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Factors affecting the tourist activity of the population

The Republic of Kazakhstan has high potential for tourism, still, in the ranking of countries by the Index of competitiveness of the travel and tourism sector in 2013 (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013), published by the World Economic Forum [1] as well as the World Bank's ranking of Logistics Performance Index (LPI) in 2014 [2] it took only 88th place. Therewith, the main factor holding back the development of tourism, both in the country and in the regions, is still undeveloped tourist infrastructure, low rates of development and improvement of its basic elements in particular. The article describes the approaches to the formation of tourist infrastructure at recreational areas and the major factors affecting the tourist activity of the population, which allowed to establish the main problems hindering the development of tourist infrastructure as well as to formulate directions for its improvement.

Key words: tourist infrastructure, tourism infrastructure; factors of tourism activity; information infrastructure.

Беспяева Р.С.
Тұрғындардың туристік белсенділігіне әсер етуші факторлары

Қазақстан Республикасы жоғары туристік әлеуетке ие, бірақта, Дүниежүзілік экономикалық форумның топтарымен жарияланған 2013 жылдың саяхат және туризм секторының бәсекеабилеттілік Индексі бойынша әлем елдері рейтингінде (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013) [1] және Дүниежүзілік Банктің берілгендері бойынша 2014 жылдың логистиканың тиімділік Индексі рейтингінде (LPI – The Logistics Performance Index) [2] 88-ші орынға ие болды. Бұл кезде елдегі сонымен қатар өңірлердегі туризмнің дамуын тежеуші басты фактор басып дамымаған туристік инфрақұрылым, дамудың және оның негізгі элементтерін жетілдірудің төменгі қарқындары саналады. Мақалада рекреационды аумақтарда туристік инфрақұрылымды қалыптастыруға ыңғайлар, тұрғындардың туристік белсенділігіне әсер ететін негізгі факторлар, осылардың көмегімен туристік инфрақұрылымның дамуын тежеуші және оларды жетілдіру бағыттарын қалыптастырудың негізгі мәселелерін айқындауға мүмкіндік берді.

Түйін сөздер: туристік инфрақұрылым, туризмнің инфрақұрылымы; туризмнің белсенділік факторлары; ақпараттық инфрақұрылым.

Беспяева Р.С.
Факторы, влияющие на туристскую активность населения

Республика Казахстан обладает высоким туристским потенциалом, однако в рейтинге стран мира по Индексу конкурентоспособности сектора путешествий и туризма 2013 года (Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2013), опубликованном группой Всемирного экономического форума [1] и по данным Всемирного банка в рейтинге Индекса эффективности логистики (LPI – The Logistics Performance Index) 2014 г. [2] заняла 88-е место. При этом главным фактором, сдерживающим развитие туризма, как в стране, так и в регионах, по-прежнему является неразвитая туристская инфраструктура, низкие темпы развития и необходимость совершенствования ее основных элементов. В статье рассмотрены подходы к формированию туристской инфраструктуры на рекреационных территориях, основные факторы, влияющие на туристскую активность населения, что позволило установить основные проблемы, сдерживающие развитие туристской инфраструктуры, и сформулировать направления ее совершенствования.

Ключевые слова: туристская инфраструктура, инфраструктура туризма; факторы активности туризма; информационная инфраструктура.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE TOURIST ACTIVITY OF THE POPULATION

Active development and improvement of infrastructure is one of the essential factors of economic growth and functioning of the world market of tourist services and products.

Kazakhstan has great potential for development of tourism, but improper use of tourist resources and opportunities, including the availability of tourist facilities that remain unclaimed because of poor infrastructure and mismanagement, is creating obstacles to the effective functioning of the industry.

In the strategy of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev “Kazakhstan-2050” and in the program “Industrial and innovational development of Kazakhstan” tourism and tourism infrastructure is considered as a priority area of the development of the tourism industry in terms of the country’s economic development concept. Without effective using of the tourism and recreational and other potentials of different regions of Kazakhstan, it is impossible to turn tourism into a profitable sector of the economy. For realization of tourism projects, special attention should be paid to the presence of tourism and natural resources [3].

