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Ecotourism Development opportunities in Latgale region

THE FINAL THESES

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Annotation

The theme of the diploma paper: Ecotourism Development opportunities in Latgale region

Carrying out a study on the development of tourism in Latvia led to the conclusion that ecotourism in Latvia is steadily growing in demand and in popularity, despite some periods of decline associated with political and economic crises. The main region in Latvia, the most popular for different types and kinds of tourism is Latgale. Daugavpils and its region are the most suitable for ecotourism in Latgale.

The tourist market of Riga and Daugavpils is a dynamically developing object: the volume of tourist trips to these cities grows substantially; the incomes from tourism follow the same trend. The majority of possible types of tourism develop in the Riga and Daugavpils regions.

Key words: tourism development, type of tourism, cultural features of the country, best places for travelling in Latvia.

Anotācija

Diplomdarba tēma: Ekotūrisma attīstības iespējas Latgales reģionā

Veicot pētījumu par tūrisma attīstību Latvijā, tika secināts, ka ekotūrisms Latvijā pastāvīgi pieaug pieprasījumam un popularitātei, neskatoties uz dažiem lejupslīdes periodiem, kas saistīti ar politisko un ekonomisko krīzi. Galvenais Latvijas reģions, kas ir vispopulārākais dažādiem tūrisma veidiem ir Latgale. Daugavpils un tās reģions ir vispiemērotākais ekotūrisma Latgalē. Rīgas un Daugavpils tūristu tirgus ir dinamiski attīstošs objekts: ievērojami pieaug tūrisma braucienu apjoms uz šīm pilsētām; tūrisma ienākumi ir tādi paši.

Lielākā daļa iespējamo tūrisma veidu attīstās Rīgā un Daugavpilī. Atslēgas vārdi: tūrisma attīstība, tūrisma veids, valsts kultūras elementi, labākās vietas ceļošanai pa Latviju.

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Introduction

The relevance of the topic of this study is due to a significant leap in tourism in Latvia, a wider flow of tourists and the opening of the new tourist sites that could interest tourists. Tourism refers to that kind of activity of mankind, whose history begins long before the emergence of a civilized society. According to the latest data from the UNWTO International Tourism Barometer (UNWTO - World Tourism Organization), compared with 2011, where the number of tourists was 996 million people, in 2012 the number of international tourist arrivals increased by more than 4% and amounted to 1035 million.¹ Nowadays tourism is one of the leading and most dynamically developing sectors of the world economy. For rapid growth, tourism was recognized as an economic phenomenon of the century. Tourism can be divided into different categories: family, youth, business, for the elderly, for people with disabilities, etc. Tourism in Latvia at the moment plays a major role in the economy sector and is one of the sectors that the state assigns to priority. The beginning of the new millennium was marked not only by the rise of the international tourist movement, but also by the emergence of new trends in the development of this sector. Statistics show sustainable rates of tourism development in Latvia. Tourism is the largest sector of the economy. All developed countries of the world have long been interested in its development. In the world economy, tourism has taken the lead position.

Relevance of the topic and level of the research: The theoretical bases of development of tourism and ecotourism is analysed, the current state of tourism in Latvia is explored and a tourist excursion route for families with children is developed.

Problem of the research: There are not enough tours for families with children in the ecotourism sector.

Object of the research: Ecotourism.

Subject of the research: Ecotourism opportunities in Latgale region.

Aim of the research: To investigate the theoretical bases of ecotourism development in Latvia, its concepts, features, as well as the current state and study its perspectives.

¹ Karpova GA, Bykov AT, Vorontsova MG, Natarov MV, Nikiforov VI, Yakovenko GV, Volovoda AV, Rohmaleva OV Sphere of tourism: stages of development, economy and management. - Moscow: UNITY-DANA, 2003. - 411 lpp.

Tasks of the research:

- to analyze theoretical bases of development of tourism in Latvia;
- to compare and explore the current state of tourism in Latvia and its development prospects;
- to analyze theoretical bases of development of ecotourism in Latvia;
- to develop a tourist-excursion route for families with children and its promotion possibilities.

Hypothesis: It is important to develop ecotourism in Latgale region, because ecotourism brings a sufficient income to the tourism industry.

Methods of the research:

- Theoretical methods: selection of literature, analysis of documents.
- Empirical methods

Novelty of the research: Development of a tourist excursion route of the families with children.

Theoretical basis: scientific literature on tourism and internet resources.

Empirical basis of the research: Latgale region, Rezekne-Daugavpils.

Period of the research: 2017-2018

Description of the structure of the thesis, reflecting its theoretical and practical significance:

In the theoretical part of the paper stages of tourism development in Latvia and ecotourism and prospects for its development are described. In the practical part of the work the literature dedicated to the development of a tourist excursion route is examined, as well as calculation and promotion of the tourist product are included.

1. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN LATVIA

The emergence of tourism on the territory of our country goes back to ancient times and the Middle Ages. The history of tourism development in Latvia can easily be correlated with the periodisation of the history of the world tourism, adding to this the division within certain stages into certain sub-stages, taking into account the specifics of the development of Latvian economy.

1.1. General characteristics of the country

Latvia - one of the greatest discoveries of Europe, to "take your mind off everything." In whatever direction from the capital you go, you will immediately discover all the new aspects of the life of the country.

Latvia is an independent democratic republic. The state is situated in the northeast of Europe, on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. In the north it borders on Estonia, in the east - on Russia, in the south - on Belarus and Lithuania. In the west it is washed by the Baltic Sea. The total area of the country is 64.5 thousand square kilometres. The length of the coastline is 531 km. Most of the country is occupied by plains and lowlands, surrounding the low hills of the Vidzeme Upland (the highest point is Gaizinkalns, 311 m). About 44% of the country's territory is covered with forests. On the territory of Latvia there is a fairly extensive water network - more than 3 thousand lakes and 12 thousand rivers, which provides good opportunities for active tourism.¹

Latvia is a country of predominant Christianity, in which the largest predominant religious denominations are Lutherans, Catholics and Orthodox Christians. The number of representatives of other religions - Muslims, Buddhists, etc. is rather insignificant.

Departing to the northeast, in an hour tourists will be in the medieval city of Sigulda, which is the centre of the National Park "Gauja". There are ruins of a medieval castle, hotels, restaurants and opportunities for various sports. Nearby is Turaida Castle, built on a hill and serving as an ancient fortress for the Livs. Almost in the centre of the National Park is Cesis, a city with cobbled streets and wooden houses that have hardly changed during Soviet times and are considered a national treasure, and one of the most remarkable historical museum in Latvia.

¹ Site about Latvia// www.latvia-land.narod.ru

Departing south of Riga you can get acquainted with the magnificence of the Rundale Palace, the summer residence of the Duke of Courland, built by the architect of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg - F.B. Rastrelli. Thanks to the restoration, tourists can hardly believe that during the Second World War the Germans used the palace as a granary.¹

Going by bus or by train to the west to Kuldiga tourists will find themselves in the former Hanseatic trading city, high above the River Venta, with numerous beautiful old houses and churches, with the widest waterfall in Europe - Rumba.

The capital of Latvia - Riga is located on the banks of the Daugava River, not far from its mouth. The river divides the city into two parts. On the right bank there is an ancient part of the city - Old Riga (Vecriga), which is girded with a boulevard ring, part of the city on the left bank is called Pardaugava. Both banks of the Daugava connect three automobile and one railway bridge. The city is home to 833,000 people. The resort town of Jurmala is situated in the neighbourhood. Latvians have been inhabiting Latvia for two thousand years. The Latvian nation was formed at the confluence of the ancient tribes of the Balts - (Latgians, Samogitians, Selonians, and Curonians with the Finnish peoples of the Baltic - Estonians and Livs. Now there are more than 2.5 million Latvians living in the world, of which about 1.5 million Latvians live in Latvia.

The official language of the Republic of Latvia is Latvian, but Russian, English and German are also widely spoken. The Latvian language belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family. A special place in the Latvian language is occupied by the Latgalian dialect, spoken in the eastern part of Latvia, and the state legislatively ensures the preservation, protection and development of the Latgalian script as a historical version of the Latvian language.²

1.2 Analysis of tourist flows

In Latvia, tourism plays a significant role in the formation of the Gross Domestic Product, the activation of the foreign trade balance, the creation of additional jobs and the provision of employment. Tourism has a huge impact on key sectors of the economy, such as transport and communications, construction, agriculture, production of consumer goods and others, i.e. acts as a kind of stabilizer of social and economic development. In turn, the development of tourism is affected by various factors: demographic, natural-geographical, socio-economic, historical,

¹Latvia // <http://tokarchyk.wordpress.com/%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%8F/>

²Latvia // <http://tokarchyk.wordpress.com/%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%8F/>

religious and political-legal. This business attracts entrepreneurs for many reasons: small starting investments, growing demand for tourist services, high profitability.¹

Table 1.2.

Indicators characterizing the tourism industry in Latvia²

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of foreign tourists, mln.	3,03	3,77	4,65	5,24	5,5	4,7	5,0
General expenses of foreign tourists in Latvia, mln.EUR	201,9	270,3	378,8	480,9	573,7	489,6	475,1
Average length of stay of foreign tourists, days	1,7	1,5	1,5	1,4	1,4	1,3	3,9
Average daily expenses of one foreign tourist, EUR	38	47	55	67	73	80	77
Number of Latvian tourists crossing the border, mln.	2,46	2,89	3,11	3,38	3,5	3,1	3,1
General expenses of Latvian tourists abroad, mln. EUR	281,0	458,2	575,7	689,8	832,5	581,1	523,9
Average duration of travels of Latvian tourists, days	2,9	3,2	3,8	3,8	4,0	4,7	4,9
Average daily expenses of one Latvian tourists, EUR	38	50	48	53	60	41	34
The balance of tourist services (the difference between the costs of Latvian tourists abroad and the costs of foreign tourists in Latvia), mln. EUR	-79,1	-187,8	-196,9	-208,9	-258,8	-91,5	-48,8

¹ Evans N., Campbell D., Stonehouse G. Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism. ELSEVIER – UK, 2007. – 412 lpp

² Ministry of Economics, CSB
http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/transp/transp_ikgad_turisms/?tablelist=true&rxid=a79839fe-

Number of people served in hotels and other tourist accommodation places, mln.	0.9	1.15	1.33	1.49	1.56	1.11	1.31
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Source: Ministry of Economics, CSB

In Latvia there are tourists from Russia, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania and Estonia. 80% of the total tourist flow visit Riga. At the same time rural tourism attracts more and more visitors. Especially popular is the seaside - in summer the demand for recreation by the sea sometimes exceeds the offers of hotel establishments.

1.3. Analysis of income from tourism activities

Latvia is the richest country among the poorest countries of the EU, which, of course, is a mild calming for the people of Latvia. Thus, consider the regional planning data for the previous periods: GDP per capita in planning regions in 2013 - 2017, in actual prices, % to the average in the country.

Table 1.3.

GDP per capita in the planning regions in 2013-2017¹

Planning Regions	Period				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Riga region	143,9	140,3	143,0	143,6	148,3
INCL Riga	181,6	177,2	183,3	180,8	190,1
Vidzeme region	57,9	59,9	59,6	58,7	53,9
Kurzeme region	82,9	87,8	88,4	79,3	69,5
Zemgale region	55,7	57,3	51,7	55,7	54,0
Latgale region	48,3	51,6	46,5	48,6	45,8

In the Riga region, higher economic indicators are still preserved: the gross domestic product per capita, labour remuneration, etc.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/GDP_at_regional_level

As it can be seen in the table, in all Latvian regions, not counting the Riga region and Riga, the share of GDP per capita in the country in the period under review significantly decreased. This means that the differences in economic potential do not equalize, but grow.

