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Tourism development in the rural suburban area

The article presents the results of the assessments of the tourism potential in Vologda Municipal District: the assessment of the tourism sector; its influence on the social-economic development of the municipality; the ways to make the usage of the tourism potential more effective.

Rural suburban area, municipal board, tourism potential, strategy and program of tourism development.



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According to Federal Law №131 "About general principles of organization of local government in The Russian Federation"¹ municipal districts acquire more independence to make administrative decisions. It also concerns the assessment of the prospective development trends of their social-economic progress, tourism is one of the most intensively developing economic sectors among them.

In August 2008 at the meeting with the mayors of the Golden Ring cities the RF President D.A. Medvedev noted the necessity to stimulate domestic tourism development, emphasizing the importance of the distribution of authorities between federal, regional and municipal district powers [2].

Taking into consideration the new economic and social circumstances the development of the sector in question can stabilize economic situation, moderate social problems, become

a real factor of maintaining, reproduction and using the natural and cultural-historical potential both at the level of the RF region and a municipal district.

The effectiveness of tourism development depends not only on the unique cultural heritage of a municipal district but on its geographical proximity to a city.

One of the most prospective tourism destinations² in Vologda Oblast is Vologda Municipal District. It has a great variety of tourist places and is in the close proximity to the oblast center – Vologda.

According to 2007 official totals assessing tourist attendance Vologda Municipal District ranked 11th among the other oblast districts (*tab. 1*). At the same time the assessments of the city population of Vologda and Cherepovets in relation to the tourist resources of the district are higher. The results of the public inquiry

organized by VSCC CEMI RAS in June 2007 show that Vologda Municipal District ranked 6th among the 10 most attractive for development of the domestic tourism districts.

The reasons for the tourist attractiveness of Vologda Municipal District are:

- Historic-cultural sights, ancient wooden architecture and monuments (The Museum of Architecture and Ethnography in Semyonkovo, The Andreyev-Rezanov Estate with parks and pools in Kurkino, The A. F. Mozhayskiy Museum and etc.);
- Beneficial geographical location (close proximity to oblast administrative center Vologda);
- Developed transport infrastructure (federal and local highways, railways and waterways, airlines);
- Various events ("Kubenskoye Trade Fair", "Horse Holiday", "Youth Household" etc.);
- Beneficial environmental situation.

Everything mentioned above creates a favourable situation for the development of the tourist attractiveness. According to the data of the inquiry of the directors of The Vologda Administration departments, the government specialists and the heads of the Vologda District Rural Settlements³ the most popular kinds of tourism nowadays are event tourism (100% of respondents), pilgrim tourism (71%), health-improving tourism (57%), sports tourism (57%).

The main condition for tourism development is the presence of the tourist resources but their distribution on the territory of the district is rather uneven. Correspondingly there are rural settlements with high, medium and low levels of tourism development (*fig. 1*).

One can see that the tourist sector is highly developed in Oktyabrskiy, Kubenskoye, Spasskoye, Sosnovka Rural Settlements (they are referred to the group "High level of tourism development"). These areas have the highest

Table 1. Distribution of tourist streams in Vologda Oblast towns and districts*, thousands of people

Rank	Districts and towns	2006	2007	200 as compared with 2006, %
1	Kirillov District	264,0	266,0	101
2	Vologda	214,9	218,0	102
3	Cherepovets	189,5	192,0	101
4	Velikiy Ustuyg District	132,0	165,0	125
5	Sheksna District	45,0	49,9	111
6	Cherepovets District	37,7	38,8	129
7	Belozersk District	30,3	38,4	127
8	Totma District	31,2	33,2	106
9	Vytegra District	23,1	27,3	118
10	Ustye-Kubinskoye District	20,9	21,9	105
11	Vologda District	19,1	21,1	105
12	Nyuksenitsa District	16,8	18,5	110
13	Ustyuzhna District	16,7	18,0	108
14	Sokol District	10,4	12,0	115
15	Gryazovets District	6,3	8,9	141
16	Tarnoga District	4,7	5,2	111
17	Babushkino District	4,5	5,1	113
18	Vashki District	0,3	5,1	17 times as many
19	Kharovsk District	6,0	5,0	83
20	Nickolsk District	4,0	4,9	123
21	others	27,8	12,1	43
	Total	1,104,0	1,164,0	105

*The data from the oblast municipal districts.

