scope to an international type of event tourism (Platonova, Krivosheeva: 2015).

The Tula region is known also by its gastronomic brands. Thus the Venevskaya Baranka festival began its history in Venev. Since 2016, the Tula region has hosted the Tolstoy Weekend international theater festival, and the Gingerbread Day festival (Bokareva, Danilova et al.: 2019; Sarancha, Mosalev: 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Due to the natural and recreational resources, unique places of interest, nature reserves, and parks, as well as brands known throughout Russia, almost all types of tourism can develop in the regions.

Currently, cultural and educational, military and patriotic, children's educational, gastronomic, religious, and event-based types of tourism are the most popular among tourists. Besides, business, rural, industrial,

ethnographic, gastronomic, active, and extreme types of tourism are also promising for development in the regions.

It should be noted that information about most places of interest and infrastructural facilities is not readily available. The collective accommodation facilities in most regions are limited. The level of service is quite far from perfect, while the qualified staff is insufficient. Another feature that is typical for most regions of the Russian Federation is a significant stratification of the level of municipalities in terms of the quality of infrastructure, service, and availability of places of interest.

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