

## Potential of the Tourism and Recreation Sphere in the European North: Evaluation and Development Vector in terms of the Arctic Development



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**Abstract.** The article examines the potential and development vector of the tourism and recreation sphere in the European North in current conditions. We present the results of the research aimed at defining the potential level of the European North's tourism and recreation sphere and developing areas of its growth within the Arctic development on this basis. We name the objects of tourist attraction in the Arctic zones and show the monuments of cultural, historical, and natural heritage in the European North. We conduct a critical analysis of methodologies for defining the tourist potential level and reveal its pros and cons. We justify the necessity to develop efficient methodological approaches to studying the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sphere. We propose the following criteria for evaluating the tourist potential of northern regions: image of the tourist region, degree of the tourist infrastructure development, labor potential of tourism, transport accessibility and environmental friendliness of the territory, comfort and safety of tourists, competitive, institutional, and innovative components of the tourism sector. We reveal northern territories with the highest tourist potential on the basis of the results received after testing the author's methodology for evaluating the tourism resource potential, which implies the carrying out of the expert assessment considering the importance and manifestation of the tourist potential components. They are the basis for designing tourist and recreation zones and forming new tourist destinations. We mark the problems and prospects of developing tourist activity in the European North. It is justified that problem-oriented concept should be the development vector of the tourism and recreation sphere of

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northern tourist territories in modern conditions. We determine the significance of the study for the theory of tourism. We develop recommendations on the application of the obtained results in management and development of tourism and recreation in the European North.

**Key words:** tourism and recreation sphere, tourism development, tourism potential assessment, European North, Arctic.

### Introduction

Due to global trends which negatively affect external and internal environment, there is a necessity to stabilize and increase the level of socio-economic conditions in Russian regions. The development of the tourist sectors is a promising area, and the implementation of its potential will allow reforming the reproductive structure of the economy. One of the priority strategic aims of the northern Russian territories development, defined in the Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone until 2020, is the Arctic tourism<sup>1</sup>. The Arctic zone is characterized by unique natural potential, cultural and historical heritages, which determine the exclusivity of tours to the Arctic. In this regard, the process of studying the tourist potential of the northern regions is of high importance in the modern conditions of the Arctic development. The purpose of the study is to assess the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sector of the European North and determine on this basis the areas of its development in the conditions of the Arctic development. To achieve this aim, we solved the following objectives:

- revealed the essence and features of the territory's tourist potential (the resource potential of tourism and recreation);
- conducted a critical analysis of approaches and methods of the tourist potential research;
- revealed the features of a current state of the tourism and recreation sphere in the European North;

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for developing the Russian Arctic zone until 2020. Available at: <http://government.ru/news/432/> (accessed: December 8, 2019).

- conducted and evaluated the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sector in the European North entities;
- highlighted the problems hindering the efficient realization of the tourist potential of the northern territories;
- determined the prospects for the tourism and recreation development in the European North in the context of the Arctic development.

The European North, being the largest tourist region in Russia, unites the territories of the Vologda, Arkhangelsk, and Murmansk oblasts, Karelia and Komi republics, as well as the Nenets Autonomous Okrug. The study of the tourist potential of the European North will help to determine the future prospects for the development of the tourism sector.

The tourism potential (the resource potential of tourism and recreation) is the resource base of a tourist region, which forms a opportunity to meet the needs of tourists and achieve the goals of tourism. The level of the tourism and recreation resource potential development is determined by a set of qualitative and quantitative characteristics. The size of the tourist potential reflects a totality of natural, cultural, historical and socio-economic resources that form the attractiveness of the territory for travelers. However, it is worth noting that, currently, there is a problem of evaluating the tourist potential of the territory, which is associated with the divergence of views of scientists and specialists from different professional fields on its components. At the same time, the results of the critical analysis of existing approaches to the study of the tourist potential of the territory suggest that the assessment

of its individual components is the most developed – natural resources in particular [1–6].

The complexity of the structure of the tourism potential determines a variety of research approaches to the identification of components and criteria for its assessment (*Tab. 1*). Thus, in accordance with the approach of I.A. Bashalhanov and L.B. Bashalhanova, the evaluation criteria of the tourism potential are wildness, uniqueness and

originality of recreational resources, quality of rest, fulfillment of human needs in communicating with “wild nature”, and a possibility of restoring natural and recreational resources [1]. A.V. Drozdov [2] identifies the main components of the tourism potential for quantitative assessment: natural and cultural landscapes, means and conditions for conducting tours. Total value is converted into a qualitative characteristic. E.Yu. Kolbovskii

Table 1. Component structure and criteria for evaluating the tourist potential of the territory in researchers' approaches

