

Transfrontier Cooperation Strategy Development Based on Utilization Efficiency Increase of Tourism and Recreational Territory Potential

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ABSTRACT

The importance and relevance of the research of the new form of international cooperation, transfrontier cooperation, cannot be overemphasized because this is border regions activity development that encourages social and economic relations expansion into the other regions of neighbouring countries. The authors used methods of contrastive, system, factor and structural analysis as well as methods of systematization, generalization and SWOT-analysis that helps to study the issue in a comprehensive way taking into consideration various factors that influence cross-border cooperation strategy development. The research results originality consists in the specification of the “transfrontier cooperation” scientific concept, of its essential features, types and specific project goals. Moreover, the authors conducted comparative analysis of these resources based on the research of tourism and recreational potential of Poland, Lithuania and Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, it was proved that not only border state authorities should be interested in the increase of tourism and recreational potential utilization efficiency but also the economic entities participating in certain cross-border cooperation projects. The support of the local community is also very important as the play an essential role in tourism development. The article is of theoretical value for the scientific research in the sphere of cross-border cooperation strategy development at the expense of tourism and recreational potential utilization efficiency growth.

KEYWORDS

transfrontier cooperation, border regions, strategy, tourism and recreational potential, health resort services.

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Introduction

Transfrontier cooperation modern types have evaluated from pre-existing interstate cooperation forms as an answer for the ever-growing world

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globalization pace. Nowadays transfrontier cooperation is one of the essential elements of state-to-state relations and global policy.

Since the end of the last century due to the globalization activation the transfrontier essence research has been launched (Ricq, 2006) as well as relevant international frameworks have been adopted (European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, 1980).

Numerous researches of the transfrontier cooperation issues (Belitskii, 2014; Litvishko, 2015; Verkholantseva, 2009; Katrovsky & Korneevets, 2015; Sakhieva et al., 2015) highlight the importance of the transfrontier cooperation development for economic activity expansion within border regions as well as the importance of the natural resources potential mobilization and thereupon living standards growth on the.

At the same time, the diversification mechanism of the border regions economic activity is not clearly understood and tourism and recreational potential effective utilization possibilities of these areas aren't described.

For the said purpose the scientists of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University initiated the research of the transfrontier cooperation development challenges and opportunities in order to diversify the Russian Federation subjects' economic activities on the basis of tourism and recreational potential effective utilization within these regions. The results of the conducted research are reflected in the present article. The research is undertaken with financial support from The Russian Foundation of Basic Research as a part of the project № 16-06-00181.

Literature Review

The writings of scientists who studied the transfrontier cooperation concept provided the scientific background for the present research. Basing on the results of the research conducted it may be concluded that there is not a unique definition of the transfrontier cooperation even though single approach elaboration is very important.

Nowadays there are various approaches to define the transfrontier cooperation concept despite the fact that the European Outline Convention (European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, 1980) gives rather vast interpretation of transfrontier cooperation as several common activities aimed at more profound neighbourhood among communities or authorities that act under the jurisdiction of two or more parties basing on the conclusion of necessary agreements (Table 1).

Table 1. Scientific approaches to define transfrontier cooperation

Interpretation	Author
Transfrontier cooperation is a specific sphere of foreign economic, political, ecological, cultural, educational and other forms of international activity that is conducted at a regional level and comprises all their common forms. It is characterized by the necessity and possibility of more active utilization of	Belitskii(2014)

these forms. It has such features as the boundaries and the necessity of its development, common use of natural resources and common mitigation of security issues as well as wider interactive and personal relations among neighbouring countries populations, and notably high load on the infrastructure (roads, communication, service industry, road-side infrastructure)	
Transfrontier cooperation is one of the interterritorial cooperation forms that is a complex of bilateral and multilateral communications among authorities, economic entities, non-governmental organizations and border regions population of two or more states	Davydov&Chekalina(2011)
Transfrontier cooperation is a process of restoring and forming economic contacts with neighbouring states, preservation and development of competitive advantages that were established on both sides of a frontier. Transfrontier relations considerably expand the regions possibilities and enable them to solve their economic and social problems more efficiently.	Kaledin&Korneevets (2007)
Transfrontier cooperation are concerted and affirmative actions that are directed at the development of relations between territorial-administrative units or authorities within a jurisdiction of two or more countries, and that imply making appropriate agreements between the countries.	Verkholantseva(2009)

Thus, the authors presented in the table 1 highlight several essential features of transfrontier cooperation:

- Establishing bilateral and multilateral communications among authorities, economic entities, non-governmental organizations and border regions population of two or more states
- Concerted and affirmative actions within the framework of these projects on the border regions of two or more countries
- Wide interactive relations among economic entities neighbouring countries populations
- Making appropriate collaboration agreements between territorial-administrative units and authorities of two or more states