In the works of V.I. Azar, V.A. Kvartalnyi, V. M. Kozyrev tourism industry is defined as an economic system, consisting of a complex of branches and divisions, function of which is to meet the diverse and increasingly complex demand for various recreational activities [4].

According to Vinogradova M.V. infrastructure in tourism represents a collection of legal forms, mediated by movement of tourism products, acts of purchase and sale, or a set of institutions, systems, services, businesses serving the tourist market and performing certain functions to ensure its normal mode [5].

With regard to recreation and tourism industry, composition of objects and elements of tourist infrastructure depends primarily on tourist activity. It is influenced by two groups of factors, one of which incorporates factors directly related to tourism, and the other – with the ones that are not directly related to tourism, but affect the volume and shape of the demand for tourism product (Figure 1).

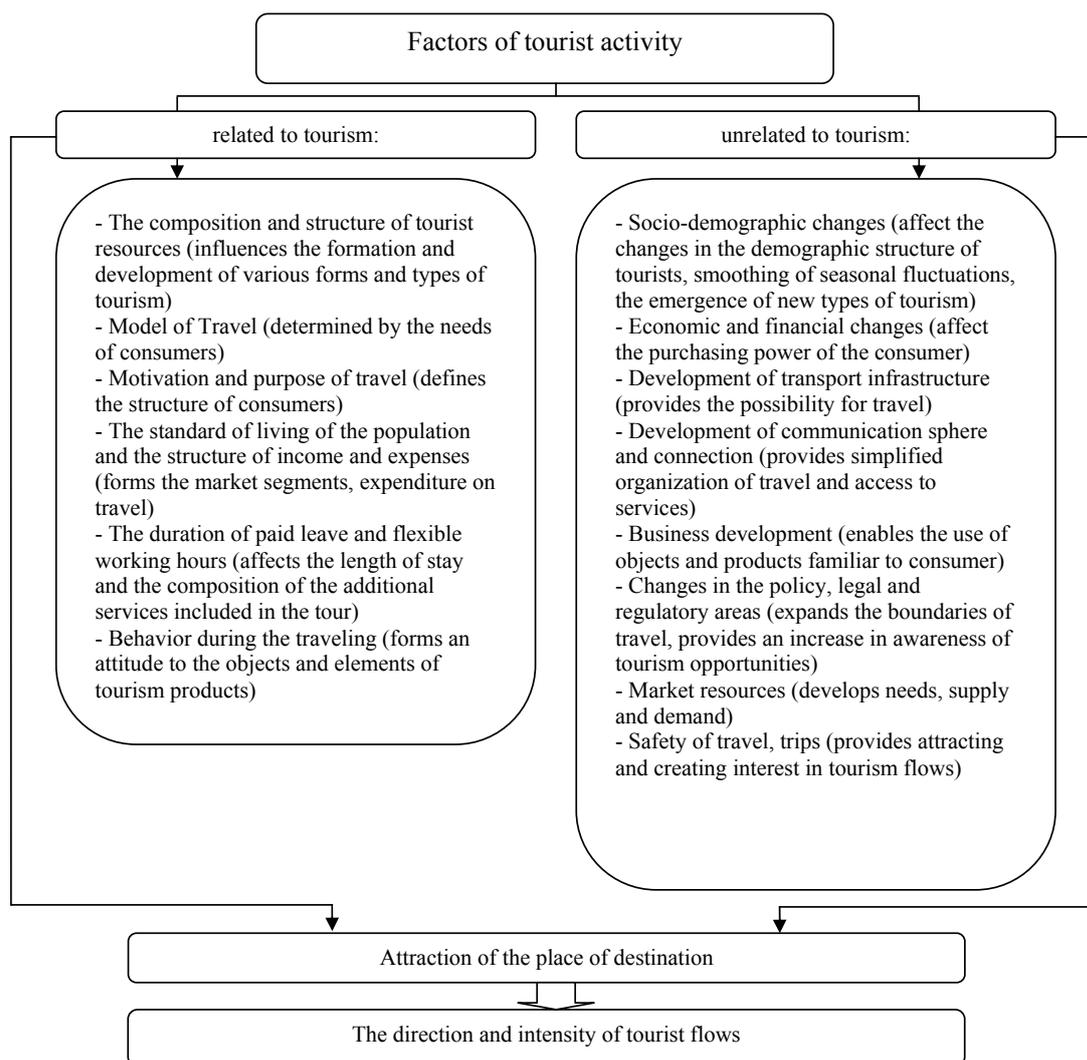


Figure 1 – Factors affecting the tourist activity of the population (compiled from sources [5,6,7])

Factors of indirect effect are significantly more numerous in comparison with the first group:

- Socio-demographic changes;
- Economic and financial changes;
- The development of transport infrastructure;
- The development of communication sphere and connection;
- Business development;
- Changes in policy, legislative and regulatory fields;
- The resources of the market;
- The safety of travel.

These factors have a complex impact on tourist activity, which is amenable to external forced change, and independently affect the economy of the region (country, company).

The impact of various aspects on the tourist activity of the population is characterized by the following factors.

The first group of factors. To evaluate the effect of the composition and structure of tourist resources in the tourist activity is necessary to introduce the concept of “tourism product”.

In his textbook “The theory and practice of tourism” V.A. Kvartalnyi profoundly reveals the essence of the tourism product, namely: «... a set of material (commodities) and immaterial (service) consumer values necessary for satisfying the tourists’ needs encountered during their journey” [7].

According to M.B. Birzhakov, tourism product – is a set of tourist services, works and goods that can

and should be offered to a tourist by the destination in order to meet his needs in tourism, depending on the purpose and nature of tourist travel [8].