1. Recreation parks allow the Latvian regions to develop entrepreneurship successfully,
2. Successful development of the regional economy creates new jobs and increases tax revenue,
3. The developed regional economy promotes new trends in the national economy,
4. Recreation parks for tourists in the regions of Latvia are a successful application of our natural resources, creating new opportunities and trends in the economic aspect.

Operations on international tourism are a type of activity aimed at providing various kinds of tourist services and tourist demand goods in order to facilitate the satisfaction of a wide range of cultural and spiritual needs of the foreign tourist. International tourism includes people travelling abroad who do not engage in paid activities.

Tourist services in international commodity turnover act as invisible goods. A characteristic feature and peculiar advantage of tourist services as a commodity is that a significant part of these services are made with minimal costs on the spot and, as a rule, without the use of foreign currency. Foreign tourists use the services provided by enterprises of the tourist industry of the country of destination. In addition, they consume or buy and export as a gift a certain amount of goods purchased in the country of visit for foreign currency, having previously exchanged it for local currency.¹

1.4. Overview of sightseeing tours and places in Latvia

Most actively Latvia is visited in the summer (the end of June - July) and on New Year's Eve. The first four months of the year (January-April) are relatively quiet, when they come mainly on business occasions or on holidays. The burst of trips begins after May holidays, but at the beginning of August and at the end of the swimming season the number of tourists is sharply reduced. In autumn they usually come in the second half of November, when Latvia celebrates the Independence Day, and Riga's Staro Riga light festival takes place.²

Winter tours to Latvia, tours on New Year's Eve to Riga and Jurmala:

¹ Evans N., Campbell D., Stonehouse G. Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism. ELSEVIER – UK, 2005. – 301 lpp.

² <http://www.discover-latvia.lv/one-day-tours-in-latvia.php>

The second surge of interest in Latvia is observed on New Year's Eve. Despite the fact that the season lasts only 10 days, the number of visitors to Latvia at this time is approaching the number in the summer season. Although in Latvia the winter holidays begin with the Catholic Christmas - December 24, and the last week of December is often actually a day off, Russians come for their weekend, which begins on December 30. Tourist companies offer tours with check-in on December 30, 31. They include a festive programme at the hotel or the restaurant. Also there are tours with the date of arrival after the New Year's Eve, for example, on January 2. The same as in the case of summer tours, winter tours should be booked in advance - in September or October.¹

Tours to Latvia on May holidays:

Outside tourist outbreaks, Latvia is popular on May holidays, which cover the first ten days of May. Not all Russians go to the countryside, but prefer to go somewhere abroad. And often their choice falls on Latvia because of its close location. In May in Latvia - it's already warm, the sun shines, and cafes are equipped with terraces. In addition, the 1st and 4th of May in Latvia are the holidays. On the 1st, together with the rest of the world, we celebrate the Labour Day, and on the 4th the Day of Restoration of Independence, so that on these days you can get to some festive events.²

Weekend tours to Riga, rest in SPA, treatment in sanatoriums of Jurmala, cruises on a ferry from Riga to Stockholm:

In the offseason, weekend tours are popular. They are offered by travel companies throughout the year. Usually they are designed for 3 days and 2 nights and include excursions around Riga, as well as trips to Sigulda or Rundale. In addition, at any time, tours are popular to the three Baltic countries - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as sea cruises on a ferry from Riga to Stockholm.³

Among the actively offered there are SPA tours and sanatorium treatment tours. The main destination is Jurmala, famous for its sanatoriums and SPA hotels. If you are planning to order

¹ Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

² Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

³ Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

such a tour for the summer, then you need to book in advance, because at this time there is a large influx of tourists. The same applies to the New Year's Eve holidays.

1.5. Perspectives for the development of tourism in Latvia

Popular types of tourism in Latvia

The development of tourism is one of the priority directions in the Latvian economy and is one of the most rapidly developing sectors of its economy: in Latvia there is a stable growth of foreign tourists and the number of tourists already exceeds 4 million people per year, which is almost twice the population of Latvia.

In order to be attractive to our guests, it is necessary to make it a centre for safe tourism with good infrastructure and high level of services for foreigners in Latvia; also the task of development of local tourism is put forward.

The European Union allocates large sums for the development of Latvian tourism sector.

The self-government of Riga has established a special "tourist police", the purpose of which is the safety of tourists.

Thanks to economic priorities, local traditions of hospitality and good quality food, natural conditions, Latvia provides ample opportunities for organizing the following types of tourism:

- Business tourism, conferences, seminars, motivating trips¹
- Corporate tourism and recreation
- Ecotourism
- Rural tourism
- Beach tourism
- Stag and hen parties
- Active rest
- SPA
- Culinary tourism / Cafes and Restaurants

Business tourism

¹ Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

Employees of any company work hard and no doubt sometimes want to give themselves a little good rest and at the same time improve their professional level, motivating to achieve further success. All this is realistic, having arrived to Riga. For a business meeting or conference, Riga offers business partners excellent opportunities for the best conference halls in Riga, Jurmala and other places in Latvia. It also provides support in obtaining invitations, purchasing tickets for a flight or a bus trip to Riga, booking a hotel at the best prices and providing transport for the group, organizing a banquet with a special menu. The combination of work and a good rest, delicious food and a cultural programme will help make your visit to Latvia unforgettable.

To organize a business trip to Riga, you only need to compose an application for its organization and send it to a specific Internet address.

Corporate tourism and recreation

Corporate holidays in Latvia are in great demand among foreign guests. Riga companies provide support in obtaining invitations, purchasing tickets for flights or trips to Riga, booking hotels at the best prices, providing transportation, developing a program of leisure and excursions, organizing a banquet with a special menu and scenario developed by an experienced scenario writer and conducted by the best presenters, DJs for a disco or artists: dancers, magicians, singers.

Ecotourism

The number of ecotourists in the world is increasing from year to year and Latvia is one of the few countries in the world that are of interest to ecotourists. In Latvia there is no harmful production, but there is a careful attitude to nature, there are preserved corners of untouched nature, where you can observe the life of wild animals and listen to the singing of birds. National parks occupy a large territory of Latvia and their visit is always a great pleasure for tourists.¹

Rural tourism

Despite the fact that rural tourism is not so cheap as a few years ago, in Latvia it has become very popular lately. About four hundred rural cottages offer rest in silence in the fresh air combined in hunting, fishing, bathing, riding horses. The low density of the population of Latvia (by 65 thousand square kilometers, 2.2 million people, half of whom live in cities), allows you to feel the spaciousness and cleanliness of the surrounding world.

¹ Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

Beach tourism

Latvia is rich not only in the countryside, but also in a variety of beaches, where tourists can spend unforgettable sunny days, lie on a light sand and sunbathe, swim in the Baltic Sea and play beach volleyball, have a snack right on the beach in a restaurant or in a cafe. The most popular beaches of Latvia are Jurmala, Saulkrasti, Bolderaja, Vecaki, Vakarbuli.

Stag and hen parties

The cheerful and noisy European tradition - the organization of stag and hen parties in Riga on the wedding eve, is not only included into the wedding scenario of many young couples, but also begins to live its own life, when a friendly company of young people and girls wants not to just have a good time, but also get acquainted with the history of the city

Active rest

How to spend your time in Riga, so as not to get bored sitting in a hotel or just wandering around the city. Tourism companies can offer a variety of activities that will make your stay in Latvia unforgettable, give a lot of impressions and vivid emotions. The most common types of outdoor activities in Latvia are:

- Airway
- Paintball
- Carting
- Golf
- Crossbow

SPA

Today SPA is the most modern achievements of medicine and cosmetology; a variety of procedures will bring true pleasure to tourists, teach them how to love their body, their appearance, and change their attitude to the world around them. SPA - is a quality care, pleasant sensations and comfort, perfected by the magic hands of a beautician, it is a symbol of respectability and a good result. In Latvia, especially in Jurmala, there are a lot of good SPA-centres in which tourists will be provided with decent care and a lot of special offers.

Culinary tourism / Cafes and Restaurants

As with all our tours, the aim is to get people to experience local culture. Of course we are a business, but our passion for local products, craftsmen and traders ensures that we will not be

dragging you to the closest touristy Latvian-themed restaurant. We want to show you Latvian cuisine as it was historically as well as how it is changing in a global environment.

Riga's gastronomic scene is growing every year. The old marketplaces are still teeming with fresh produce and the traditional, popular, stable food and drink is still enjoyed by the Latvian people, but now you can also find upcoming young chefs using local produce in inventive new ways, a booming craft-beer scene and a wide range of specialist gourmet shops all across the city.

Our Food and Drink Tours focus on the independent, local and seasonable. You will discover the tastiest Latvian delicacies, most delicious beers, the most interesting restaurants and leave Riga well and truly satisfied.¹

¹ Most popular types of tourism, <http://www.newstrackindia.com/travel/most-popular-types-of-tourism.html>

2. THE ESSENCE OF ECOTOURISM

The main reason for the emergence and development of ecological tourism is the need of urban residents with an average income to rest alone in nature, to get acquainted with the life of a peasant family. And not only to try fresh vegetables and fruit, meat and dairy products, but also to take a direct part in agricultural work.

The customer's desire was respected, the wheel of the tourist industry turned around, giving tourists a choice of hundreds of rural houses, huts and castles complete with fresh milk, wine from their own vineyard, fishing, hayloft and a variety of entertainment. However, it should be noted: in France, the active development of agro-tourism was caused by the problem of the rapid flight of residents of unpromising rural areas to large cities. That prompted the government to support the idea of creating conditions for the reception of tourists on the basis of farms. Currently, Ecological tourism in Europe brings, according to different data, from 10% to 20% of the total income of the tourism industry.¹

2.1. Ecological tourism and prospects for its development

Ecotourism includes any kinds of tourism outside of urban conditions that do not damage natural complexes, promote the protection of nature and improve the welfare of the local population.

Ecotourism is not only the residence of a tourist in a rural home, but also the functioning of a whole infrastructure that includes good transport links between settlements, places of leisure, the availability of services providing various services for information and services, small restaurants, cafes and taverns. At the same time, every guest, and in the Ecological tourism a tourist is called a "guest", must constantly feel the comfort of home and increased personal attention. The main family, providing accommodation, food and acquaintance with the sights of the countryside, is a rural family.

Ecological tourism refers to a passive form of recreation, on purpose - more social, rather than purely commercial.

Of particular importance is that Ecotourism does not require as much public investment as other types of tourism. While it is satisfied with the use of the existing potential of rural regions: unique natural resources and objects of historical and cultural significance; private housing stock in rural areas; produced in personal food holdings, etc.

¹ Jamal, T., Borges, M., and A. Stronza. 2006. The Institutionalisation of Ecotourism: Certification, Cultural Equity and Praxis. *Journal of Ecotourism*. 5(3):145-175

In general, the birth of ecological tourism should be based on the means of the population, which takes care of the maintenance and service of tourists, naturally, for monetary compensation. Another feature of eco-tourism is that it does not require the creation of large tourist firms, but is an object for the voluntary association of private farms and owners of some small businesses to provide individual tourist services.

