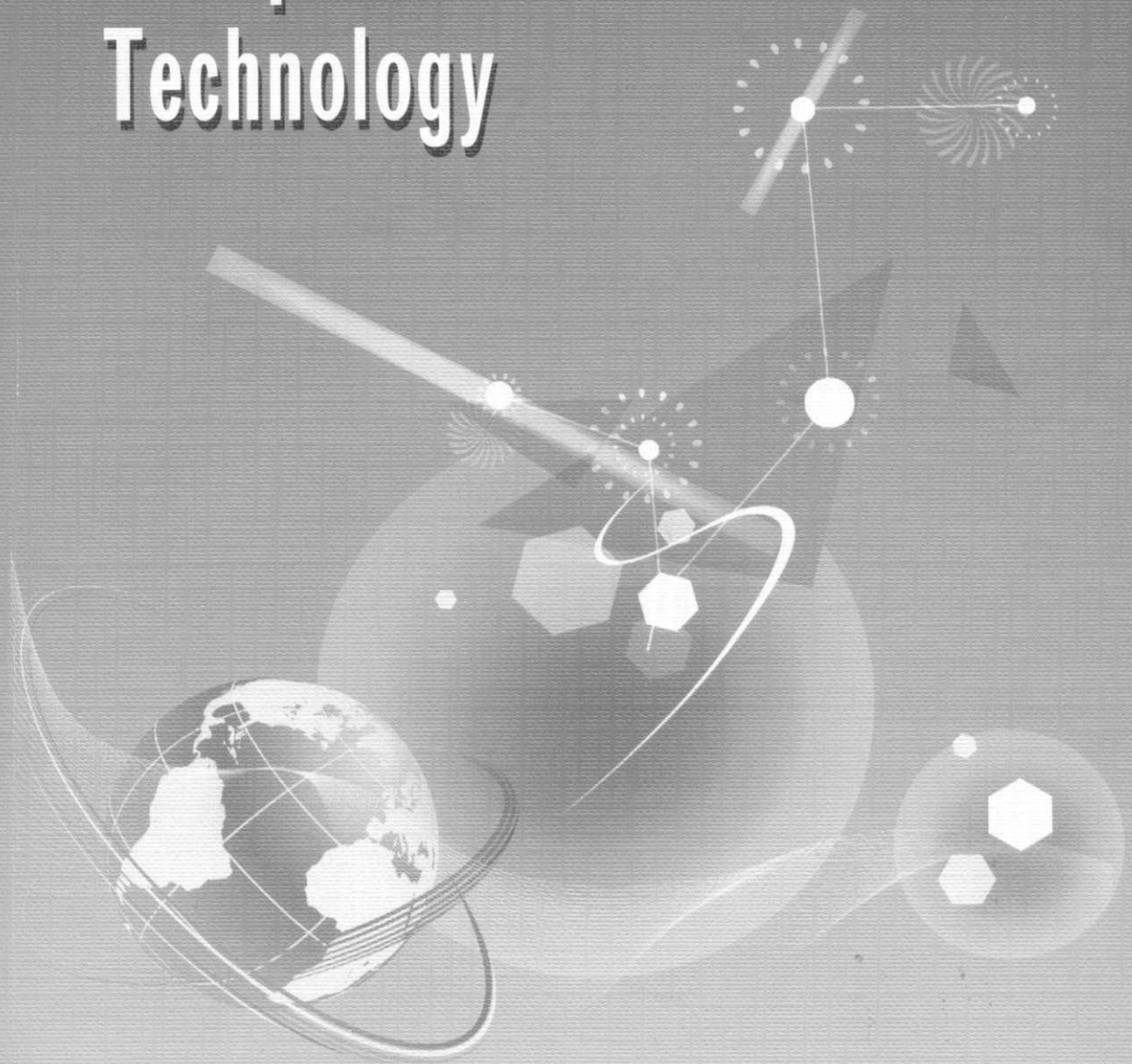




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International Conference on European Science and Technology



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PRIORITIES OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN REGION

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Abstract

Presented paper provides information of a current situation of development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan, particular, in the South Kazakhstan region. Issues of defining such types of tourism as rural tourism and agri-tourism are discussed. Role and impact of rural tourism on development of countryside and rural areas of Kazakhstan are considered in a work. How tourism will influences on sustainable development, benefits of rural tourism are discussed in a paper. Authors made an attempt of identifying of a role of rural tourism from other types of industry in development of the national economy, as well as how rural tourism would have a negative impact on a local community.