Researcher	Components and evaluation criteria	Evaluation pros and cons
Bashalhanov I.A., Bashalhanova L.B.	Criteria: 1) quality of recreation, which is provided by a variety of opportunities (medical, sports, educational, aesthetic, etc.); 2) wildness, uniqueness and originality of recreational resources; 3) fulfillment of human needs in communicating with “wild nature”; 4) possibility of restoring natural and recreational resources.	Pros of evaluation are a wide range of components of natural potential, as well as consideration of its role in the process of meeting needs of a tourist. Cons: – lack of quantitative assessment; – cultural, historical, and infrastructural resources, as well as the socio-economic component, are not included.
Drozdov A.V.	1) Natural and cultural landscapes. 2) Means and conditions for the implementation of tours (landscape, recreational load, transport, public catering facilities, information materials, etc.).	Pros: – a fixed set of components is evaluated; – a qualitative scale is used to calculate the final value; – territorial scope of a comparison is indicated. Cons: – focus on using national parks in the conditions of specially protected natural areas; – lack of quantitative assessment.
Kolbovskii E.Yu.	1) Historical heritage objects. 2) Unique natural and cultural landscape-related objects. 3) Places chosen by population for their own recreation. 4) Potential types of tourism. 5) Objects used for tourism purposes. 6) Priority types of tourist activities. 7) Tour routes	Pros of this method include a possibility of a comprehensive study of the tourist potential and the identification of problems that hinder its development. Cons of the method are that it does not involve a quantitative and a general integral assessment.
Khudenkikh Yu.A.	Natural, historical, cultural, and socio-economic components.	The advantage of the method is the study of a totality of the main components of the tourist potential. Cons: – complexity of calculating the correction coefficients; – performance indicators of service and hospitality enterprises are not taken into account; – transport component is examined without taking into account the quality of the tourist transport used.
Rating Agency Expert RA	Natural and recreational, historical and cultural, infrastructural and entertainment potentials	The advantage of the method is the usage of the experts' experience in the process of assessing the tourist potential of the territory Cons: – there is no socio-economic component; – subjectivism, since indicators are calculated based on their significance, determined by experts.

End of Table 1

Researcher	Components and evaluation criteria	Evaluation pros and cons
Karachevskaya E.N.	Resource, environmental, infrastructure, and consumer factors.	The advantage of the method is to determine the impact of factors taking into account regionally significant criteria. However, indicators that characterize natural resources of a territory, as well as its socio-economic development, are not included.
Raskovalov V.P.	Natural, historical, cultural, and transport potentials.	The advantage of the methodology is determined by the fact that, in the process of assessing the tourist potential, a set of environmental factors that limit the development of tourism is taken into account. At the same time, infrastructure resources, socio-economic development and environmental friendliness of a territory are not taken into account.
Source: own compilation on the basis of methodological developments of researchers [1–6].		

improved this approach by proposing to consider not a separate part of a territory but a relatively large area of an administrative region or district.

Yu.A. Khudenkikh determines the amount of natural and historical-cultural components on the basis of a point assessment, taking into account the value of the territory's heritage [2]. The final result is the share of each specific territory in the natural, historical, cultural and socio-economic components of the potential. Rating Agency Expert RA annually calculates the tourist potential as its main component within the evaluation of Russian regions' investment potential.

E.N. Karachevskaya also evaluates the tourism potential using a generalized index and integral characteristics of resource, environmental, infrastructure, and consumer factors [3]. In accordance with the approach of V.P. Raskovalov, the complex potential of the territory consists of four unequal parts (blocks): natural, historical, cultural, transport potentials and a complex of environmental factors that limit the tourism development [4]. It is worth noting that all the considered approaches have pros and cons, as well as "bottlenecks", through which a subjective factor has a significant impact on evaluation.

In the works of A. Pashkevich, G. Fay, P. Maher, P. Mason, Yu.F. Lukin [7–18], the resource potential and features of the Arctic tourism organization are examined; problems and opportunities

for conducting tourist activity in the northern territories are named. However, the researchers do not provide specific methods for assessing the tourism and recreation potential in relation to these territories. In this regard, we have developed our own approach to the study of the tourist potential of the northern regions, which allows conducting a comprehensive assessment. The novelty of the approach is provided by the formed system of evaluation criteria for revealing the content of the "tourist potential" category and determining the level of its development, taking into account the importance and expressiveness of each component in relation to the northern tourist territories.