Ecological tourism can include a rather wide range of activities: scientific and cognitive (ornithological, botanical, archaeological, ethnographic), adventure tours (walking, biking, water, horseback riding and routes), summer camps, bases and programmes for schoolchildren and students in nature, weekend trips outside the city.

However, ecotourism contains a great potential danger. An excessive number of tourists, their cars and equipment can fill small towns and villages. Their culture may be alien and hostile to local residents. Their desire for entertainment can distort and degrade local culture. The aimless and uncontrolled development of ecological tourism on a large scale can be devastating for local landscapes and ecosystems.

Today, no one doubts the fact that the future of our region is closely connected with tourism. A few years ago in the mass consciousness of the villagers the hostility towards tourists and tourists was still firmly rooted. Today, many families with free housing have spontaneously joined this lively, interesting and profitable business. Renting a house for rent to vacationers was quickly mastered and began to bring additional income to families. But this income is seasonal and depends little on the owners of housing. To obtain a stable income, work is needed to create permanent jobs. And then you should understand and accept that no one will do this for us. We live already in a society with a market economy, which is alien to the consumer approach. If we wait for someone to solve our problems, we will simply suffer from depression and hopelessness, ache, malign and destroy the nature of its excessive consumption. In fact, there is a way out. Only many villagers are not used to looking this way. For many families, the solution is to create jobs in the field of rural tourism. Then this activity of the family becomes professional, requires knowledge, skills and compliance with certain norms.¹

Features of ecological tourism²:

- Peace and tranquillity of village life.

¹ Müller, F.G. 2000. Ecotourism: an economic concept for ecological sustainable tourism. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*. 57(3):241-251

² Wight, P. 1993. Ecotourism: Ethics or Eco-Sell. *Journal of Travel Research* 31:3-9

- Spring water.
- Pine and cedar air.
- Vegetables from the garden, fresh milk, home-made bread.
- Individual mode of rest and service.
- Home cooking for every taste.
- The ability to take a four-legged friend.
- Living in a solid peasant house with a stove.
- Latvian bathhouse with a fragrant broom.
- An opportunity to communicate with pets.
- Harvesting of berries, herbs, mushrooms, nuts.
- Fishing, horseback riding, participation in haymaking, mastery of crafts.
- Participation in public holidays.
- The opportunity to relax with the whole family or a small group

Also, rural tourism has a number of advantages compared to having a rest at tourist bases. For greater clarity, the advantages are presented in the form of a summary table¹:

Pros and cons of ecological green tourism

Pros:

- The possibility of additional earnings
- The incentive to bring your house in order.
- The ability to employ adult family members.
- Possibility to solve various problems with children (holding vacations in cities, assistance during studies in universities, selling products of subsidiary farming, etc.).
- Interesting communication.
- Raising the educational level.
- Stimulus for active learning of foreign languages.

Pros for government authorities:

- Increase in employment.
- Reducing social tension.

¹ Campbell, LM (1999) – *Ecotourism in Rural Developing Communities*, *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(3), p.534-553

- Increase in household incomes.
- The low cost of this type of tourism for the authorities due to the use of family resources.
- All money earned by families remains in the region.
- Creation of temporary and permanent jobs, improvement of the life of the population)
- The possibility of additional earnings by cultural organisations from the service of tourists.
- Growth of social activity of participants of rural tourism.
- Improvement of settlements.
- The growing interest of the population in keeping settlements clean.
- Additional income for sanitary epidemiological station, fire inspection.
- Improvement of the criminal situation in the future due to the growth of the cultural level of the population.

Pros for Business¹:

- Increase in the incomes of the whole service sector due to the appearance of solvent customers (shops, telecommunication centres, mail, etc.)
- The possibility of creating various productions in connection with the increased demand and guaranteed sale of goods and services.
- Opportunity to establish business ties and attract investments.

Pluses for nature:

- Reduce the burden on the environment, as jobs are created in the service sector and the population does not consume natural resources so much.
- Waste from the stay of tourists is utilized by the owners of micro-hotels.
- The interest of the population in preserving and prospering the surrounding nature is growing, as nature is the main magnet for tourists.
- The environmental education of the population improves during training at seminars for owners of micro-hotels.
- The participants of rural tourism take practical part in cleaning the river banks, improving the springs, clearing the territory that applies to the estates, improving the approaches to the objects of rural tourism.

¹ Campbell, LM (1999) – *Ecotourism in Rural Developing Communities*, *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(3), p.500-553

Cons of ecological tourism:

- Weak inflow of direct incomes to budgets of all levels in the first years of existence.
- The need of constant financial support for the organisers of rural tourism in connection with the high costs associated with systematic work with the population and the promotion of tourist products.

2.2. Creation of conditions for ecological tourism

The basic conditions for a homestead and a host family

Housing, if possible, should be in a picturesque place near the pond. This kind of housing can be a house in a village, a house or a campsite in an apiary, a house or a campsite on a farm. The manor house will work more efficiently if it is located in a place popular with tourists with a strong natural magnet. It is inadmissible to have nearby production facilities, manure piles, destroyed buildings, sources of constant and loud noise and unpleasant odour. A good road should lead to the manor.¹

Impeccable cleanliness, safe living conditions, neat and beautiful homestead plot are obligatory for the manor. Guest rooms should be isolated from the dwelling of the owner of the dwelling. Guests are provided with a separate house, isolated rooms with an entrance from the street, an attic, and verandas.

Guests should be given the opportunity to cook food (kitchen in each homestead) in a room without a common passage.

Attentive attitude of the host family to the guests (this should be the main quality of all members of the family).

The presence of a stable connection. If the house does not have a telephone, it is necessary to agree with the nearest neighbour and generously thank him for these services, so that he will always inform you with a desire and in a timely manner).

Additional conditions that increase the competitiveness of the estate are as follows:

¹ Gavin J., Phipps A.; series editor Robinson M. Tourism and Intercultural Exchange. Why Tourism Matters. Channel View Publications – UK, 2007. – 181 lpp.

Ability to provide sightseeing services. This ability must be constantly mastered: at courses, through books, mastering folk crafts, taking the experience of other people. If there is not a person in the host family who is able to provide qualitative excursion services, you should look for him in the nearest environment (among relatives, neighbours, and friends) and encourage him to learn. The original excursion service is a strong magnet. Excursion services should be certified.

Original and flexible kitchen. The importance of this service cannot be overemphasized. The hostess needs to have knowledge about vegetarian, separate, mixed, diet, baby food, and raw food. If there is a proprietary "zest" – excellent.

Possibility to provide transport services. If there is own transport, then it must be fixed, clean and safe. If not, you need to find in your nearest environment a driver with a personal car and negotiate with him about providing services to your guests. If the driver has a license for passenger transportation, he is responsible for the safety of passengers, if not, then the owner of the estate.

The main condition, without which no work is possible, is the creation of a legal framework. This means registering your business. Legal base is a responsibility to the partner, own social security, clean and open mutual relations, ease of mutual settlements with partners.

What do you need to become a participant in eco-tourism¹:

- availability of your own real estate and resources,
- desire to work in the field of providing services to vacationers,
- the ability to attentively and kindly treat guests.
- own resources of the family can be as follows:
- own or rented dwelling house located on the bank of a river or lake, near the forest, which the family frees during the reception period, moving to a separate room near the main housing,
- free premises in the owner's house, which has a separate entrance,
- sufficient number of dishes, bed linen, furniture,
- household plot, farm, horse,
- vehicle (car, boat, catamaran),
- hayfields, apiary (for providing sightseeing services),

¹ Ecological tourism // http://www.wwf.ru/about/what_we_do/reserves/info/ecotour

- the ability to fish, pick up mushrooms, understand medicinal herbs,
- possession of folk crafts and the ability to teach others (for providing sightseeing services),
- free labour,
- knowledge of the history and culture of his people,
- knowledge of the area and its attractions,
- knowledge of foreign languages,
- presence of telephone, computer, e-mail. It is not necessary to have all the resources at once, the service and the workplace can consist one of the resources.

The desire to work is understood as the following actions:

- compulsory registration as an entrepreneur (becoming a boss in the business),
- regular studies (use of experience gained by other people, training family members in guide-conductor courses, participation in seminars, reading of magazines and newspapers),
- the establishment of order on the backyard and adjacent to the house plot (creating a beautiful landscape),
- improvement of the improvement of the residential house for guests (improving the culture of everyday life),
- creating their own unique excursions for the guests (raising their cultural and spiritual levels),
- providing guests with other additional services (smoking fish and meat, baking cakes, home-made bread, making home-made cheese, wine, transport services, fishing, etc.)
- providing high-quality food (home kitchen with a "zest").

What is meant by the ability to attentively and kindly treat guests?

- Ability to be a flexible host and quickly make changes to the equipment of the house depending on the composition of the group of guests (to establish a baby bed, to make ramps for moving a wheelchair, to install or to remove sleeping places, to provide skewers, etc.).
- The availability of an agreement with other villagers to provide additional services to their guests, if these services are not centrally located.
- Ability to resolve conflict situations (seek and find the cause of trouble in yourself).

- Maintaining a joyful atmosphere in your "green house" in attention to the slightest request of guests (change towel once, dry the baby underwear, phone, etc.) "The ability to take any note of guests into consideration.

Striving to improve the quality of services

Ecological tourism is not necessarily a walking tour for physically hardy people with a heavy backpack behind their shoulders. It can be quite comfortable, but not at any cost, especially when it comes to untouched nature. This is one of the basic postulates of ecotourism. In other words, the proposed tours and routes should comply with the principle of environmental friendliness, which involves¹:

- the use of environmental transport - bicycles, non-motorized boats, paragliders, etc. or environmentally friendly type of fuel;
- organization of halts, bivouacs, toilets, fires, cooking (from environmentally friendly local products) in strictly designated places;
- competent disposal of garbage (garbage is not thrown out on the route, but collected, after which it comes for special processing);
- attracting tourists to solve local environmental problems (garbage collection, etc.);
- picking mushrooms, berries, medicinal plants, any natural souvenirs only in the allowed zones;
- construction in the permitted zones;
- the construction of recreational facilities - shelters, huts, hotels, campsites, etc. from environmentally friendly materials and so as not to disrupt the normal ecological development of the surrounding landscape.

This type of tourism does not damage the natural environment or provides for minimal impact on the habitat that does not undermine its environmental sustainability (it is impossible to study the feather grass of Stavropol, without stepping on the ground and the feather grass itself, but it is possible to limit the number of groups and tourists in them, giving nature time to recover naturally).

Ecological tourism in Latvia is still a novelty. Thus, there is a need to develop an effective model of ecological tourism, which will serve as an important tool for protecting the environment and

¹ Crabtree, A., O'Reilly, P. and G. Worboys. 2002. Sharing expertise in ecotourism certification: developing an International Ecotourism Standard. WORLD ECOTOURISM SUMMIT – Quebec

promote the well-being of local residents. At the heart of the new image of Latvian tourism lie the changes in the scale of values of the inhabitants of Latvia and other countries, in the movement from traditional consumption to the search for a new content of life. A swift run to well-being, a desire to be in time and be the best in all spheres has exhausted people and made their life more disturbing than ever before. Today the issues of the development of ecological tourism are included in various documents related to the tourism policy of the state¹:

- 1) the National Programme for the Development of Tourism of Latvia for the period of the year;
- 2) Latvia's sustainable development strategy, as an indicator of achievement of the main planned targets, indicates an increase in the share of eco-tourism, rural tourism and other types of nature-oriented tourism, the number of tourism enterprises that received green certificates, the length of beaches certified with the "blue flag" ". The strategy notes that in order to achieve its goals, it is necessary to comply with the requirements of nature protection plans in specially protected natural areas of nature, in order to preserve valuable and important biotopes in existing and potential places of tourism.