Keywords: Rural tourism, agri-tourism, sustainable development, rural area, South Kazakhstan

1 Introduction

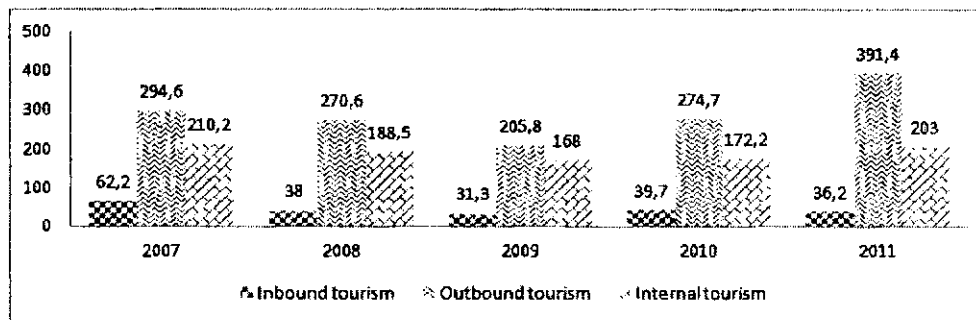
Nowadays, about 7.4 mln people lives at rural areas in the Kazakhstan. It is 46.4% of a total number of country's citizens. At the most of rural areas inefficient management, depletion of mineral resources, closing city-industrial enterprises has led to a deterioration of life quality and social isolation of local population, as well as declining economic growth. In such situations tourism would become one of the priorities directions of rural areas' development. Using principles of sustainable development tourism has potential in improving ecological, socio-economy state at all of regions of Kazakhstan. Sustainable development principles lie in a fact order to replace a cultural of intensive consumption with culture of smart growth, to balance economic and ecological context of development; find common interests of tourists and local population.

Tourism in the 21st century will be the biggest industry of the world. Tourist arrivals are estimated to reach 1 billion by 2010 and 1,6 billion by 2020, and people will take a holiday more often, maybe two or four times per year. Tourist arrivals are predicted to grow by an average 4,3% a year over the next two decades, while receipts from international tourism will go up by 6,7% a year [1]. Along with this great

growth, the tourism industry will also have to take up more responsibility for its wide impacts, on the economy, on the environment, on societies and on cultural sites [2]. At current moment rural tourism is one of the leading types of tourism in the world. In spite of this, rural tourism is a new directions of tourism.

2 Current trends of tourism development in Kazakhstan

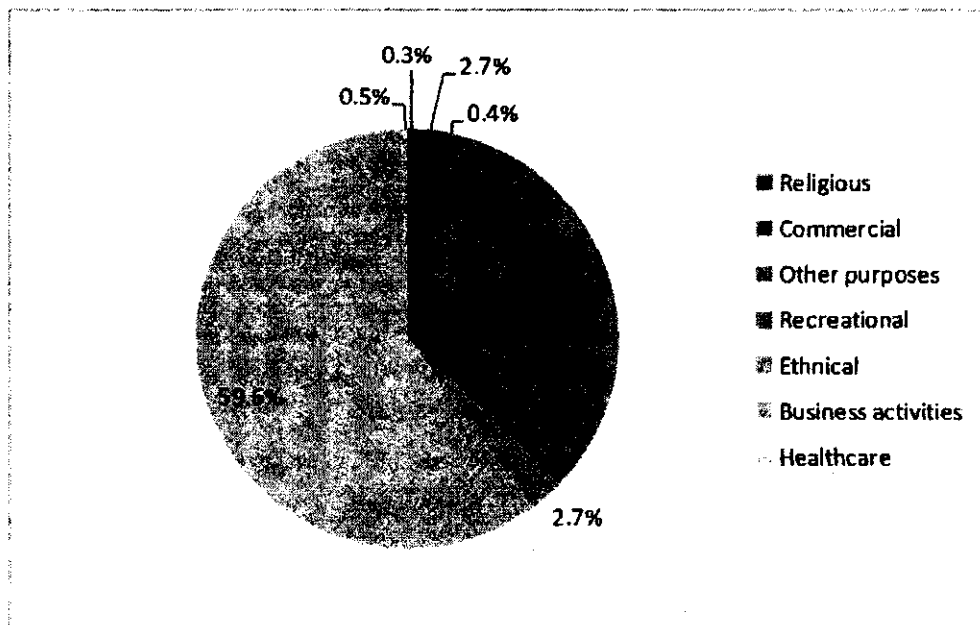
More importantly, let us talk about tourism industry development in Kazakhstan as well. Experts of the World Economic Fund, which have conducted the study in 2013, evaluated the country's 14 criteria: national, human and cultural resources, the development of communications, pricing, infrastructure, land and air transport, tourist infrastructure, security, health, the environment, and tourism priority, in order to be aware of the current situation in the tourism sphere of the country. Fortunately, Kazakhstan in the World Tourism rankings improved its performance by five points and took 88th place. The high rate of Kazakhstan for the development of the tourism cluster is confirmed by internal statistics. Following this, we can see the dynamics of the served tourists' number for inbound, outbound, and internal tourism in Kazakhstan in picture 1 below [3].