In the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated June 13, 2001 № 211-II “On tourist activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan” tourism product is understood as a set of tourist services, sufficient to meet the needs of tourists during travel [9]

First of all, tourism product is based on the tourist resources – natural and climatic, historical, socio-cultural, scientific, technical and other, capable of satisfying the needs of tourists in the process of tourism.

Model of travel. According to the survey data of the consulting firm Horwath HTL, the study found that 2.1 million citizens of Kazakhstan held a vacation traveling throughout Kazakhstan in 2013, and another 1 million of Kazakhstani people travelled abroad. 2.1 million Kazakhstanis, who traveled across Kazakhstan, made an average of 1.7 trips, which leads to the total number of 3.3 million tourist visits conducted by Kazakhstanis within the country. This number is more or less correlated with the official statistics, which registered 2.3 million arrivals in accommodation facilities as well as a difference of about 1 million can be explained by day trips and the fact that people visit their friends and relatives.

66% of respondents expressed an interest in traveling within the country, which corresponds to approximately 3.3 million people (urban population older than 18). One third of the population, who responded negatively to this question, perhaps, was mainly guided by their dissatisfaction with the current offer in the field of tourism in Kazakhstan, or by the fact that they could not afford to travel for economic reasons, both of these factors needed to be significantly improved for the planning period of this plan [6]. In addition, the improved economic conditions should influence traveling public to take more trips annually, easily reaching at least 10 million vacation trips by 2020.

Motivation and purpose of travel depends on the level of development of tourist resources, their attractiveness, human psychology, which have a direct effect on the structure of consumers. For example, if the motive of the trip is the desire of a tourist to have a rest, the aim will be the rapid approaching to the destination and the extension of stay in the destination. Most of these motives occur among couples (or parent and child), a group of young people (students) with an average level of income and limited time for rest. The need for discretionary tourism (tourism of own choice) will increase.