The natural conditions of Latvia as a whole favour the development of ecological tourism. But it is unevenly developed. The key to the development of ecotourism are specially protected natural areas, they occupy 14% of the territory of Latvia. These include 1 biosphere reserve "Northern Vidzeme" (an area of 4,500 km²), three national parks of Slitere (ha), Kemeru (ha), Gauja (ha), four nature reserves, six landscape reserves, twenty-two nature parks, 211 local protected objects. Territories Natura 2000 of Latvia is the list of protected natural territories of European importance which is approved by the edition of the Law of the Latvian Republic of "Specially Protected Natural Territories"; Natura2000 in Latvia includes 336 territories. Together they occupy 11.9% of the area of Latvia. The territories of Natura2000 form a unified network of natural territories of the European Union. This project contributes to the overall objective of protecting rare, endangered and endangered species and biotopes, the protection of which is established in Council Directive 92/43 / EEC of 21 May 1992 on the protection of wild animals, wildlife and flora and in Council Directive 79 / 409 / EEC of 2 April 1972 on the protection of wild birds. Let's consider features of some territories of development of ecotourism. Founded in 1997, the Kemeru National Park includes the Great Kemeru swamp, Lake Kanieru, the valley of the Slocone River, the sulphur sources of the Zala marsh (Green), ancient continental dunes, a sandy beach with coastal dunes and Lake Valguma. For visitors there are walking trails and

¹ Latvia. Rest without fuss// <http://www.latvia.travel/ru/ozdorovitelnyi-otdykh>

marked bicycle trails, as well as excursions for bird and animal watching, for example, watching wild horses on the Dundur meadows. The national park has a rich historical heritage; the town of Kemerī was a famous resort from the end of the XIX century until 1995. Fishing village Lapmežciems has long been famous for its famous fish market, where you can buy smoked fish of high quality. The natural park "Lake Engure" was established in 1998, before that, since 1957, was an ornithological reserve. The uniqueness of the park is in biodiversity. From the observation towers built on the shore, you can observe 186 different species of birds, while walking along the "Orchid Tropez" (the park is proud of the largest variety of orchids in Latvia), 3.5 km long, explore the plant world of the park and see wild cows and horses. The park is a Ramsar wetland and an area important for birds, is part of the Natura2000 network. In the years a management plan was developed for the park. "Arcs of the Daugava" is a natural and cultural and historical park. The place where the Daugava forms 9 large arcs is the only one in the territory of Latvia, where the river has preserved its natural course. There is an infrastructure for water tourism; there are many places to hire boats and rafts and places to stay overnight. In the park there is the town of Vecpils, the Markov Nature Trail, the Slutišchi Old Believers Settlement, Ethnographic Open-air Museum, the Daugava Gate, the narrowing of the Daugava Valley and the Vasargalishki Watchtower.¹

In the natural park "Lake Papes", founded in 2003, there is still a cultural and historical environment typical for the fishing villages of the Baltic Sea, there are beautiful landscapes and interesting natural objects.

The area of the park is ha, where in a relatively small area you can observe several natural ecosystems: the small coastal lake of the lagoon-type Pape, the Baltic Sea and the dunes, the Nida upland mire, coastal floodplain meadows, forests. 22 biotopes of European (EU) values were recorded on the territory of the natural park, of which 11 priority and 14 specially protected biotopes in Latvia. Total protected biotopes occupy ha, or 52% of the territory, including specially protected biotopes in Latvia ha, or 37% of the internal territory of the natural park (area ha). 278 bird species, 1298 insects, 376 other invertebrates, 11 amphibians and reptiles, 34 mammals, 21 fish in inland waters, 32 fish in the Baltic Sea, 632 vascular plants and moss were recorded in the park. 84 species of birds, 17 mammals, 16 invertebrates, 62 plants and 10 species of mosses are Red Listed. Between Pape Lake and the Baltic Sea there is a migration route of sea birds from the White and Baltic Seas, where in spring and autumn, thousands of migratory birds

¹ Geographical and historical and cultural characteristics of Latvia // <http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=527880>

can be observed. The natural park is included in the network of protected natural areas of the European Union Natura2000. The isolation of the southern part of the Kurzeme region contributed to a longer preservation of ancient household elements, both in material culture and in the minds of people. There was a life here, which slowly and with restraint accepted the changes of modern times. Here, nature is inextricably linked to man, with his harmonious sense of the environment and his way of life. The territory of Lake Pape until the 90's of the 20th century was closed by the Soviet military zone. This suspended the development of agriculture and preserved natural objects. Several natural trails are arranged in the park. The path of natural processes suggests going on a trip to untouched nature. The natural path of Lake Pape extends for 26 km and runs along its banks. A trail begins at the "House of Nature" ("Dabas maja"), where you can see the exposition about the surroundings of Lake Papes. Along the way, you can see various objects: bird nests, the rivers Paurupe and Ligoupe, flowing into the lake of Pape, beavers, floodplain meadows, wild horses, wild tours, the "Holy Grove" and the sacrificial stone of Ezerskola, the ornithological station and the lighthouse. Since 1966, an ornithological station operates in the village of Pape.¹

Station staff collects data and conducts annual bird migration studies. For almost 40 seasons, about a million birds were caught in more than 130 species, but only 70% of them are ringed. In addition to catching migratory birds and getting them ringed ornithologists carry out other activities to study the characteristics of migration, such as accounting migrating birds during the day, observe the nocturnal migratory birds, and started back in the 90's surveillance of migratory owls in searchlight light, registration morphological and physiological parameters of captured birds. In summer, in a natural park, you can sunbathe, bathe in the Baltic Sea (the length of the coastline of the park is 20 km), fish in the Pape Lake and the sea. A tourist water route has been developed along Lake Pape. In the natural park "Ligatne" there are characteristic landscapes of the valley of the river Gauja. Visitors can choose one of the hiking trails or a route for campers (5.1 km). On a natural hiking trail (5.5 km) in open-air cages, you can see wild animals living in the wild, the bears, wild boars, moose and wolves that live in Latvia. On the untouched nature trail (1.3 km) one can get to know one of the few sand canyons in Latvia by the Fern ravine. Another trail (2 km) winds along the shore of the Gauja.² The unusual nature park "Laumu" (Talsu district) belongs to the family of professional biologists. In the park you can choose one of four paths: bird, vegetable, forest or bee. For example, on the bee trail, the entire life of the

¹ Geographical and historical and cultural characteristics of Latvia // <http://bibliofond.ru/view.aspx?id=527880>

² Latvia. Rest without fuss// <http://www.latvia.travel/ru/>

bee is shown in a cheerful and visual form. The most courageous visitors are invited to look into a real hive or try to pull themselves on ropes to a hollow. On the forest you cannot miss the real beaver dam and the opportunity to be like stilts. In the park there is a sports path with wooden obstacles, pendant bridges and other adventures. Here you can play mini-golf, jump on the trampoline or have a picnic, for which there is everything you need. In winter, there is the opportunity to go skiing, and in summer on horse riding. The Skanjakalns Nature Park (Valmiera district) extends for 3 km along the right bank of the Salaca. Caves and Devonian rocks from red sandstone give the park a special charm at any time of the year. Here, the path of Kurbad, the Latvian warrior, with 50 wooden sculptures, the Forest Training Trail, the Dwarf Trail, was created.¹

The park has many interesting natural objects: the Devil's Cave, Pine of werewolves, Cave of Angels, Skanaiskalns (Sounding rock) of red sandstone (here is the most powerful echo in Latvia), clove and other rocks. The Nature Reserve "Swamp of Teichi" is formed to protect the largest moss marsh in the Baltic. It is located in Madona district. This natural reserve is a diverse range of natural humid ecosystems, plants, animals and birds of rare species (black stork, golden eagle, gray crane, and others.) Arranged in a marsh natural history trail can only be visited with a guide. Nature Reserve "Krustakalni" in Madona district was created to preserve the values available are natural kinds of living organisms and landscape features, which are mainly related to the ridge Madonna schmooze and its characteristic steep slopes, deep valleys, where there is little lakes and swamps. The reservation offers excursions accompanied by a guide on specially created trails. Cape Kolka (Kolkasrags) is the northernmost point of the Kurzeme coast, where waves of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga meet. A lighthouse built in 1884 rises behind the six-kilometer bank. Kolka Cape is located in the National Park "Slitere", where guided tours are available with possibility to see the types of Latvian forests and marshes, badger sets; beaver dam and watch the birds of rare species. Natural monument "steep coast in Jurkalne" one of the most picturesque parts of the Baltic Sea coast with a quiet, untouched by civilization, the beach and the steep bank, reaching a height of 20 m. The natural monument "Rocky Seashore of Vidzeme", a section of the picturesque Vidzeme seaside from Tui to Zen is 14 km long. Here you can see the Vidzeme Red Rocks- the unique sandstone outcrop on the shore of the Baltic Sea, 200 meters long and 4 meters high with caves and grottoes. The nature monument "Ventas rumba" is the largest waterfall in the Baltic and the widest in Europe with a width of 249 m and a height of 2.5 m. The waterfall is associated with many historical events and legends. For example, because of catching fish braided baskets, invented by the Duke of Jekab and installed

¹ Tkachenko V.V. History of Latvia / Ed. - St. Petersburg: "Peter", 2015. - 298 lpp

on the rumba in the right places, Kuldīga was called the city where salmon is caught in the air. You can observe the flying fish in late April early May, when the salmon goes to spawn. Then the city opens the tourist season with a great holiday "The fish flies!". In summer, there is a local attraction swimming under a waterfall. The white dune near Saulskrasti is one of the most beautiful coastal dunes in Latvia with a beautiful view of the Vidzeme coast.¹

From the White Dune you can see the mouth of the river Inčupe, there is a special observation deck. From the White Dune along the sea coast a pedestrian "Sunset Sunset Trail" with a length of 3.6 km was created. The Gutmanis Cave near Sigulda is the largest in the Baltics 18.8 m deep, 12 m wide and 10 m high. The Cave Gutmanis is considered the oldest tourist object in Latvia. There are many legends about her. The most popular of them is the legend of Maija Turaida Rose, who according to the legend, was killed there. On the walls of the cave you can see inscriptions engraved by visitors in the XIX and XX centuries, which in our time is strictly prohibited. Vejniski underground lakes are the only underground lakes in Latvia. They are in the Cēsis area. Lakes consist of two parts, the area of the first 30 m², the second 15 m², their depth reaches 2 m, and the height of the domed ceiling is up to 3 m. The cliff of Zvarte (Cēsis district) is one of the most beautiful outcrops of Devonian rocks in Latvia. The cliff is a vertical rock with a horseshoe-shaped cliff about 150 meters in length. The height of the cliff is about 45 meters. There is a legend telling that around the cliff on the night of the Old Year, on the Trinity and on Jani, there were big coven of witches and devils. From the cliff of Zvarte, walking routes along the banks of the Amata River begin. Labyrinths of the caves of Riežupe (about 460 m) are the longest in Latvia. They are in the Kuldīga region.²