Picture 1 - Dynamics of the served tourists' number in Kazakhstan [3]

Consequently, the served tourists' number in inbound and internal tourism declined for 4 years (2008 - 2011 respectively) in comparison with 2007, however outbound tourism briefly rose from 294.6 to 391.4 people. The smallest number of the served tourists in inbound and outbound tourism in 2009, mainly the cause of this fact can be a crisis in a country at that time. Despite the fact that the figure of internal tourism fell throughout this period of time, it increased in 2011 by 203 thousand of tourists' [3].

Furthermore, there should be also considered about what types of tourism were mostly interested by foreign tourists and local people in Kazakhstan. Hence, from the picture 2 we can analyze the types of tourism share and define the role of rural tourism among other types of tourism in Kazakhstan.



Pie chart 2 - Structure of tourism types share served in Kazakhstan in 2011 [3]

As we can analyze, business tourism has the most significant role in Kazakhstan, and in contrast the pie chart shows that the rural tourism is not selected as one individual type of tourism, because in comparison with others it has smaller proportion and so it is included in other types of tourism.

3 An understanding of rural tourism in Kazakhstan.

Rural tourism is among the most polymorphous of all Special Interest Tourism (SIT) forms. The diversity of attractions included within rural tourism embrace. Such diversity represents major opportunities for rural areas that have turned to tourism as a means of supplementing diminished incomes (Douglas, 2001) [4].

In addition to this, we would like to look at not only contemporary definitions of rural tourism, but also the old descriptions. With regards to *geographic and demographic definition*: "A multi-faced activity that takes place in an environment outside heavily urbanized areas. It is an industry sector characterized by small scale tourism business, set in areas where land use dominated by agricultural pursuits, forestry or natural areas"; *product-related definitions*: "The Rural Tourism product could be segmented to include such product components as rural attractions, rural adventure tours, nature based tours, ecotourism tours, country towns, rural resorts and country-style accommodation, and farm holidays, together with festivals, events and agricultural education"; *tourist experience-related definitions*: "Rural tourism should be seen as offering a different range of experience to those offered in big cities" and that "the emphasis in rural tourism is on the tourist's experience of the products and activities of the area" [5].