Source: Strategy of the tourism sphere development in Vologda Oblast till 2020: Decree of The Vologda Oblast Government № 1547 of August 11, 2008. Available at: <http://vologdatourinfo.ru/legislation/>.

tourist activity due to their close proximity to Vologda.

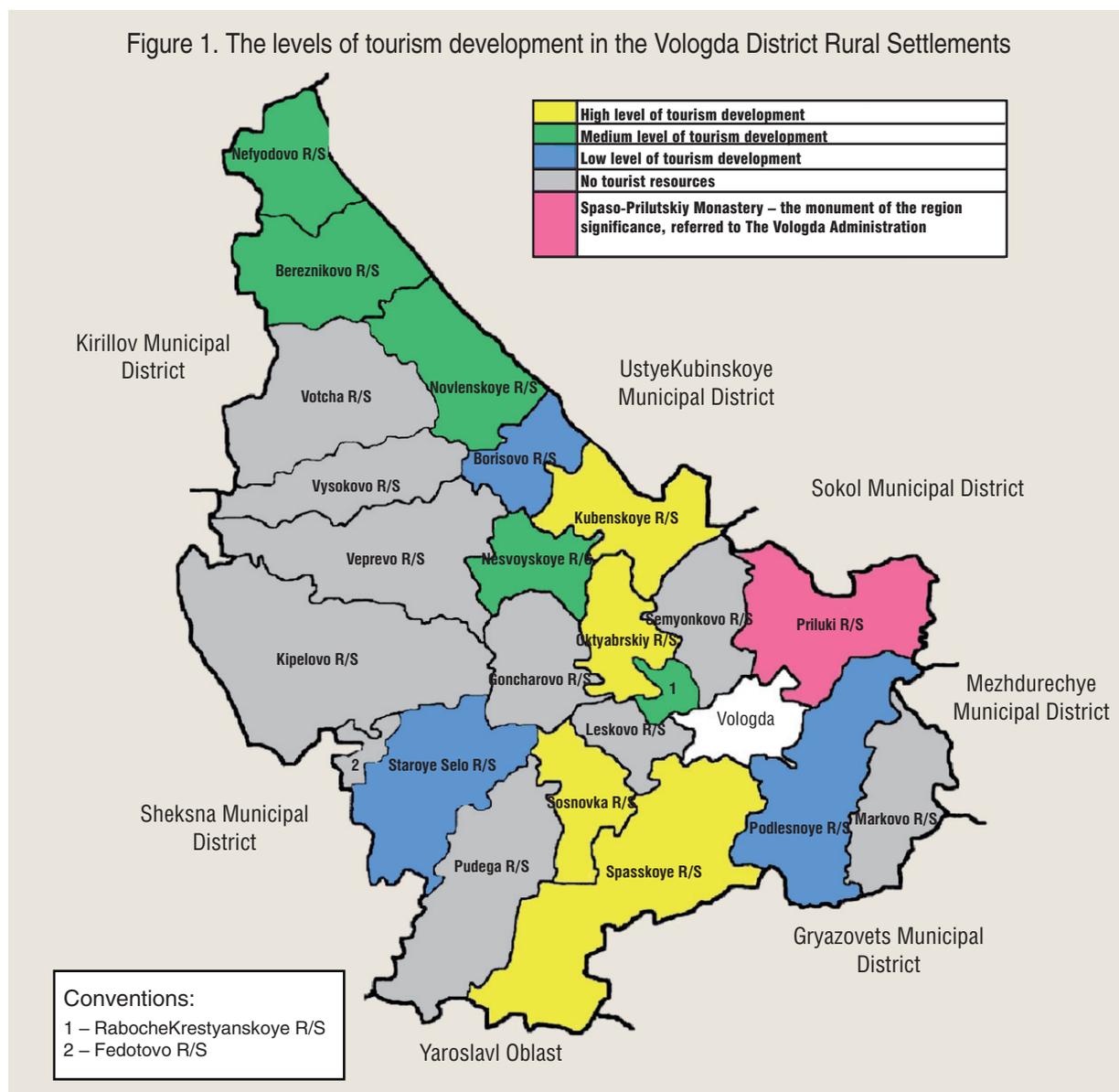
Vologda is a rather big tourist center, its part in the oblast general tourist stream is 18,2%⁴. Correspondingly the rural settlements belonging to the group «High level of tourism development» can be well included to the main tourist routs of the town itself and to the neighbouring districts of the oblast.