The caves developed in the natural way were expanded in the 19th century, when white sand was produced here for the production of glass. For tourists, caves are inspected by candlelight and accompanied by a guide. At 13 km from Dobele in the south-west direction is the forest Pokaini. The Pokaini forest, located among the high hills and deep ravines, is a picturesque landscape. Uniqueness to this place gives a lot of stones of different sizes. Small, larger and quite huge, they stand alone, and collected in groups, piles and Stone Rivers. The sorcerers, healers and psychics do not doubt that in the place of Pokai there used to be an ancient sanctuary. The place radiates a kind of energy, felt by people as different energy currents. Some people visit visions, and some catch information flows. Tourists and visitors to the Pokaini forest tell us about the abnormal natural phenomena observed here. If this is your first time in Pokachi, then it's better to use the

¹ Latvia. Rest without fuss// <http://www.latvia.travel/ru/>

² Tkachenko V.V. History of Latvia / Ed. - St. Petersburg: "Peter", 2004. - 298 lpp

services of a guide, because there are a lot of objects, and they occupy a very large territory. Ecological tourism in Latvia has great prospects. If we consider the territorial features of different regions of the country, here stand out: the coastline of the Baltic Sea, the surroundings of Lake Asmas, the Abava River, the hilly terrain around the city of Telsi, the Emboute, Venta, Skervelis and Zilikalni valleys in Kurzeme; a part of a valley of the river Daugava under name Daugavas loki, hilly district Dagda, Istra, Ezerniki, lake Lubans in Латгалии; the Daugava river valley, Sauka Skykastkalne Mamela and Tērvete Auce, Lake Engure in Zemgale; the Selek River, Lake Bertnik, the Vekpiebalga Amata and Veklakein Gojina, the Rhone River and part of the Gauja River valley in Vidzeme. Currently, many regions of the country are implementing projects for the arrangement of natural objects for tourists to visit. The work on issuing guidebooks, tourist maps, marking eco-routes has been organized. The development of ecological tourism is closely linked to rural tourism.

Traditions of ecotourism in Latvia are quite new and are just being created. Taking into account the fact that Latvia is sparsely populated, half of the territory is covered by forests in which it is possible to observe wild animals and nature processes. For those who are especially interested in nature, a special adventure will be visiting one of the natural parks in Latvia, where you can observe both birds' flights, and for such exotic animals as a tour or a bison. In turn, the countryside and small towns of Latvia can be proud of their authenticity. In the West of Latvia in Kurzeme you can get acquainted with the unique in the cultural and historical sense of the day, and with the heritage of Livs - a small Finno-Ugric people. In the east of Latvia you can experience the hospitality of local residents, learn the art of making clay pots and visit many different Catholic, Orthodox and Old Believers churches. And every small town in Latvia has its own unique narrative about the people who inhabited it.

In Latvia, many residents grow food in their gardens, which is especially true for rural areas. Therefore, when travelling in Latvia, you should not miss the chance to refresh yourself locally with grown vegetables and harvested forest gifts - berries and mushrooms. They can be bought in local markets. There you can also buy locally produced smoked meat and game meat. And in many restaurants in Riga you can enjoy the gifts of Latvian fields.¹

In turn, if you are looking for a place to stay, the ecotourism certificate "Rural traveller" ("Lauku celotajs") will be a good guide, which indicates that the place of accommodation meets the

¹ Popular types of tourism in Latvia // <http://www.rainbow-tours-latvia.lv/ru/page/populyarnye-vidy-turizma-v-latvii>

requirements and spirit of ecotourism. Here the ecotourist will encounter the hospitality of the local residents and, if desired, can enjoy the spirit of the local bath.

Among the guests of guest houses in Latvia, only 10% are foreign guests. As it turned out, the overwhelming numbers of tourists staying in guest houses in Latvia are local residents. However, the idea of further development of rural tourism should not be abandoned. In my opinion, companies engaged in rural tourism should adapt this direction of tourism industry for Latvian vacationers.

For this service in Latvia there are a lot of conditions and opportunities, thanks to which it is possible to actively promote rural tourism not only in Latvia and Europe, but also in neighbouring countries. For starters, one can disclose the most obvious advantages of our country, namely: a large number of forests, rivers, fields. Thanks to them, it is possible to build holiday homes for rural tourism in favourable conditions. It is worth noting that in Latvia there is a rich flora and fauna, which contributes to attracting more interested people.

Likewise, various discussions and conferences are organized on the development of rural tourism in Latvia, which often offer interesting ideas. In order to somehow contribute to the development of rural tourism in Latvia, meetings are offered to provide some privileges to small hotel establishments where guests stay for the night. Such hotels usually offer homemade food. Experts, who usually also participate in the discussion; suggest exempting such small institutions of the hospitality industry from taxes. Also, the meeting participants believe that such enterprises should not be annoyed by constant bureaucratic checks.

The infrastructure of the village, where people come to rest, should assume the availability of places for cultural leisure, as well as high-quality transport. Guests must be accommodated either in separate guest houses or simply in the rooms. The presence of maximum comfort is also required. Now in development of the Latvian rural tourism two basic directions were allocated:

The construction of individual guest houses in villages and villages with the subsequent conclusion of contracts with the tour operator for the accommodation of guests.

Development of its own tour operator network, which operates specifically in domestic tourism with an independent solution of all organizational issues.

Naturally, the organisation of your own guest houses requires a much larger amount of initial costs. Taking into account the European experience, it can be assumed that the rural tourism niche in Latvia will soon be filled.

National Parks

Large areas, characterised by nature formations of outstanding beauty; landscapes and cultural landscapes unaffected or slightly transformed by people activity; bio-tropical diversity; profusion of culture and historical monuments; peculiarities of cultural environment. The main task of the National Parks is the environment protection and research.

In Latvia there are 4 National Parks: Gauja National Park (1973), Ķemeri National Park (1997), Slītere National Park (1999) and Rāzna National Park (2007).¹

Nature reserves

Territories unaffected or slightly transformed by human activity, in which in order to protect and investigate rare or typical ecosystems and their elements, undisturbed development of natural processes are provided. In Latvia there are 4 nature reserves: Moricsalas (1912), Grīņu (1936), Krustkalnu (1977) and Teiču reserves (1982).²

Red Data Book of Latvia

The Red Data Book of Latvia is a scientific document listing plant and animal species and subspecies that are threatened with extinction or endangered; it also contains data on the biology and spread of these species and the main factors behind the sharp reduction in their number.³

Status of plant and animal species

The status of plant and animal species is characterised by the proportion of species that according to expert assessment are considered as threatened with extinction in the national or international context.⁴

¹ Promotion of tourist product <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistikas-temas/metodologija/plant-and-animal-species-national-parks-and-nature-reserves-38301.h-0>

² Promotion of tourist product <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistikas-temas/metodologija/plant-and-animal-species-national-parks-and-nature-reserves-38301.h-0>

³ Promotion of tourist product <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistikas-temas/metodologija/plant-and-animal-species-national-parks-and-nature-reserves-38301.h-0>

⁴ Promotion of tourist product <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistikas-temas/metodologija/plant-and-animal-species-national-parks-and-nature-reserves-38301.h-0>

2.3.Promotion of the tourist product

Ecotourism could offer not only walking or cycling in nature, but also watching the wildlife of Latvia. Also, rural tourism can offer walks on the water, for example in boats or catamarans. For example, the European organization Euroter defines rural tourism as tourism, supports the development of agrarian regions, preserves the cultural heritage and ecology of the village, and revives local traditions and products. This type of tourism is characterized by regional identification and satisfies the needs of tourists in accommodation, food, leisure activities, and other services that contribute to the sustainable development of the social sphere of the village. Naturally, consumers of this type of services are mostly urban residents. In Latvia, the main shortcoming of rural tourism is its weak popularity. Thus, in the coming years, until it becomes popular, it is best to mainly rely on foreign tourists. They tend to look for tours with online resources, so you can place ads compiled in several languages on thematic forums and sites. Another option is to find customers among firms.¹

In most companies, various corporate events are held. Earlier they were limited to organization of holidays, however today joint trips to nature became more popular, therefore the offer to spend the weekend in nature can be met with great enthusiasm.

Another option for obtaining customers is to conclude an agreement with travel agencies that will themselves advertise environmental tours among their client base.

Dissemination with the help of Radio, the Internet, TV, magazines (special), flyers.

On various, the most popular (MixFM 102.7 Riga, Radio SWH, Radio Skonto, etc.), radio stations place advertisements, which contain basic information about this company (special offers, entertainment, target audience, location and contacts), advertising should go in the morning from 7 to 9 (every 15 minutes), in the afternoon from 13 to 14 (every 30 minutes) and in the evening from 17 to 19 (every 20 minutes).

On the Internet, advertising in the form of an article on a specialized website of this company, ad unit, banner or links in social networks. The information in the advertisement must contain the photo of the place described. Offers for different target audiences, location, prices and contacts. Advertising should be on the Internet all the time.

Advertising on TV can be an advertising video, shot in the described location with people from the target audience. Also, this advertisement should provide photos and video materials and

¹ Gunn, C (1994) – *Tourism Planning: Basics, Concepts, Cases*, 3rd edition, Taylor & Francis, Washington

contacts, for which you can get additional information about prices, locations and schedules. Advertising should be transmitted in the morning from 7 to 9 (with an interval of 20 minutes), in the afternoon from 13 to 15 (with an interval of 15 minutes) and in the evening from 17 to 21 (with an interval of 30 minutes). This advertising can also be placed in specialized magazines related to recreation and entertainment. For this, a separate article can be singled out, describing the advantages of this company and the opportunities that the target audience can implement there (for example, the opportunity to come to nature with the whole family, where everyone will find something to do for themselves), photos of picturesque places and people, having a rest there.

Advertising in flyers can also contain some photos and a small description of the place where you can spend a healthy full rest in the circle of friends or family. The contacts and location of the company should be indicated.

The goal is to intensify and coordinate the actions of state structures, local communities and businesses to develop rural tourism in Latvia, create conditions for the dissemination of best practices, and expand cooperation between countries and regions in this direction.

Strategy - Dissemination of information in various sources (TV advertising, Internet advertising, radio advertising, flyers).¹

The main target audience of this type of business are:

1. Families with a high level of income;
2. People who prefer to lead an active lifestyle;
3. Families with several children.

The task - to achieve greater attendance holiday homes with the corresponding profile, providing points of vacation homes with necessary services that would be of interest to the target audience (the creation of new services, such as wildlife watching Latvia, bicycle riding, rafting, etc.).

Among the objectives of rural tourism development are:

- development of eco-territories;
- stimulating the creation of new jobs;

¹ Farrell, BH & Runyan D, (1991) – *Ecology and Tourism*, Annals of Tourism Research 18, p.26-40.

- growth of incomes and increase of living standards of rural residents at monetary costs;
- stimulation of production of ecologically clean foodstuffs, expansion of assortment of production of farming and household plots and the possibility of its realization on the spot;
- preservation of local customs, folk crafts and crafts, as well as the ecological attractiveness of rural areas.

The promotion of the tourism product is thus aimed at the implementation of specific management tasks, namely:

1. Informing consumers and other interested parties about new tourist products being brought to the market¹;
2. Dissemination of information and awareness raising of consumers and other interested parties about the proposed tourism products;
3. Stimulation and increase in sales of the proposed tourist products;
4. Creating and maintaining an image of a travel company;
5. Consolidation of efforts of the participants of the marketing network and other stakeholders (government bodies and organizations, public associations, travel company associations, etc.).