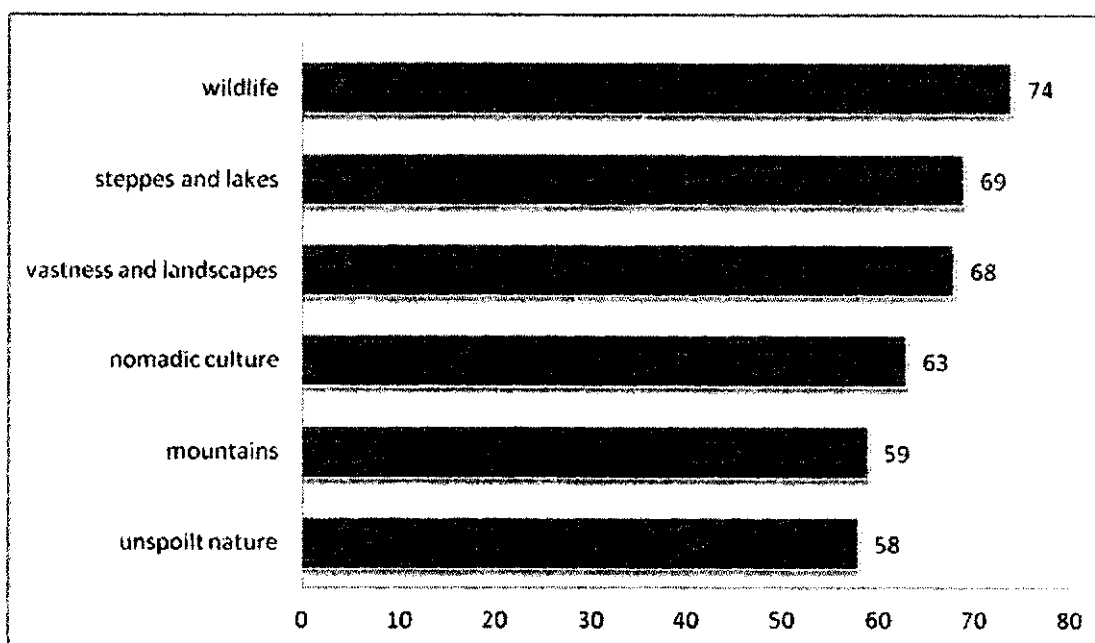
Currently, there are many approaches and opportunities to rural tourism. Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as a rural tourism. It is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside.

4 Development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan: analysis and current state

Basically, there was done an analysis in order to evaluate the development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan as a whole. Studies have shown that the expectations of foreign tourists from a trip to Kazakhstan have their own characteristics and are presented in picture 3 below.

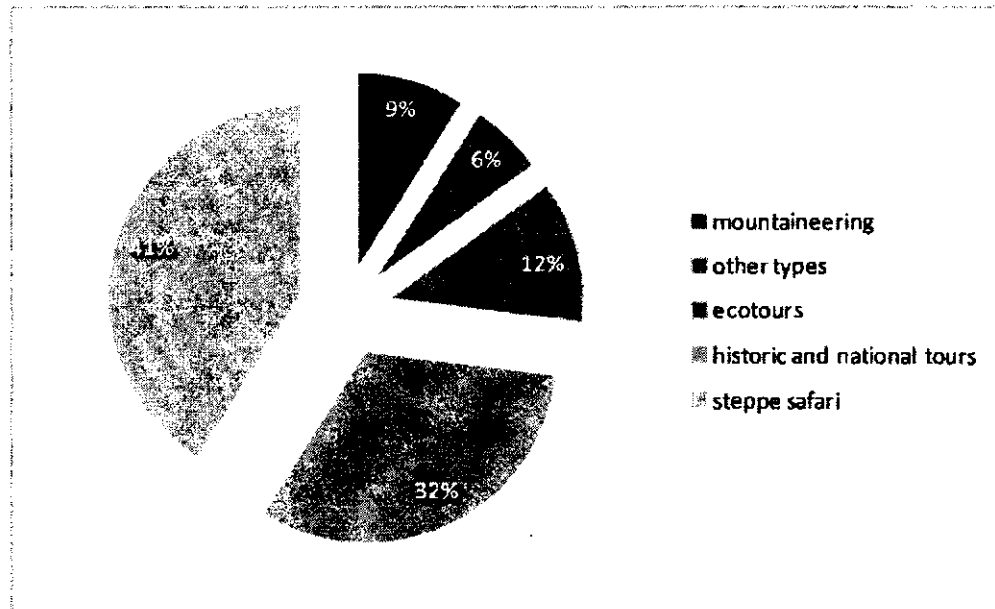
As the analysis describe the most attractive side for foreign tourists as part of rural tourism are wildlife, steppes and lakes.