According to Horwath HTL, the three regions of Kazakhstan that caused the greatest interest in terms of tourist arrivals are Akmola region, the interest in which was expressed by 32% of the respondents, followed by Almaty region – 26%, and East Kazakhstan – 21%. All other regions received 10% or less. It follows that in terms of domestic tourism, Kazakhstanis are mainly attracted to the two largest cities (Almaty and Astana) and mountain areas (Almaty region and eastern Kazakhstan), which differ geographically from the rest of the country.

Kazakhstanis have expressed interest in the following tourism products in Kazakhstan over the 2009-2012 (only the products that have more than 10% of total responses are indicated):

- Holiday at the lake – 46%;
- Vacation mainly to visit family / friends – 28%;
- Summer holidays in the mountains – 23%;
- Trip (tour) focused on nature – 22%;
- Fishing trip – 15%;
- Holidays in the city, city tour – 14%;
- Trip (tour) focused on culture – 22%;
- Resting in the national park – 12%;
- Water-based recreation at the Caspian Sea – 10% [6].

It is clear that preference is given to products that reflect the interests in the regions (rest in the mountains and at the lakes / mountains of Almaty region, East Kazakhstan). However, it is doubtful to what extent preferences for tourism products in Kazakhstan reflect preferences for tourism products of Kazakhstani population as a whole. For example, the majority of surveyed travel agencies reported that the Kazakhstanis have predominant interest in beach holiday in Turkey and Thailand. This is probably due to the pictures and images of certain resources, which are present in Kazakhstan, as well as the ability of the tourism industry of Kazakhstan as of today to provide tourism products. Thus, we must bear in mind that there are many examples when such opinion was quickly changed with an advent of an offer of higher level tourism products.

These trends will cause the need for new, more diverse and attractive tourism product. Traditional tourism product (for example, rest at the lake / beach, city tour) will remain as the main option in the tourist market, accompanied by a slow rise in prices and its consumers.

The standard of living of the population and the structure of income shape market segments, defined by geographic, demographic, social, target and other features. Development of international relations will lead to an increase in the number of segments of the tourism market, targeting the specific needs with

regard to demographic and social changes, lifestyle and interests of different groups.

Increasing the length of paid leave and flexible working time will cause the population's need for a new tourist product, which includes maximum enjoyment with minimum time. Reduction of five-day working week with an eight-hour working day to four-day working week with a nine-hour working day will free up three days off to relax, travel and cultural events.

Behaviour during the travel. With regard to the objects and elements of tourism products, respondents from Kazakhstan indicated the following most important factors (more than 66% of the votes of all respondents, according to the Horwath HTL source):

Intact nature – 81%;

Quiet atmosphere – 75%;

Beautiful landscape and nature – 74%

Fine food and restaurants – 67%.

Contrary to some conclusions and expectations, opportunities for shopping and casino / gambling hit the end of the list, as they were considered significant by 35% and 10% of the total number of respondents respectively. That, of course, applies only to the population group with the highest income.

As for accommodation, people of Kazakhstan are most interested in country houses and cottages (50%), which speak in favor of a significant real estate development in the territory of the future resorts. Hotels and guest houses took the second place with 30% of the total number of votes; all other options (camping, kiiz yi, apartments) scored significantly lower percent than mentioned above, and based on the results of the study they should be built selectively within individual products [6].

The second group of influencing factors affecting the tourist activity of the population. Socio-demographic changes of the population model in developed and newly industrialized countries encourage people to spend their free time and income on traveling. These changes include the following factors:

Maturity of population;

An increase in number of working women and the income per family member;

An increase in the proportion of older persons living alone;

The trend towards later marriage;

Rapid growth in the number of childless couples compared with population growth;

Reducing the number of immigrant restrictions;

An increase in the duration of paid leave;

Early retirement;

Increasing awareness of tourism opportunities [10].

Provision is made for easing migration restrictions imposed by the industrialized countries, which will lead to an increase in the number of trips of migrant workers between the country of residence and employment centers abroad, as well as the emergence of tourism products, the creation of tourist trips and services, designed for specific ethnic groups.