The most common are advertising videos, announcements, reports and broadcasts, as well as screensavers in the intervals between transmissions. The high degree of attention, the possibility of hearing information, and also visually, the impact of messages on a variety of feelings of people are the merits of this tool. Of course, TV advertising represents the most costly way to promote a tourist product. The payback of costs is directly influenced by the quality of the advertising message, its orientation to the target audience, as well as a competent approach to the placement of advertising, namely, the choice of the television channel, the timing of the release and the frequency of placement of the commercial or message, the period advertising on television, etc. Among the most common means of advertising tourism products should be allocated advertising in the press. The main carriers of advertising information are newspapers, magazines, directories, catalogues. Information in the press can be placed either in the form of announcements, or in the form of publications of an overview and advertising nature. With the help of the announcements, the firm has the opportunity to inform potential customers of its

¹ Farrell, BH & Runyan D, (1991) – *Ecology and Tourism*, Annals of Tourism Research 18, p.24-42.

existence in the market and the positioning of the offer of tourist products. Publications of a survey and advertising nature, placed in the form of articles, reports, reviews, can provide both the promotion of specific tourist products, and the creation, maintenance and development of the image of a travel company. The advantage of newspaper advertising is the possibility of an operative access to the regional market, wide coverage of the local audience, the possibility of prompt and less expensive updating of information, its rapid search by consumers due to the presence of specialized headings of advertising or tourist orientation. However, comparing the quality of printed products, newspapers are largely inferior to magazines. Among the merits of magazines can also be attributed a higher prestige, the ability to cover highly specialized segments of the market, a longer life cycle of messages. The tool for providing feedback to consumers is placing in the press, along with advertising information, special coupons that allow sending information of interest to the advertiser, sending applications, receiving discounts on purchased services. When choosing carriers of advertising in the press, it is necessary to ensure its conformity and address to the target market.

Stimulation of the marketing of a tourist product can be carried out in the following areas:

1. Stimulation of consumers and customers, whose purpose is to encourage more intensive consumption of services, encourage tourists to purchase tourism products that they have not previously used, accelerate consumer decision-making about buying, encourage regular customers, reduce the time fluctuations in demand, attraction of new clients;
2. Encouragement of trade intermediaries (travel agents), whose purpose is to encourage the work of business partners, aimed at increasing the sales of tourism products;
3. Stimulation of the personnel of the travel agency, whose purpose is to improve the quality of services, ensure the growth of professional skills and interest in personal development, and increase the responsibility and effectiveness of employees.¹

The effective means of advertising designed for visual perception of potential consumers is printed products: booklets, catalogues, prospectuses, posters, calendars. Booklets are more the means of image advertising; they can be issued to customers when visiting a company, signing contracts, during presentations of tourist products, participation in exhibitions, etc. With the help of the catalogues, the firm informs potential and actual consumers, other interested parties about the offered tourist products, directions of travel, and the conditions for providing tours.

¹ Cater, E (1994) – *Ecotourism in the Third World- Problems and Prospects for Sustainability*, in *Ecotourism: A Sustainable Option?* (1994), edited by E.Cater & G.Lowman, Wiley , UK .

Prospects, as a rule, inform about a specific tourist product, a new route, contain a more detailed description of the proposed service. Posters are able to reflect the main feature of the advertised tourist product, providing its visibility and visual perception. The means of placing photo illustrations of promoted tourist products can include large-format calendars and calendars. The possibility of reaching the target consumer is ensured by postal advertising, due to the targetedness of information to a specific group of people-permanent or potential consumers, business partners, other interested parties, willing to make contact. The most common forms of postal advertising are letters, booklets, booklets, leaflets, catalogues, brochures, leaflets, invitations, programs, etc. Direct mailing of advertising information is based on the formation and constant updating of the relevant client databases (real and potential consumers, business partners, tour operators, travel agents, organizations, etc.). Personal address providing positive perception, location and confidence in the firm, relatively low costs for mailing, the possibility of using printed products that provide visibility of promoted tourism products are the merits of postal advertising. Good results are provided by mailing with its orientation to corporate clients - employees of specific organizations planning joint recreation, for example, during pre-holiday periods. A rather effective means of advertising a tourist product is outdoor advertising, which can provide a wide coverage of the audience, practically the entire population living on a specific territory. Outdoor advertising can be represented in a variety of ways. This is a billboard advertisement (billboards, billboards, light signs, electronic displays, scrolling lines), advertising at the points of sale (signposts, shop windows, company signs, interior design of offices, reception rooms, negotiation rooms, use of company clothes, etc.), on transport (advertising messages on the sides of vehicles and in salons). An important point in the use of outdoor advertising is the establishment of its territorial location and the formation of the content of the information message itself. Promotion of the tourist product, creation of a favourable image of a travel company, public opinion is promoted by exhibition and yoke activity. Tourism exhibitions and fairs make it possible to acquaint potential customers and other interested parties with tourism firms operating in the market, offered, including those introduced to the market with new tourist products, to inform about the specifics of providing tourist services.¹

Contextual advertising involves the placement of a text advertisement of a travel company on the page of the search results of search engines, such as, Google, Yahoo, etc. The advertisements of tourist companies are displayed outside the search results. Placement of advertising in the search

¹ Isaacs, J.C. 2000. The limited potential of ecotourism to contribute to wildlife conservation. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. 28(1):61-66

engines occurs by purchasing keywords (which users enter into the search box, trying to find a tour or ticket) for a month. Contextual advertising is most suitable for promotion of tourist products, promotion of a travel agency or advertising for a tour operator. Search engine promotion is aimed at increasing the number of visitors from search engines. A link to the site of the travel company is displayed in natural search results. Hit site travel company in the TOP-10 search results of the relevant search system for certain keywords, can ensure the growth of site traffic, and increase the number of customers. But achieving such results requires significant time-consuming, and therefore is not suitable for instantly informing potential consumers. Context-banner advertising involves the placement of graphic animation blocks in search results and on partner sites of search engines. This type of online advertising attracts attention with its dynamics and brightness. A rather effective means of Internet advertising is the advertisement of a travel company and a tourist product in social networks, which involves the creation of a special group of a travel company. Such a group can, in its functional orientation, replace its own website, as it allows information on new tourist offers to be received, and promptly accept applications.¹

Thus, during the personal sale of a tourist product, the following steps can be distinguished:

1. Reception of the client and establishment of contact. At this stage it is important to create a pleasant atmosphere for communication, to attract attention, to arouse the interest of the client, to create conditions for openness, predisposition to communication and establishing relationships. Obligatory attributes of interest are the design of the office of a travel company or special rooms for negotiations, the appearance of employees, facial expressions, confidence, and politeness. It is the first few phrases that influence the client in a decisive manner, are the most significant for the further establishment of relationships and decision-making. For this stage, it is important to relieve the initial tension (a few warm words, complement, joke, create a friendly atmosphere, etc.), appeal to the client by name, and take an attentive attitude to the opinions and interests of the client.

2. Identify the needs of the client. It is important to identify the problems, desires and preferences of the client, which makes it more likely to demonstrate the usefulness and benefits of the proposed tourist product for the client. This stage allows you to identify the motives and

¹ Weinberg, A., Bellows, S., and D. Ekster. 2002. Sustaining Ecotourism: Insights and Implications from Two Successful Case Studies. *Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*. 15(4):377-390

goals of the client, to prepare for the presentation of the tourist product, to form the main positions of the argumentation.

3. Presentation of the product through the transfer of information. The reliability, completeness and the ability to provide visibility and visual perception of the transmitted information are of great importance in this case. It is advisable to accompany this stage with the presentation of commercials, catalogues, prospectuses, and other promotional materials capable of reflecting the main features of the tourism product being presented, increasing the level of perception of information, influencing the diverse feelings of people, inspiring emotions and the desire for participation. Informing the client is advisable to accompany the staging questions, specifying the position of the client, allowing to collect additional information. An important point in the transfer of information is listening to the client, which allows you to concentrate more on the sales process, create an image of a good listener, learn the client's reactions, select effective arguments, etc.

4. Argumentation allows you to mainly change the position and the formed opinion of the client, consolidate a new opinion, mitigate the contradictions that have arisen, create a basis for making a decision to buy a tourist product. Argumentation requires from traders great knowledge about the tourist product, its competitive advantages, the activities of the travel company itself, the actions of competitors, changes in the tourist market situation, as well as concentration of attention, assertiveness, correctness of statements. Of great importance for this stage is the ability to persuade, reasonably respond to the objections raised and skilfully use expressive means in oral speech. It is advisable to select the methods of argumentation taking into account the psychological characteristics of clients (figures, derivation of conclusions, method of comparison, "yes-but", method of ignoring, using authority, etc.). Neutralisations of remarks or overcoming the possible objections are of great importance. On the one hand, attempts to influence the client's choice, to exert some pressure on him, can provoke a defensive reaction in the form of objections, questions. On the other hand, the customer's desire to make the right choice is usually supported by clarifying questions, the purpose of which is to clear up possible doubts and get more clarity on the issue of interest. The objections and remarks made facilitate the conversation, since they indicate the interest of the client, suggest where to strengthen the argument, and in which clauses to convince the client. When neutralising remarks, it is important

to have several pre-prepared counter-arguments, keep a calm tone, respect the client's position, acknowledge his rightness, and be restrained in personal assessments.¹

5. Decision making and sales of a tourist product. It is this stage that determines the effectiveness of personal sales, as it helps attract new customers, conclude contracts, and inject additional income and increase revenue from sales. The main goal of this stage is to stimulate the client to perform the planned actions to purchase a tourist product and formalize contractual relations. Various incentive tools can be used (discounts, additional free services, promotional gifts, various invitations, etc.). The results of this stage can be different. Either the customer immediately decides to purchase a tourist product, or he or she postpones this decision in time, because rarely have to make a decision after a one-time discussion. In conditions when the client immediately decides to purchase a tourist product, it is important to create a favourable atmosphere at the end of sales. It can be a gratitude for the decision, congratulation of the client with a reasonable solution, elimination of residual doubts by emphasizing the correctness of the choice made. If the client did not dare immediately to make a purchase, it is necessary to offer information and advertising materials, participate in further communication, and, if possible, agree on a follow-up meeting.

6. Documentation of the relationship between the travel company and the client, which is an important element of the relationship in the course of personal sales. The list of documents applicable to a particular tourist product depends on many factors: the set of services, the type of tour, the individual or group tour, the presence of young children, etc.

7. Organisation of settlements with customers. Payment for a tourist product may be in the form of full payment or in instalments. After full payment documents for the right of reception of tourist services are given out to the client.

8. Organisation of feedback with the client. The most common method is direct marketing. Feedback implies the establishment of contact with the client after the provision of the service in order to obtain exhaustive information on the degree of customer satisfaction with the tourist product, clarifying the requests and wishes of the customers for further fulfilment of the quality of the services provided. The most significant component determining the effectiveness of sales

¹ Medina, L.K. 2005. Ecotourism and Certification: Confronting the Principles and Pragmatics of Socially Responsible Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 13(3): 290-295

is the quality of the relationship between the sales staff of the tourist firm and its customers, determined primarily by the quality composition of the sales agents.¹

¹Orams, M. 1995. Towards a more desirable form of ecotourism. *Tourism Management* 16(1):3-8

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURIST-EXCURSION ROUTE FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

To develop and maintain entry and domestic tourism, the tourism strategy should pursue a dual purpose:

On the one hand, it should preserve and strengthen the already achieved position in the traditional tourist area. To do this, you can create an additional proposal that would react to changing consumer demand within the already formed product. At the same time, one should take into account that the creation of competitive advantages in the sphere of tourism is connected with the concentration of efforts on the admission of foreign and wealthy Latvian tourists, which can be realized only if a fundamentally new tourist offer with a bright individual image is created.