Although there are such common features, each project may differ in its type, objectives, and other characteristics

Objectives and types of transfrontier cooperation

On the basis of analysis of current scientific approaches to define the criterion function of transfrontier cooperation projects development and realization procedures the following objectives of such cooperation can be distinguished:

- Development of relations among territorial-administrative units and authorities of two or more states
- Restoring old and forming new economic contacts with neighbouring states
- Development of regions' competitive advantages that were established on both sides of a frontier



- Expansion of regions' possibilities that enable them to solve their economic and social problems more efficiently

The research conducted might lead to a conclusion that in order to evaluate transfrontier cooperation it is essential to ameliorate the process of establishment and development of contract relations for project generation conducted on the border regions of two or more states. N.V. Kaledin and V.S. Korneevets (2007) describe the following types of transfrontier cooperation:

- Local border contacts
- Coordination based on the treaty on cooperation between certain organizations, territorial-administrative state units or a complex of these units
- Temporary cooperation networks created in order to carry out transfrontier projects in different spheres.

O.M. Litvishko (2015) suggests highlighting the following interaction models regarding 'initiating parties' as a criteria for transfrontier cooperation classification:

- "soft" or "hard" regionalism
- Models of bottom-up and top-down integration

Regionalization is one of the criteria of transfrontier cooperation classification types. The scientists of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University studied transfrontier cooperation in the tourism sphere that is rapidly developing in the Baltic region and is considered to be a top-priority course of development strategy there.

Although, there are various definitions of the "Baltic region", there is not a unique one. Everything depends on the particular regional concept, on jurisdictions, on the combination of states and geographic regions neighbouring the Baltic Sea. Within the framework of Baltic transfrontier mesoregions formation research V.S. Korneevets, E. Kropinova and I. Dragileva (2015) proved that the following 3 regions can be classified as mesoregions:

- Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation
- Klaipėda, Marijampolė and Tauragė Counties in Lithuania
- Warmian-Masurian and Pomeranian Voivodeship in Poland

In the following, let us consider how the transfrontier cooperation is developing in the Baltic region.

Results

Transfrontier cooperation development analysis of Baltic Region

To work out the transfrontier cooperation strategy aimed to use efficiently the tourism and recreational potential of specific regions, first of all, it is essential to evaluate available territorial resources. Basing on the studying of different scientific (Bookman & Bookman, 2007; Bunakov et al., 2015; Jagyas, 2010; Kaspar, 1996; Michael, 2013) and analytic sources (Nahrstedt, 1997; UNWTO, 2016; Travel to Wellness, 2016; Images of Lithuania' regions, 2016; Information tourism portal of Palanga, 2016; Information portal of Economic chamber «Resorts of Poland », 2016; EuropeSpa, 2016) authors of the article have conducted the investigation and presented the characteristics of tourism and

recreational potential for the development of health resort services in Poland, Lithuania, Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of tourism and recreational potential of regions (in terms of health resort services in Poland, Lithuania, Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation)

Characteristics	Health resort regions			
	Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation	Lithuania	Poland	
Natural resources	Forest resource	19737 ha. Forest resource comprises softwoods (pine, fir), hard-leaved forests (oak, horn-beech, ash) and soft-leaved trees (birch, aspen, European alder, lime)	10711 ha. Pine is the most widespread, but also there are fir, birch, alder, aspen, oak, and ash	Pine is the most widespread, but also there are fir, birch, oak
	Climate	Transitional from oceanic to moderate continental. Average annual temperature is about +8oC. Temperature in July is 17oC, in January - 3oC. Prevailing wind direction is westward with average speed of 4 m/s.	Transitional from oceanic to moderate continental. Average monthly temperature in January is -5oC, in July - 17oC. It is often fogging in spring and autumn and thawing in winter.	Transitional from oceanic to moderate continental. Wet and cloudy seasons are changed with dry and clear ones. Average temperature in July varies from 16oC in the north of Poland to 21oC in the south-east. Average temperature in January is -7oC and more.
	Mineral waters	Mineral waters with mineralization of 50 g salts per 1 litre: - potable, medicinal table hydrocarbonate-chloride natrium composition water without specific components; - bromine chloride calcium-natrium solution with high concentration of borium	Chloride natrium and calcium-natrium waters with mineralization from 15 g to 35 g salts per 1 litre. Chloride natrium, iodine waters	Brines (chloride natrium) of different mineralization. Contain sulphates (bitter water), iodine, bromine, ferrum
	Fund of minerals used for health resort aims	Therapeutic muds from "Goreloe" peat land	Two main types of therapeutic muds: peat and sapropelic muds	Peat therapeutic muds



Infrastructure	Collective accommodation facilities	More than 122 facilities	64 facilities	62 facilities
	Spa resorts, other facilities providing health resort services	20 facilities	10 facilities	38 facilities
	Transport accessibility	Highway transport	Air transport, highway transport, sea transport.	Air transport, highway transport, sea transport.