Increase in the level of education will encourage person's desire for knowledge. Interest in different cultures will create the desire to travel and have new experiences. The consumer will feel the need for a new multivariate tourism product or service. The growing interest of students in the world culture, learning foreign languages in kindergartens, primary classes will increase the desire to travel more, both within the native country and abroad. Students and undergraduates will realize their opportunities to travel using privileges and discounts. There is an increasing interest in international programs for students mobility exchanges aimed at language practice in the country of the target language, as well as at additional wages.

It follows that the socio-demographic changes will have a positive impact on the development and formation of the global tourism market.

There is a clear link between the economic and financial environmental changes in tourism development. The tourist market is very sensitive to changes in the economy. The expected increase in personal income of the population of the world, both in industrialized and in developing countries will lead to reinforced tourist activity, and, in particular, to an increase in the number of consumers of tourist product with high incomes; as well as to an increase in funds allocated by society for the development of tourism.

Changes in prices of tourism product will be determined not only by the level and growth of income used for tourism purposes, but also by pricing factors on the tourist product. In the second half of the XX century price increase in tourism lagged behind the inflation, which resulted in the development of competition in the tourist market. Moreover, at the beginning of the XXI century it caused the excess that led to the division of spheres of influence and destinations among tour operators [7].

Legislative and regulatory restrictions on the operation on the routes and the continuing production of more spacious and comfortable aircrafts will retain its influence on the trends in the tourist pricing.

Thus, the increase in real disposable income will be directly proportional to the tourism expenditure, becoming an important source of social funds. Expenses for people's favorite pastime, entertainment, sports, arts, culture will be rising.

Regular contacts with almost all regions of the world will become possible due to new technologies in transport infrastructure. Reducing the time spent on travel to the tourist destination and lower prices for the trip will allow more frequent travel over long distances.

Maintenance of state control over the transport will abolish the visa processing when entering the visiting country. However, the expected growth of tourism development will create problems in the transport infrastructure. For example, the expansion of the tourism industry will increase the number of tourist arrivals, which could result in increasing the number of vehicles on the roads, the lack of opportunities for railway transport, especially during periods of peak seasonal demand for transportation, air transport congestion, which would be a major obstacle in the full realization of the landing facilities potential. Reconstruction of transport infrastructure will become necessary in all regions of the world; as a result larger volumes of investment will be required.

Regarding the holding of such a major event in Kazakhstan as the international exhibition EXPO-2017, with the estimated number of tourists up to 5 million people will lead to an enormous strain on the transport infrastructure. Therefore, an important issue is the expansion of existing roads, construction of access roads, an increase in the number of lanes, construction of highways connecting the major towns of the country, such as the planning of Almaty – Astana highway.

Improvement of transport infrastructure and system of electronic data will provide a quick and direct connection between the regions to make tourist routes more diverse and less expensive.

Effective communication and information technology will provide rapid development of international tourism market. Major investments in new information technology and telecommunications market will lead to vertical, horizontal and diagonal integration. The global computer networks will become of great importance in the tourism industry. Effectiveness of marketing in tourism will increase. Simplification of the process of booking will boost the tourism market. All sectors of the tourism industry will be influenced by new technologies [7].

Information infrastructure is the most dynamic and extremely vulnerable to technological changes

element of the tourism industry infrastructure. Expanding the range of services provided by the use of scientific and technological progress has dramatically increased revenues in this sector of the economy over the past decade.

According to the Committee on Statistics, communications enterprises in Kazakhstan provided services worth 673.36 billion tenge in January-December 2014; this is 4.64% (643.49 billion tenge) higher than the volume of services in January-December, 2013.

Revenues from long-distance and international telephone services in January-December 2014 amounted to 41.48 billion tenge, which is 2.36% less than in January-December 2013; from local telephone services – 51, 59 billion tenge (0.66% increase), from Internet services – 169,04 billion tenge (23.43% increase), from cellular services – 285,44 billion tenge (6.69% decrease).

