

Tourism Policy Challenges in Post-Soviet Georgia

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Abstract : The research of Georgian tourism policy challenges is important, as the tourism can play an increasing role for the economic growth and improvement of standard of living of the country even with scanty resources, at the expense of improved creative approaches. It is also important to make correct decisions at macroeconomic level, which will be accordingly reflected in the successful functioning of the travel companies and finally, in the improvement of economic indicators of the country. In order to correctly orient sectoral policy, it is important to precisely determine its role in the economy. Development of travel industry has been considered as one of the priorities in Georgia; the country has unique cultural heritage and traditions, as well as plenty of natural resources, which are a significant precondition for the development of tourism. Despite the factors mentioned above, the existing resources are not completely utilized and exploited. This work represents a study of subjective, as well as objective reasons of ineffective functioning of the sector. During the years of transformation experienced by Georgia, the role of travel industry in economic development of the country represented the subject of continual discussions. Such assessments were often biased and they did not rest on specific calculations. This topic became especially popular on the ground of market economy, because reliable statistical data have a particular significance in the designing of tourism policy. In order to deeply study the aforementioned issue, this paper analyzes monetary, as well as non-monetary indicators. The research widely included the tourism indicators system; we analyzed the flaws in reporting of the results of tourism sector in Georgia. Existing defects are identified and recommendations for their improvement are offered. For stable development tourism, similarly to other economic sectors, needs a well-designed policy from the perspective of national, as well as local, regional development. The tourism policy must be drawn up in order to efficiently achieve our goals, which were established in short-term and long-term dynamics on the national or regional scale of specific country. The article focuses on the role and responsibility of the state institutes in planning and implementation of the tourism policy. The government has various tools and levers, which may positively influence the processes. These levers are especially important in terms of international, as well as internal tourism development. Within the framework of this research, the regulatory documents, which are in force in relation to this industry, were also analyzed. The main attention is turned to their modernization and necessity of their compliance with European standards. It is a current issue to direct the efforts of state policy on support of business by implementing infrastructural projects, as well as by development of human resources, which may be possible by supporting the relevant higher and vocational studying-educational programs.

Keywords : regional development, tourism industry, tourism policy, transition

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