There was done a segmentation of foreign consumers in Kazakhstan on socio – demographic factors in 2010 which can be represented as following: totally 10 % of the English people's tourist flow to Kazakhstan was between the ages of 35 to 54 years, 26 % of which were couples; Korean people accounted for 8% between the ages of 25 and 54 with high level of education, 39% of them were couples; the French took 6 %, aged from 25 to 54 years with secondary and high level of education, 32% of them were couples ; Germans accounted for 3%, aged for 35-54 years with high and the average level of education, 24% of them were couples, Japanese took the smallest proportion of 1%, aged 45-65 years, high education, 10% of them were couples / Statistical compilation "Tourism in Kazakhstan in 2010 and 2011, 2012/.



Picture 3 - Expectations of foreign tourists from traveling to Kazakhstan [3]

As a result of research, consumer preferences for tourism types among foreign tourists in Kazakhstan shown in picture 4 below.



Picture 4- Preferences of foreign tourists by tourism types in Kazakhstan, 2010 [3]

Based on the studies of existing tourist and recreational resources in Kazakhstan it can be identified that rural tourism might be developed in close conjunction with ecotourism, safari tourism, cultural and educational tourism, equestrian sport tourism, also the rural tourism offers are distinctive and diverse, also they are demonstrated through the wide range of products and experiences, examples include adventure sports, horse-riding, fishing, boating, bird watching, conservation activities.

Specifically, for foreign tourists the most appealing is steppe safari with its historical and national tours. These types of tourism can be directly linked to rural tourism, as on the one hand in the steppe part there are vast majority of Kazakhstani rural settlements, on the other hand historical and national traditions have been preserved exactly in country sides.

To date, the Kazakhstan form and operate 80 guest house reserves and rural areas that offer accommodation and food for a modest fee of 30-35 dollars per day [3].

Furthermore, development of rural tourism in Kazakhstan, by its character, has a number of good aspects and ideas in favor of its future increase:

- transfer of excess labor in the agricultural sector alternatively to tourism service sector and the creation of new jobs in the countryside;
- diversification, i.e. development of other activities (catering, hotel business, crafts , etc.)
- preference of tourists who is oriented on national traditions and rural resources of the country;
- reduction in migration of rural youth to the city;
- providing eco-friendly natural foods;
- the availability of recreation from a financial point of view;
- increase in rural employment;
- attractiveness of steppes and wildlife from their primordial state point of view [6].

Rural tourism, while still only a minority of tourism market, is making a valuable contribution to rural economies. Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms, but also in terms of jobs, contributions towards funding conservation, encouragement to the adoption of new working practices, and the injection of a new vitality into sometimes weakened economies of Kazakhstan in comparison with other countries among the 50 most developed ones in a rate. Potentially rural tourism promises some of the following benefits to rural development:

Job retention

Rural tourism cash flows can assist job retention in services such as retailing, transport, hospitality and medical care. It can also provide additional income for farmers, and, in some cases, for foresters and fisherman. Job retention is not as politically glamorous as job creation, but, by helping the viability of small communities, it is critical to the survival of marginal areas. Studies of rural Austria, Sweden and Ireland have documented the role of tourism in job retention.

Job creation

Job creation typically occurs in the hotel and catering trades, but can also take place in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage interpretation. For example, studies in Britain suggest that job creation varies by enterprise type. Farmhouse accommodation and bed-and-breakfast can create up to 23 jobs per £100 000 of tourism revenue. Job creation effects are less marked in hotels and caravan/campsites, yielding approximately six jobs per £ 100 000 of revenue.

The historic built environment

The historic built environment can benefit from rural tourism in two ways. Many historic properties now charge for admission in order to maintain their fabrics and surrounding gardens and parklands. Secondly, there are important buildings from the past which have become redundant [7].

New Business Opportunities

Tourism generates new opportunities for industry [8]. Even those rural businesses not directly involved in tourism can benefit from tourist activity through developing close relationships with tourist facilities where local foods can be used as part of the tourism offering in a locality [9]. Rural tourism facilitates expansion of complementary businesses such as service stations and new businesses, and they are created to cater tourist needs for hospitality services, recreational activities and arts/crafts.

Opportunities for Youth

The tourism industry is often promoted as an exciting and growing industry suited to the energies and enthusiasm of young people. Career options are enhanced with the opportunities for training and direct involvement in running tourism businesses, especially those within small communities.