In January-December 2014 the number of fixed telephone lines amounted to 4338.2 thousand units, cellular subscribers – 28,003.0 thousand units, cellular subscribers with access to the Internet – 10,133.4 thousand units, fixed Internet subscribers – 2095.2 thousand units.

Thus, a variety of services in the total revenue of the telecommunication sector in Kazakhstan has the following shares: mobile communication – 42.5%, the Internet – 25.1%, local telephone connection – 7.66%, long-distance and international telephone connection – 6.16% , data transmission – 3.36%, the spread of programs – 3.11%, and other communications services (document electric communication (telegrams, telematics services); radio, TV, satellite, radio, wire broadcasting) – 12.09%. Such distribution of revenues from telecommunications services demonstrates the trend of rising relative importance of new communications services and the loss of preferential position of postal services.

Information and technological progress brings tourism and recreation business to the next stage of development, and the leading role in this process belongs to the Internet. The advantages of using a global network is evident from the perspective of consumers, as well as from the perspective of the manufacturer of tourist services: this is the broadest scope of audience (for example, in the March 2015 request rate of “Health of Kazakhstan” in the Google search engine reached 373 thousand). On the criterion of relevance, a leading position is occupied by world famous and structured web page – Republican tourist portal www.visitkazakhstan.kz [12], there is no site that

provides detailed information about the tourist sector in Kazakhstan other than this. The site provides certain information, still, its usefulness and importance for tourists is not too significant, as the given web page lacks organization of on-line sales, maps, clear information on the cost of visits,

instructions on how to get to the place, as well as any other information that would conform to generally accepted international practice. However, in terms of content and initiative the page deserves attention of the foreign tourists, and needs to be improved in technical terms (translation, maps, and so on).

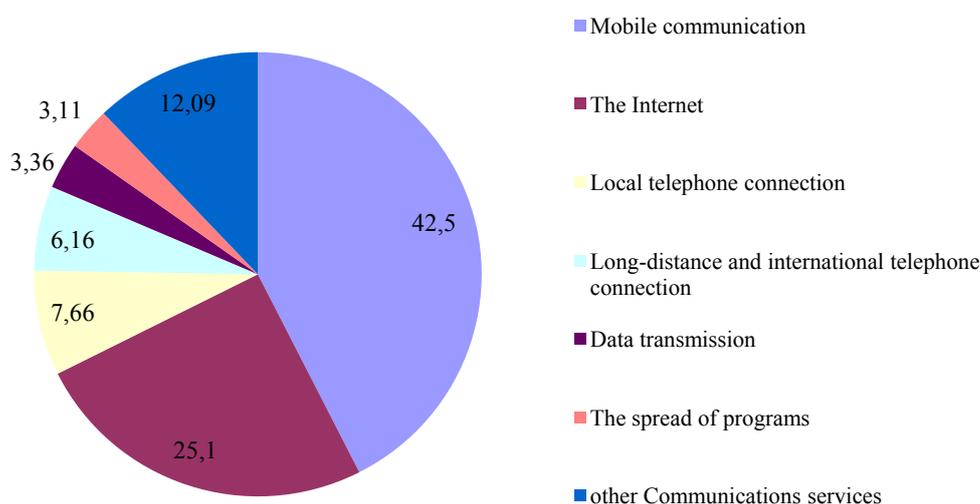


Figure 2 – Structure of the income from communication services in Kazakhstan in January-December, 2014 [11]

However, in order to make sale of tours through the Internet successful, it is required to work constantly on updating the content on the websites, indexing in search engines, registration in the various directories and catalogs, investing in advertising promotion in the network, as well as improving the organization of electronic payment systems, developing cooperation with various financial institutions. Still, the organization of on-line sales and qualified provision of information (from page looks, ease of search and catalog of labels to completeness and relevance of placed data) is a prerequisite for promotion of the separate tourist company as well as the industry as a whole.