On the other hand, it should create a new tourist product that goes beyond the traditional view of the tourist offer, which takes into account the historical and cultural specifics of the city, and also allows a significant diversification of the traditional offer, due to its combination with services previously uncommon for the region. Below, the author made an attempt to develop a new tourist product, which would diversify the usual proposals of travel agencies.

Tourist and sightseeing Daugavpils district route, developed by the author is a category of ecological excursion tourism. This type of tourism includes travels and trips with cognitive purposes. The route is calculated for 4 days. It is designed for families with children. Received in the course of extensive excursions, knowledge will expand the horizons of children, enrich their inner, spiritual world, and increase the level of intelligence. In addition, this journey with cognitive goals is combined with the purpose of recreation. The route is designed for a group of 20 people, in addition to the leader and guide.

The bus leaves from the Rezekne bus station and goes to Daugavpils, from Daugavpils it goes to the destination place. The bus will take the group from the hotel to each tourist object and take back to the hotel. The target audience is the families with children at the age of 7-15.

The cost of the tour includes:

1. accommodation in the hotel SILENE RESORT & SPA ****;
2. meals according to the program;
3. the entire excursion program - entrance tickets;
4. comfortable bus;
5. insurance

3.1. Calculation of the cost of the tour. The economic justification of a tourist product

The calculating method of the total cost of a tourist product

This is an accounting system in which all costs are allocated to all types of tourist products. The basis is the division of costs by the way of inclusion in the cost of certain types of services.

1. **Direct costs** - the costs directly associated with the production and sale of tourist products. They include:

Table 3.1.

Meal	Price for 1 person per day, Euro	Cost per group per day, Euro	Number of days	Total cost, Euro
Breakfast	5	105	3	315
Lunch	10	210	3	630
Dinner	7	147	4	588
Total:	22	462	–	1533

The cost of breakfasts, lunches and dinners for 1 person will be:

$$3 \times 5 \text{ €} + 3 \times 10 \text{ €} + 4 \times 7 \text{ €} = 73 \text{ €}$$

The cost of breakfast for the group is:

$$5 \text{ €} \times 21 \text{ people} \times 3 = 315 \text{ €}$$

The cost of lunch for the group is:

$$10\text{€} \times 21 \text{ people} \times 3 = 630\text{€}$$

The cost of dinner for the group is:

$$7\text{€} \times 21 \text{ people} \times 4 = 588\text{€}$$

Total for food required:

$$315\text{€} + 630\text{€} + 588\text{€} = 1533\text{€}$$

Accommodation. The cost of living is calculated based on the cost of the room, which depends on the class of the hotel, accommodation, the number of people in the group, the number of days of living. This tour involves the accommodation of tourists in a children's hotel for 3 days. The cost of a double room is 60 Euro per day. The group of 20 people needs 10 rooms. The leader of the group lives in a single room costing 60 Euro per day.

Cost of living:

$$60\text{€} \times 10 \text{ double rooms} \times 3\text{days} = 1800\text{€}$$

$$30\text{€} \times 1\text{single room} \times 3\text{days} = 90\text{€} \text{ (For the leader of the group)}$$

Transport service. The article "transport" includes transportation costs: travel to the point of stay.

The cost of renting a bus is 15 Euro per hour. Excursion programme and transportation of tourists takes 25 hours. The cost of renting a bus for 1 person is:

$$375/21 = 17.86\text{€}$$

Excursion service. In view of the fact that the tourist product carries the category of excursion tourism, the service programme includes the following excursions:

Table 3.2.

Type of excursion (author Valerija Burova)

Type of excursion	Price for 1 person per day, Euro	Cost per group per day, Euro
<p>Sightseeing tour at the Nature park "Silene"</p> <p>"Silene" is a nature park situated in Daugavpils region. In the Park there are 24 lakes. There are also several small marshes. Pine stands as well as pine-fir and fir-deciduous forests predominante in the nature park. European pond turtle, fire-bellied toad, great crested newt and forest dormouse can be found in the marshes and lakes of the park. Black storks, black kites and lesser spotted eagles nest in park's forests.¹</p>	8	168
<p>Out-of-town excursion to Recreation Park "Stalkers"</p> <p>Special well-equipped rest park is located in picturesque place on the bank of the Daugava River on the territory of Daugavas Loki Nature Park. It is possible to organize a wide range of activities in the park. There are children's playgrounds, outdoor grills, tables, terraces, benches etc. Several tourist groups can visit the park at the same time. There are unique objects in the rest park that are constructed as a fortress. Tourists will be given the opportunity to learn about interesting and mysterious history of the creation of the park.²</p>	1	21
<p>A trip to Daugavpils Bats Centre</p> <p>Daugavpils Fortress is a place where the second largest in the Baltic States hibernating bat colony inhabits. The fortress walls with a high humidity, as well as a special microclimate in the fortifications create favourable conditions for dwelling. Exposition of the Daugavpils Bat Centre provides an opportunity to explore the way bats</p>	0.50	10.50

¹Sightseeing tour at the Nature park "Silene" <http://www.visitdaugavpils.lv/en/turisma-objekts/silene-nature-park/>

² Out-of-town excursion to Recreation Park "Stalkers" <http://www.visitdaugavpils.lv/en/turisma-objekts/leisure-park-stalkers/>

live, to see thematic stamp collection, artwork depicting bats, as well as pictures and informative materials that characterise the life of these animals, to take part in the day or night tours around the Fortress in order to explore the bats, to find out what they eat, how they hibernate and breed, as well as where they live and have a chance to see the bats with their own eyes during the night excursions. ¹		
Rafting along the Daugava "SOLA" It is possible to make a boat trip on a boat and scheduled water tours for adults and for children. ²	5	105
Boat ride along the Daugava, boat rent "Beibuks" Beibuks” boat rental offers wooden raft, canoes and various inventory rentals for active rest. “Beibuks” organizes various events and outdoor sport games with an accommodation and catering. The duration of rafting depends on the time of the year, water flow intensity and wind direction. Big raft event organizing – the meeting of lovers of water tourism of Latvia.	3	63
Excursion programme in the attraction park "Daugavpils Tarzāns" ³ In Daugavpils, near Lielais Stropu Ezers lake, there is a tourism attraction – adventure park “Daugavpils Tarzāns”. Obstacle park is suitable for children as well as for adults for active leisure. It will be interesting for both children and adults, since the tracks are tailored to different interests. The park consists of 6 obstacle tracks with different degrees of difficulty.	26	546
Totally	43.5	913.5

¹ A trip to Daugavpils Bats Centre <http://www.visitdaugavpils.lv/en/turisma-objekts/daugavpils-siksparnu-centrs/>

²Rafting along the Daugava "SOLA" <http://www.visitdaugavpils.lv/en/turisma-objekts/izbraucieni-pa-daugavu-ar-plostu-sola-vai-liellaivu-dina/>

³Boat ride along the Daugava, boat rent "Beibuks" <http://www.visitdaugavpils.lv/en/turisma-objekts/piedzivojumu-parks-daugavpils-tarzans/>

The total cost of excursions will be:

$$43.5\text{€} \times 21 \text{ people} = 913.5\text{€}$$

Services for the insurance of tourists. This service is an obligatory element in the article of direct costs, because the age category of tourists is children. Cost of insurance for 1 person is 2.04 Euro.

Accordingly, the cost of insurance for the group will be:

$$2.04\text{€} \times 21 \text{ people} = 42.84\text{€}$$

Salary to the leader of the group. At a fixed rate travel agency manager receives 20 Euro per day. Since the tour is designed for 4 days, therefore, the leader will receive a salary of 80 Euro.

2. Indirect costs - costs associated with the maintenance of production, management of the enterprise and the organization of sales. They are associated with the formation and sale of tourist products, but at the time of formation cannot be attributed to a certain type of tourist product. They account for 10% of direct costs. Direct costs of this tour are 226.40 Euro for 1 person, and for the group it is 4754.40 Euro. Indirect costs are 22.64 Euro for 1 person, and for the group – 475.44 Euro.

3. The total cost price of a tourist product is the sum of direct and indirect costs. Consequently, the total cost of a tourist product is: $4754.40\text{€} + 475.44\text{€} = 5229.84\text{€}$

4. VAT is 21% of the total cost of tourist products: $5229.84\text{€} \times 0.21 = 1098.27\text{€}$

5. Profit. It is taken into account in the cost of the tour by multiplying the profitability (the rate of profit) by the total cost of the tourist product. Taking into account the competitiveness of the tour, the normative profitability is 10%. The amount of profit is equal to: $5229.84\text{€} \times 0.1 = 522.98\text{€}$

6. The selling price of a tourist product. It is determined by adding up the total cost of a tourist product, VAT and the profit of a tourist organization:

$$5229.84\text{€} + 1098.27\text{€} + 522.98\text{€} = 6851.09\text{€}$$

And, finally, the selling price of a tourist product for 1 person will be:

$$6851.09\text{€} / 21 \text{ people} = 326.24\text{€}$$

The method of calculating the limited cost of a tourist product ("direct-costing")

This method makes it possible to measure the cost of a unit of tourist product from the sales volume of a tourist product.

With the help of the Direct-Costing method, we determine the point of critical volume of sales of tourist products, in which the company does not incur losses, but also does not receive profit. As it is known, an important feature of this method is that due to it, it is possible to study the interrelations and interdependencies between the volume of services realization, costs (cost of a tourist product) and profit. First, let's use the graphical method, which allows us to visually show the break-even point and the threshold of the travel agency.

Table 3.3.

Threshold of the travel agency (author Valerija Burova)

Type	Indicators per month, Euro
Rent of office (20 m ²)	150
Wages: the general director	630
Telephone communications	12.90
the Internet	9
Electricity	20
Advertising costs	30
Stationery	35
Depreciation deductions: computer table	10
Totally	896.9

Based on the data in the table it is seen:

Rent of 1 m² of premises per month is 7.5€. Accordingly, the rent of 20 m² is 150€. Funds are shown in Table 6.

Table 3.4.**The main funds of the travel agency (author Valerija Burova)**

Name	Initial cost, in Euro	Service life, years
1 computers	500	10
1 desk	250	10
Totally	750	–

The main difference between costing and cost of production or services on the basis of the "direct-costing" method from the calculation by the method of full cost allocation is that when calculating using the "direct-costing" method, only the variables are included in the costs of the unit of produced and provided services costs, and the total amount of fixed costs is considered as not depending on the volume of services rendered.

3.2. Promotion of the tourist product (environmental tour)

The main target group has the following features in the selection and purchase of goods. According to the psychographic profile, they can be characterized as a connoisseur of technology /aspiring to high social status /fashionable /conservative /socially responsible / reasonable buyer / family-oriented /seeking for entertainment /carefree /families with children /other.

Table 3.2.1.