Other rural settlements of the district ether do not use the tourist potential to a full extent or do not possess enough information about the tourist resources (Votcha, Kipelovo Rural Settlements and others).

On the whole tourism has a rather great influence on the social-economic development of the municipality (*tab. 2*). Taking into consideration the existing tourist resources, the variety of the kinds of tourism one can say this sector is likely to become one of the "points of increase" in the economy of Vologda District.

In spite of the potential possibilities tourism development in Vologda District is restrained by:

- Insufficient information about the district and its tourist attractions in the external market;
- High competitiveness on behalf of other tourist centers of Vologda Oblast.



Besides, about 80% of the interrogated representatives of the administration and the heads of the Vologda District rural settlements named the underdevelopment of the tourist infrastructure and poor service to be the reasons that prevent the tourist flow. Every second expert mentioned that the absence of an accurate program of the sector in question prevents it from effective functioning. One third of the respondents consider that the tourist resources of the district are unknown in the external market and there is lack of tourist produces of international standards as well.

Under the condition of thorough planning and reasonable management tourism is going to develop steadily not damaging the destination.

Taking into consideration strong points and potential opportunities of the tourism sector (*tab. 3*) it should be noted that the strategic status of its future development seems to be in the organization of the diverse kinds of tourist rest in order to give the maximum satisfaction of staying at the place. So the mission of the district can be defined as: Vologda District – rest for everyone.

The priority in tourism development of the municipality is set to the creation of auspicious conditions for a man to have a rest. Within the

bounds of the above-stated mission the strategic aim of tourism development in Vologda District is the following: to create modern, effective and competitive tourist complex that is going to satisfy the requirements of the oblast population, the neighbouring regions and foreign tourists and to develop a tourism sector as one of the prospective economic spheres in the municipality.

As for the target guidelines in the near- and medium-term outlooks it is necessary to concentrate on:

- ➔ the promotion of the district as a tourist center on the national tourism market;
- ➔ the enhancement of the opportunities to invest into the tourist infrastructure of the district;
- ➔ training and improvement of professional skills of the personnel in the tourist services sector;
- ➔ the involvement of the local population in tourism development.

The effectiveness of the realization of the strategic aim greatly depends on the management system in the tourism sector: it is necessary to develop management-organizational mechanisms in order to increase the results of using the tourist potential of the district.

Table 2. The influence of tourism on the social-economic development of the municipality

Positive influence	Negative influence
<i>On social development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improvement of the architectural-artistic appearance of the municipality. ✓ Rise of cultural education of the municipality native population, cultural networking with the bearers of different cultures. ✓ Development of service enterprises aimed both at the tourists and at the local population (cinemas, restaurants, consumer services, trade etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Heightened interest/ indifference of the local population to the tourist attractions in the municipality. ✓ Deterioration of the problems connected with drug abuse, alcohol addiction, crime, prostitution.
<i>On economic development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tourism is a source of development of other economy branches somehow connected with the tourist service sector and of additional employment opportunities. ✓ Tourism is a source of currency that is why it directly effects the external payments position. ✓ Tourism encourages local population, authorities and all the districts to earn extra incomes. ✓ Tourism creates extra demand for various goods and services. ✓ The demand for souvenirs and local handicraft produces considerably increases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tourist streams have seasonal character, it considerably effects the profitability of the tourist enterprises. ✓ The demand for tourist services can intensify the rate of inflation concerning certain goods and services that can cause the rise of the cost of living in the municipality.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of the development of the tourism sector in Vologda District