In addition to using the Internet, there are following directions of information technologies development in tourism:

The introduction of application programs on automation of formation, promotion and implementation of the tourism product;

The automation of the local tourist office;

The use of database management systems and software packages;

The use of local computer networks;

The introduction of telecommunications systems of room reservation in hotels and booking tickets;

The introduction of multimedia marketing systems [13].

The dynamic development and the development of information technologies in the future may change the very structure of the tourism market by withdrawing intermediaries between tour operators and final consumers of the tourism product. Having the ability to independently form your tour, book hotels, select the necessary excursions and tourist routes, compare timetables of different modes of transport, arrange electronic payments, the consumer may refuse the services of travel agents and go to the direct contact with the producer of services.

Business development. The nature of international trade is becoming more liberal. International trade practice retains a significant development in an environment where an increasing number of countries are actively involved in both exports and imports of products, works and services.

Changes in policy, legal and regulatory sectors. Stability of the policy creates in society the conditions for technical cooperation in all

areas. There is an opportunity to get support from economically developed regions (countries) to developing ones by investing in their economies and improving the quality of life of the population, as a result it will lead to an increase in the mobility of the population of these regions, and, consequently, the development of tourism. An effective legal framework provides reduction of investment risks in tourism, consumer protection, the ability to its quick and systematic development.

Safety of travel, trips. With the development of tourism, the problem of security of travel becomes more important and complex. As participants of travel and trips are involved to a certain risk, there should be a variety of means, which can be employed by tourism sector in order to significantly reduce the level of danger for tourists. First of all, it is necessary that the government and tourist organizations operate as one team in all areas of tourist safety.

Resources of the market. Circumstances directly and effectively influencing the tourism and related to the formation of needs, demand and supply of tourist products and services can be conditionally called – resources of the market. Components of this area are: the process of needs, supply and demand; market segments; development of objectives of the tourism product; private tourism sector and human resources.

Infrastructure complexity depends on the profile of places of tourist destination and its importance. In certain situations, the construction of access roads, water and sewage systems, power lines may suffer. In any case, there should be provided an easy access to points of long-distance communications (usually – airports), system of highways and regions, where new places of tourist destination are created. In areas with complex, multi-functional means it is necessary to create a modern communication system (for example, telex, computer network for hotel reservations, transportation, etc.), simultaneous interpretation tools.

Factors of tourist activity influence the development of a particular element of tourist infrastructure. This influence can be one-sided and reciprocity, interdependent, direct and indirect.

Therefore, the tourist infrastructure is a

subsystem that provides services, promotes the opportunity of usage and implementation of tourism products, motives and needs, achievement of consumer's goal of travel with due regard to the requirements and preferences of the latter for the range and quality of these services.

The definition offered above allows to establish structure of elements of tourist infrastructure where will enter: transport, hotel, excursion and financial service; sphere of public catering; entertaining sphere and sports service; information support and support; production of tourist and sports production; means of communication; sphere of household services; retail trade; production of souvenir products and products of national trade.

Thus, based on the definition of tourist infrastructure and the considered factors of tourist activity, the composition of the tourist infrastructure is determined. Infrastructure is a providing subsystem containing secondary elements of tourism industry and forming the market value in collaboration with major elements. With that tourist infrastructure helps to meet the needs arising during the selection of a tourist destination, and complements them with appropriate range and provision of tourist services.

Investments in this area do not bring direct revenue, and it is difficult to determine whether the return on investments will be achieved in the short term. Therefore it is rather complicated to establish the sources of financing and ownership of investments.

Thus, an important role for the normal functioning of the world market of tourist services and products is played by its infrastructure. Infrastructure contributes to the development of tourism, both within the regions of Kazakhstan as well as near and distant countries, that is, provides interaction of local tourist routes with foreign ones.

Having analyzed the main components of the tourism infrastructure, we can conclude that the insufficient development of tourist infrastructure is an important factor hindering the development of inbound tourism. Therefore, the creation of an extensive infrastructure that meets international standards is one of the major challenges in the near future for the development of international tourism in Kazakhstan.

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