1) Directions of the improvement of utilization effectiveness in transfrontier cooperation projects for the tourism and recreational potential of regions (in terms of health resort services in Baltic Region)

2) Given the general features of tourism and recreational potential for developing health resort services in Poland, Lithuania, Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation, authors of the article have determined three strategic directions of transfrontier cooperation development to advance the health resort services of the resort areas on the Baltic coast of Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad region (Table 3).

Table 3. Strategic directions of transfrontier cooperation for the development of health resort services in Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation, Lithuania and Poland

Proposed direction of cooperation	Main purposes of cooperation	Descriptions of cooperation directions
“Traveling without borders”	Easing visa regime	Favorable terms to obtain a visa for tourists who visit the resort areas on the three countries’ Baltic coast.
“Speaking one language”	Breaking language barrier	Programs of spa tours, ground maps, price-lists, and main information concerning health resort services are presented in three languages. Employees of main and additional facilities should speak the three countries’ languages at least at the intermediate level. Main information sources providing the data on health resort services are presented in three languages.
“Creating single attractive image for health resort services”	Cooperative promotion of medical health resort services provided within resort areas on the three countries’ Baltic coast.	Creating a unique web-site dedicated to medical health resort services of these areas in three languages. Setting special price determinants for different types of tourists (discounts for families, children). Increasing the attractiveness of each area by the way of cooperative marketing efforts. Organization of exhibitions within the three countries to promote health resort services.

These projects are non-regulatory and may be added and specified depending on one or another project stream of the transfrontier cooperation. In this case, the standard algorithm of working out a transfrontier cooperation strategy can be applied. According to Ricq Ch. (2006), it comprises the following stages: information, consultation, cooperation, relationship harmonization, integration

Discussions

Among the works of Russian scientists who studied the transfrontier cooperation's essence and problems it is possible to distinguish the publications of M. E. Belitskii (2014), D. M. Davydov & T. N. Chekalina. (2011), D. M. Litvishko (2015), K. V. Verkholtantseva (2009) and others.

Several scientists studied the issues of transfrontier cooperation development in particular in the context of tourism. First of all, this refers to the works prepared under the direction of professor V.S. Korneevets from Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (Kaledin & Korneevets, 2007; Katrovsky & Korneevets, 2015; Korneevets, Kropinova & Dragileva, 2015; Korneevets & Semenova, 2015) and others.

However, those investigations do not pay enough attention to the issues concerning transfrontier cooperation strategy generation basing on the increase of tourism and recreational potential's utilization efficiency within the regions.

Authors of the article have already repeated that the tourism and recreational potential's utilization efficiency of the regions, including border ones, depends not only on the neighboring states government bodies' initiative, but also on the contribution of investment and socio-political environments (Rudenko et al., 2015; Kropinova, Zaitseva, & Moroz, 2015). In addition, many things are contingent on the personal interests of economic entities, that take part in specified transfrontier cooperation projects, and on the local population's support that plays crucial role for the tourism development (Zaitseva et al., 2015).

Suggestions and recommendations represented in the article are notable for their novelty since they specify the essence of the "transfrontier cooperation" concept as the science-based category. Besides, the transfrontier cooperation strategic development peculiarities of the Baltic Region, including health resort services, are pointed up in the article.

Conclusion

Generally, summarizing the results of the investigation inference should be drawn that transfrontier cooperation is the basis for integration processes all over the world. At the same time, the effectiveness of the implementation of development strategy for these processes within a specified region depends on a set of factors, including macroeconomic and political factors as well as meso-factors related to the border regions' cooperation peculiarities.

Investigation which was conducted by the authors has allowed to draw the conclusion that one of the main conditions enforcing the transfrontier cooperation development within the Baltic Region is the presence of economical, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic relations. Due to the regional identity factor together with geopolitical and geographical specifics of this region the transfrontier cooperation, as the form of interplay and collaboration among countries, is evolved in the most active manner.

Basing on the studying of tourism and recreational potential through the example of health resort services in Poland, Lithuania and Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation it has been proved that there are common features for



such practices within the mentioned region. This has become the baseline for feasibility and description of the transfrontier cooperation strategic directions related to the health resort services development within the region.

Applying the recommendations proposed by the authors will enhance the increase of tourism and recreational potential's utilization efficiency in the regions by means of the transfrontier cooperation project realization..

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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