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficial geographical location (close proximity to Moscow, Saint Petersburg and oblast administrative center Vologda). • A number of significant historic-cultural sights, ancient wooden architecture and monuments. • Holding of the oblast and inter-regional exhibitions, fairs, festivals, competitions. • Virgin landscapes and natural monuments. • Medical health-improving complex including diagnostic and therapeutic basis of Sanatorium «Noviy Istochnik». • The Museum of Architecture and Ethnography in Semyonkovo. • Relatively beneficial environmental situation in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underdevelopment of the tourist infrastructure and poor service. • Absence of an accurate program of development. • Low level of usage of the tourist potential. • Insufficient publicity of the district and its tourist brands in the tourist service market. • Lack of tourist produces of international standards. • Absence of complex tours that can connect the district destinations with the tourist centers of Vologda Oblast. • Obvious seasonal character of the majority of the tourist attractions. • Lack of experienced tourist personnel. • Local population lacks information about the tourist potential of the district.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including Vologda District into the group of innovative attractive tourism areas in Vologda Oblast. • The Vologda Government support of the prospective trends of tourism development in the district. • The possibility of increasing of the tourist flows from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Vologda and Vologda Oblast due to the joint tourist produces. • Including tourist attractions of Vologda District into tourist agencies catalogues of other regions. • Arousing foreign tourists' interest in ecotourism and farm tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of the criminogenic situation. • Competitive advantage of Vologda and other tourist centers of Vologda Oblast. • Deterioration of the environmental situation. • Causing damage to historic-cultural monuments as a result of inadequate measures to preserve them. • Loss of tourism market owing to the low level of tourist service and lack of information about the district.

Firstly, they need to create the program of tourism development. The interest to the program-targeted approach in the tourism sector is heightening every year. The quality of such a program mostly depends on the existing methodological base of such a development. The Federal Tourism Agency (Rostourism) issued Order № 66 of July, 11, 2007 "About adoption of Standard structure of regional (municipal) program of tourism development in The Russian Federation region". According to the order the municipal program of tourism development in the RF region comprises a package of measures to take on the constituent territory of The Russian Federation [4]. Therefore, the above-stated order should be the key one to define the contents of the program of tourism development while creating it.

The development and realization of the complex targeted program can ensure:

► Promotion of Vologda District as a tourist center in national and international tourist markets;

► Improvement of the tourist services sector and suggestion of a tourist produce with improved consumer properties;

► Development of the prospective kinds of tourism in the district;

► Rational usage and effectiveness increase of the investments into the tourism sector of the district etc.

Secondly, for effective tourism development they should create an appropriate governing body operating on two levels – The Administration of Vologda Municipal District and Administrations of Rural Settlements (*fig. 2*). A specialist in tourism development should cooperate with other Vologda Administration departments: The Department of Culture, The Department of Social-Economic Development of Rural Settlements, The Committee on Physical Culture and Sports, The Department of Land Resources, Trade Department, The Department of Protection of Consumers, The Department of Natural Resources, The Department of Environmental Protection etc.

An accurate mechanism of responsibility and supervision should be created to take the tourism development measures in Vologda District successfully. The director of Economic Department of Vologda District supervises the work of a proper specialist. The Committee on Tourism of The Vologda Government can operate as a consultative body which makes certain alterations in the tourism development programs in the district and works out strategic programs.

Thirdly, tourism development on the territory of a municipal district is impossible without mutual understanding between local authorities and population and their involvement into implementation of concrete plans and projects.

Today the results of the inquiries show the citizens of Vologda District are rather indifferent about tourism as a prospective sector of the municipal district economy (71% of