Service retention

Visitor information services can be provided by existing outlets, such as shops, thus increasing income flows. Services can also benefit by the additional customers which visitors provide. Finally, tourism's importance to national economies can strengthen the political case for subsidies to help retain services.

Rural Tourism Enhances and Revitalizes Community Pride

Tourism encourages conformity to an ideal image of community which can result in growth of personal ties and community solidarity. Thus the basis for community solidarity shifts from shared cultural background to shared image [10]. Amenities play a fundamental role in shaping a community's identity and pride and so the potential of tourism for improvements to facilities and amenities has positive implications for community pride, particularly rural museums as an important repository of rural culture.

Preservation of Rural Culture and Heritage

In rural tourism the sense of place is a fundamental element in both the tourists and host community's feelings of what makes the area attractive to visit and live in. This sense of place is maintained partly through rural ancient attractiveness such as museums which play a vital role in preserving heritage.

Landscape conservation

Landscape conservation has become an increasingly important form of heritage protection. Landscape is the crucial importance to rural tourism but, equally, visitor use is vital to the landscape conservation industry. Visitor use brings political benefits, can bring economic gains, and can provide jobs in maintaining and repairing traditional landscapes worn by recreational activities.

Environmental improvements

Environmental improvements such as village paving and traffic regulation schemes, sewage and litter disposal can be assisted by tourism revenues and political pressures from tourism authorities. These help develop pride of place, important in retaining existing population and businesses, and in attracting new enterprises and families.

Actually, present day development of tourism in rural areas provides the ability to supplement the income streams of businesses operating or fixed in rural locations, a good example of this is farm and equestrian diversification. This can help maintain the environmental and landscape qualities which are

valued by visitors, communities and businesses alike. So, there are few words about why rural tourism involvement should be considered, in order to get success:

Community involvement

For an area to become a rural tourism destination, not just a stop off point, structured networks and collaborative agreements between public and private sector actors are essential. Community involvement is a key part of the equation.

Proximity to a generating market

Rural tourism destinations must be easily accessible to potential visitors through reliable transportation systems.

Product Development (Tourism planning, infrastructure, and activities)

This should include sound tourism development planning, investment in tourism related infrastructure, and a range of activities to satisfy the diverse tastes of visitors. The community and government should work to support rural tourism infrastructure development by providing technical assistance, facilitation and promotion, and economic impact analysis support.

A visitor center

Rural communities must have a welcoming center where visitors can seek information on local attractions, activities, and accommodations, and ask questions of people who are knowledgeable about the area.

Partnership Collaboration (Cultural Heritage Welcome Centers)

Key to maximizing rural tourism marketing efforts is the need to create and leverage potential partnerships with cultural/heritage segments. It may help to provide value-added services for consumers, including providing directions and creating awareness for rural tourism locations and historical/cultural activities—successfully differentiating them from other destinations.

A quality brand and regional label

Brand identity may increase awareness of the destination among its identified target market segments. A brand is the way in which consumers perceive or distinguish a destination. To be effective, a brand should unify all of rural functions (recreation and events) and emotional benefits (fun, culture and solitude) under one all-inclusive identity (image and positioning statement) to create an indelible impression in the mind of the consumer.

Funding

Identify creative ways to support rural tourism funding in an effort to maximize and leverage existing marketing efforts. The long-term sustainability of tourism rests on the ability of community leaders and tourism professionals to maximize its benefits and minimize its costs [1].

Conclusion

Summing up, tourism supports the economic viability of communities. Local services and amenities, such as shops, pubs, restaurants, transport and postal services are all supported and sustained by visitors to rural areas. Tourism has the ability to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Kazakhstan's natural and built environment through the businesses and visitors that benefit and rely on these rural assets. This is not always a direct contribution to the economy but recognition by those investing in the environment that their conservation is important to the visitor as well.

Moreover, analysis of the experience in rural tourism development has shown that in the world there has been developed three models of this tourism type. Kazakhstan as most appropriate and promising model was chosen creating a network tourist farms on the basis of existing resources countryside i.e. creation of a network of small guest houses. This is justified by the fact that Kazakhstan already has some experience with this model.

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