Description section	Description
Market boundaries	The company "Reztours" carries out its activities in the Latgalian region, Latvia, city of Rezekne. Its target market is consumers at the age of 18 to 50, with an average income of 600 Euro, that have a need to have an active and environment friendly holiday and buy eco tours. The geographical area for the company's work includes the following cities and suburban areas: Daugavpils city and Daugavpils region.
Size and trends	The market of the company is a small segment of the tourism industry, which currently has a volume of 10000 Euro. The market at the moment is rapidly growing. The potential for market growth is large. Economic, legal and political conditions of the country cause a stable business climate.
Target Consumers	The activities of the company are primarily aimed at buyers with the following demographic characteristics: young and middle-aged people with children, students and employed people.
Market readiness	Consumers exhibit high involvement in the purchase. The consumer is able to refuse to purchase the goods in the case of lower incomes. The level of adherence to certain brands in the market is high due to the quality of the service.

Table 3.2.2.

Promotion of tourist product (author Valerija Burova)

Promotion channels	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
TV advertising on <i>DauTKom TV</i>	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€	120s ec/1 32€
Advertising on the radio on LR3	155s ec/4 6.5€	140s ec/4 2€	155s ec/4 6.5€	150s ec/4 5€	155s ec/4 6.5€	150s ec/4 5€	155s ec/4 6.5€	155s ec/4 6.5€	150s ec/4 5€	155s ec/4 6.5€	150s ec/4 5€	155s ec/4 6.5€
Advertising in press in newspaper "Diena"	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€	1 module /65€
Printed products at Arta print baltijā	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€	10 booklets /24.60€
Total	268. 10€	263. 60€	268. 10€	266. 60€	268. 10€	266. 60€	268. 10€	268. 10€	266. 60€	268. 10€	266. 60€	268. 10€

TV advertising: for times per month all year round. One second on *DauTKom TV* costs 1.10 Euro. The video will be 30 seconds long. Total costs 30sec x 48(4x12 months) = 1440sec

$$1440\text{sec} \times 1.10\text{€} = 1584\text{€}$$

Advertising on the radio: one time every day. One second on *LR3* costs 0.30 Euro. The advertisement will be 5 seconds long. Total costs 5sec x 365days = 1825sec

$$1825\text{sec} \times 0.30 = 547.5\text{€}$$

Advertising in press in newspaper "Diena". One module costs 65 Euro. The advertisement will be published one time per month.

$$12\text{months} \times 65\text{€} = 780\text{€}$$

Printed products at Arta print baltijā. 10 booklets every month.

$$10\text{ booklets} \times 24.60\text{€}$$

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. For travelers, Latvia is a godsend. It is a green country with widely spread forests and untouched nature. It is a country with sandy beaches that are at a distance from the cities with their historical and cultural traditions, rich architecture and fascinating sights. With calm course of life in the villages, with modern cities, with unobtrusive but hospitable people and a safe environment.
2. Tourism occupies one of the most important places in the economy of Latvia. Latvia is different in its natural, historical and cultural diversity and is attractive from the point of view of tourism. The geography of international tourism in Latvia is diverse, and Riga in turn has a good tourist market in the tourist and recreational industry of the world.
3. Tourism in Latvia and especially ecotourism brings new impressions for all tourists, especially those who have visited it for the first time. Latvia is rich in its natural objects and sights, historical, cultural, and religious objects and nature. It is a country that has a huge number of beautiful beaches, architectural and entertainment facilities, is located in a temperate climate from sea to continental and allows you to feel each of the 4 seasons. The country is located in the Northern part of Europe. It is possible to visit Latvia alone, with a group of friends, colleagues, with a family and with different purposes: cognitive, historical and cultural, religious, etc.
4. Ecological green tourism gives the possibility of additional earnings, possibility to solve various problems with children, possibility interesting communication and improving of the educational level.
5. Promotion of a tourist product encompasses various methods and means of promotion, the application of which is determined by the specific work of the travel company, the marketing orientation towards end users, the current management system, the competence and professionalism of employees, and their interest in the final result of their work. Promotion of the tourist product consists of a combination of cyclical work related to the development and implementation of each specific tour.
6. At the present moment, the infrastructure of Latvia is developing and represents a system that fully operates in the international tourism market and is able to provide a tourist product to its consumers - tourists who have visited the country.
7. Latvia has good tourist potential and infrastructure, which is able to meet the needs of many tourists. Restaurants, hotels of different levels of comfort, bars, discos, beaches, various attractions, active sports - this is a small list that can attract tourists to this wonderful country. Despite all the attractiveness of the tourism industry in Latvia, it is

necessary to develop it, use additional funds from the country budget, and conduct active advertising abroad.

Suggestions:

- The government should support the idea of creating conditions for the development of ecotourism on a regular basis; summarize current seminars/trainings in ecotourism; gather information about organizations and institutions which provide answers about the ecotourism service in order to develop the ecotourism and make it possible to get additional incomes in this sector.
- The owners of ecotourism business ecotourism should minimize environmental changes; ecotourism should not damage natural complexes in order to promote the protection of nature and improve the welfare of the local population.
- More tours for families with children should be organized and promoted by the author. Travel agency should be ready to welcome guests traveling with children. Hotels should be equipped with special games rooms, restaurants and cafes with children's menus and there should be special zones where children can actively relax.

SUMMARY

The theme of the diploma paper: Ecotourism Development opportunities in Latgale region
Carrying out a study on the development of tourism in Latvia led to the conclusion that ecotourism in Latvia is steadily growing in demand and in popularity, despite some periods of decline associated with political and economic crises. The main region in Latvia, the most popular for different types and kinds of tourism is Latgale. Daugavpils and its region are the most suitable for ecotourism in Latgale.

The tourist market of Riga and Daugavpils is a dynamically developing object: the volume of tourist trips to these cities grows substantially; the incomes from tourism follow the same trend. The majority of possible types of tourism develop in the Riga and Daugavpils regions.

Key words: tourism development, type of tourism, cultural features of the country, best places for travelling in Latvia.

Aim of the research: To investigate the theoretical bases of ecotourism development in Latvia, its concepts, features, as well as the current state and study its perspectives.

Tasks of the research:

1. to analyze theoretical bases of development of tourism in Latvia;
2. to compare and explore the current state of tourism in Latvia and its development prospects;
3. to analyze theoretical bases of development of ecotourism in Latvia;
4. to develop a tourist-excursion route for families with children and its promotion possibilities.

Hypothesis: It is important to develop ecotourism in Latgale region, because ecotourism brings a sufficient income to the tourism industry.

Tourism in Latvia and especially ecotourism brings new impressions for all tourists, especially those who have visited it for the first time. Latvia is rich in its natural objects and sights, historical, cultural, and religious objects and nature. It is a country that has a huge number of beautiful beaches, architectural and entertainment facilities, is located in a temperate climate from sea to continental and allows you to feel each of the 4 seasons. The country is located in the Northern part of Europe. It is possible to visit Latvia alone, with a group of friends, colleagues, with a family and with different purposes: cognitive, historical and cultural, religious, etc.

KOPSAVILKUMS

Diplomdarba tēma: Ekotūrisma attīstības iespējas Latgales reģionā.

Veicot pētījumu par tūrisma attīstību Latvijā, tika secināts, ka ekotūrisms Latvijā pastāvīgi pieaug pieprasījumam un popularitātei, neskatoties uz dažiem lejupslīdes periodiem, kas saistīti ar politisko un ekonomisko krīzi. Galvenais Latvijas reģions, kas ir vispopulārākais dažādiem tūrisma veidiem un veidiem ir Latgale.

Daugavpils un tās reģions ir vispiemērotākais ekotūrisma Latgalē. Rīgas un Daugavpils tūristu tirgus ir dinamiski attīstošs objekts: ievērojami pieaug tūrisma braucienu apjoms uz šīm pilsētām; tūrisma ienākumi ir tādi paši.

Lielākā daļa iespējamo tūrisma veidu attīstās Rīgā un Daugavpilī.

Atslēgas vārdi: tūrisma attīstība, tūrisma veids, valsts kultūras elementi, labākās vietas ceļošanai pa Latviju.

Pētījuma mērķis: Izpētīt ekotūrisma attīstības teorētiskos pamatus Latvijā, tās koncepcijas, iezīmes, kā arī pašreizējo stāvokli un izpētīt tā perspektīvas.

Pētījuma uzdevumi:

1. analizēt teorētiskos pamatus tūrisma attīstībai Latvijā;
2. salīdzināt un izpētīt pašreizējo tūrisma situāciju Latvijā un tās attīstības perspektīvas;
3. analizēt ekotūrisma attīstības teorētiskos pamatus Latvijā;
4. attīstīt tūristu ekskursiju maršrutu ģimenēm ar bērniem un tā veicināšanas iespējām.

Hipotēze: ir svarīgi attīstīt ekotūrisma Latgales reģionā, jo ekotūrisms ir pietiekams ienākums tūrisma nozarei.

Tūrisms Latvijā un jo īpaši ekotūrisms rada jaunus iespaidus visiem tūristiem, it īpaši tiem, kuri to pirmo reizi apmeklēja. Latvija ir bagāta ar saviem dabas objektiem un apskates objektiem, vēsturiskiem, kultūras un reliģiskiem objektiem un dabu. Tā ir valsts, kurā ir daudzas skaistas pludmales, arhitektūras un izklaides vietas. Valsts atrodas Eiropas ziemeļu daļā. Ir iespējams apmeklēt Latviju kopā ar draugiem, kolēģiem, ģimeni ar dažādiem mērķiem: izziņas, vēstures un kultūras, reliģisko uc.

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ATTACHMENT 1. SERVICE PROGRAMME

Day 1

Bus from 9:00 to 17:00

9:00 - leaving Rezekne from the bus station

11:00 - meeting, acquaintance with the guide;

11:30 - sightseeing tour at Silas lake - 1 hour;

13:30 – lunch;

14:30 - accommodation at the SILENE RESORT & SPA *****;

15:30 - walk around the Nature Park “Silena”, duration - 2 hours;

17:30 – dinner;

20:00 - meeting in the lobby of the hotel (evening programme: games, competitions, age 7-15+).

Day 2

Bus from 10:00 to 17:00

9:00 - breakfast;

10:00 - out-of-town excursion to Recreation Park "Stalkers", duration - 4 hours;

14:00 - picnic lunch.

15:00 – a trip to Daugavpils Bats Centre, duration - 2 hours;

17:00 – dinner;

19:00 - collection in the lobby of the hotel (entertainment programme: competitions, games).

Day 3

Bus from 10:00 to 17:00

9:00 - breakfast.

10:00 - rafting along the Daugava "SOLA", duration - 1,5 hours;

11:30 – dinner;

14:00 - Boat ride along the Daugava, boat rent "Beibuks", duration - 2 hours;

17:00 - dinner.

Day 4

Bus from 10:00 to 14:00

9:00 - breakfast;

10:00 - excursion programme in the attraction park "Daugavpils Tarzāns";

13:00 – lunch;

14:00 - seeing the group off.

DECLARATION OF HONOUR

Final theses “**Ecotourism Development opportunities in Latgale region**” was developed within the study programme “Hospitality Management” at RTA and UK.

I, the undersigned, declare that the research was done independently, the information sources indicated in the Paper were only used and the submitted electronic version of the Paper is identical with the printed version.

Author of the Paper: _____

_____._____._____.

(date)

_____ Valērija Burova

(signature)

Supervisor: Mg.oec., lect. Iveta Dembovska

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Reviewer: Doc. PhD. Rūta Meište

The Paper was defended at the Bachelor Paper

Examination Committee meeting

minutes No. _____

Date: _____._____._____.

Assessment _____

Secretary of the Committee:

(signature, name surname)