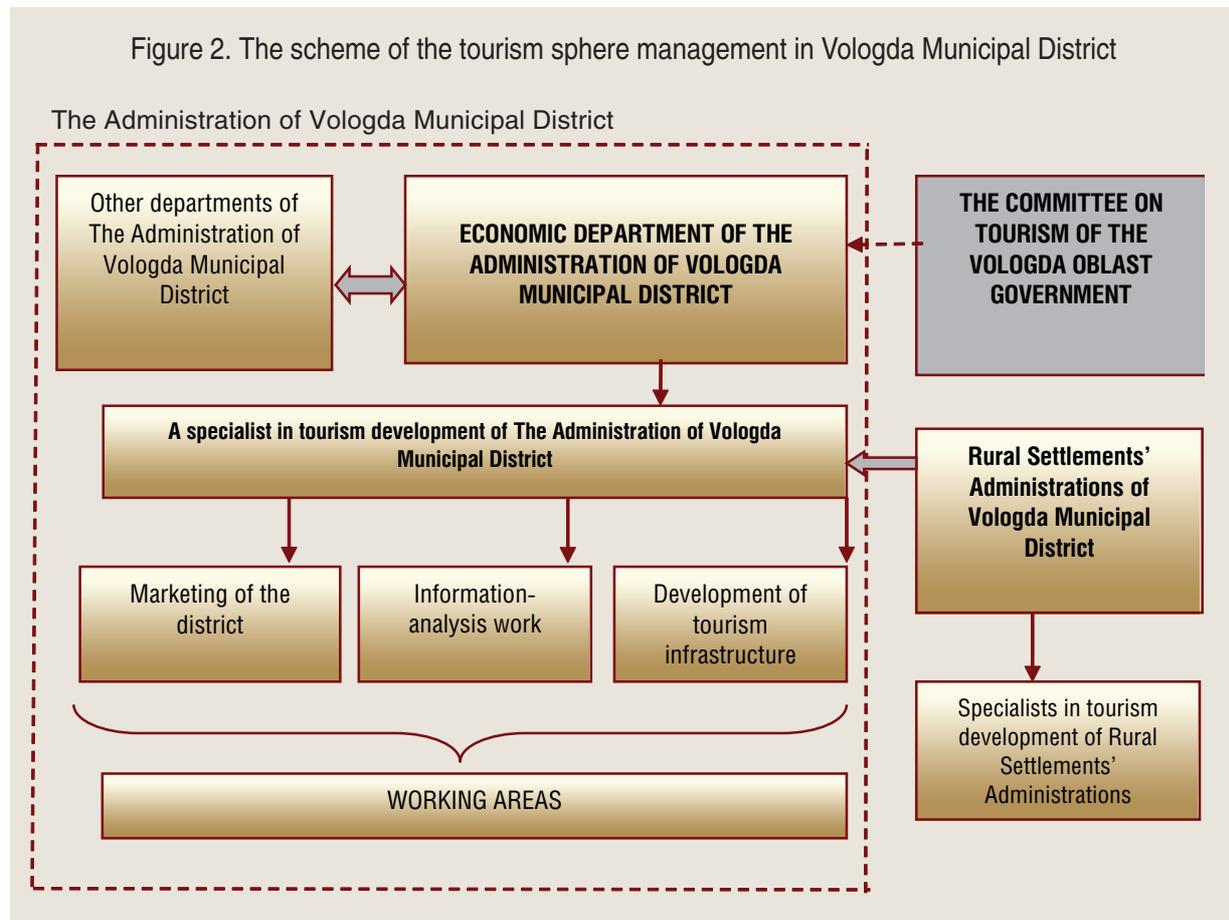
respondents). At the same time every second expert estimates that the local people are ready to participate in activities aimed at tourism development in case they are supported to establish business.

Thus, tourism development in Vologda District demands coordination of measures of The Administration of Vologda Municipal District and the tourist enterprises, complete realization of the tourist resources potential, usage of new approaches in development of the sector in question.

The desired goal of the realization of the competitive advantages in the tourist sector of the municipality which is in immediate proximity to a large town is possible under the conditions of their close mutual relations with each other, with certain economic and social effects as a result.

Economic benefit is seen in the territorial concentration of the tourist resources and tourism

Figure 2. The scheme of the tourism sphere management in Vologda Municipal District



business as a whole: common infrastructure (transport, residence, catering, entertainment and so on), joint tourist routes, projects etc. Social effect of the agglomeration is seen in creation of the necessary prerequisites for improving the life quality of the population (job growth, rise of cultural education and

so on). At the same time the town citizens become the consumers of tourist services on the territory of the rural municipal settlements (for example, while holding various events). In this case two goals are achieved – provision of a good rest and replenishment of the municipal budget.

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Notes

¹ About general principles of local governments organisation in the Russian Federation: Federal Order № 131-FO of October 6, 2003 (amended on November, 8, 2007). Adopted by the RF State Duma on September, 16, 2003, with amendments become operative from January, 1, 2008.

² Tourist destination is a territory with certain boundaries which attracts large groups of tourists and satisfies their needs.

³ 19 experts – the directors of The Vologda Administration departments, the government specialists and the heads of the Vologda District Rural Settlements took part in the inquiry held by VSCC CEMI RAS in July – August, 2008. The goal of the inquiry was to learn the opportunities of tourism development and to assess the effectiveness of the tourism sector in the district.

⁴ Based on the analytical report "The model of tourism sector development in Vologda Oblast", worked out by The Committee on Tourism of The Vologda Oblast Government in 2006.