#### **Methodology of the study of the tourist potential of the territory**

The developed system evaluation criteria to identify the level of the tourism potential of the northern territories is based on the following components of the tourist potential: general image of the tourism in an area, its infrastructure and transport, employment potential of tourism, environmental conditions of a territory, comfort and safety of tourists as well as competitive, institutional, and innovation in the tourism sector. The identified set of components of the tourist potential allows us to conduct a comprehensive analysis, taking into account features of the northern territories, rather than a fragmentary assessment, which is a disadvantage of most presented methods. At the

same time, the proposed methodology allows us to take into account the importance of each of the components of the tourist potential.

The image of the tourist territory is formed on the basis of such indicators as the presence of objects of tourist interest (natural and cultural-historical), a degree of development and popularity of tourist projects, brand awareness. At the same time, objects of tourist attraction – attractors – are of great importance. So, the North Pole is of great interest to travelers. Tourists visit the islands of the Arctic archipelago of Franz Josef Land [19] by helicopter and cruise ship. The route starts from Murmansk – a large port town (*Fig. 1*).

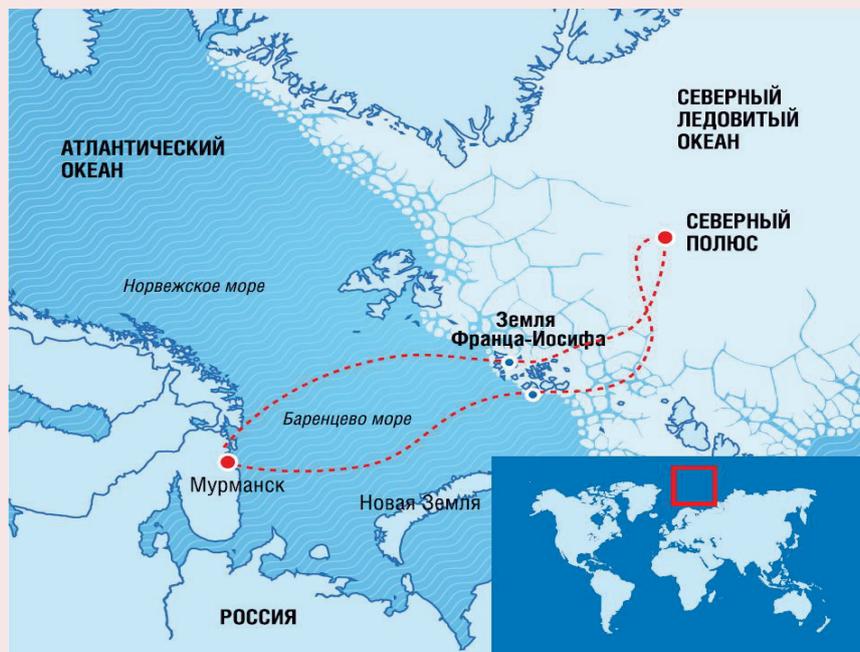
Skiing and recreation, mountaineering, hiking, mountain biking, and dog sledding are organized and successfully developed on the territory of the mountain ranges – Khibiny and Lovozero massifs. Active tours with kayaks and snowmobiles, rafting across the northern rivers are in demand. The basis for the formation of cultural and educational tours

is UNESCO sites – natural and cultural complexes of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, and Komi Republic.

National parks, nature reserves, and natural monuments of the European North open up opportunities for the development of eco-tourism. The “Yugyd Va” national park is located on the territory of the Komi Republic. The “Russkaya Arktika” (“Russian Arctic”) National Park was founded in 2009 on the Franz Josef Land and Novaya Zemlya archipelagos.

The development of tourist infrastructure is characterized by the presence of appropriate facilities: collective accommodation facilities (hotels, guest houses, recreation centers, etc.); tourist organizations; public catering enterprises, etc. Transport accessibility of the tourist center is provided by the functioning of the system of roads, air and waterways. Along with the tourist infrastructure, the most important element of resource provision and a factor in the development

Figure 1. Tourist route from Murmansk to the North Pole



Source: official website of the tour operator “Poseidon cruise”. Available at: [http://poseidoncruise.ru/puteshestvie\\_na\\_severnyj\\_poljus\\_vozможные\\_kruizy/](http://poseidoncruise.ru/puteshestvie_na_severnyj_poljus_vozможные_kruizy/)

of the tourism sector is its labor potential, which includes a whole set of real and potential abilities of residents of a tourist region, providing activities for the organization of tourism [20]. In addition, in a current environment with unstable epidemiological situation and low temperatures in the northern territories, the comfort and safety of tourists are important components of the tourist potential, including, along with the criminal situation, the psychological comfort of a traveler, the level of improvement of a territory and other factors. At the same time, the most important component of the tourist potential is the environmental situation in a region. It is determined by the volume of emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere and water objects, amount of costs for environmental protection, etc.

Determinants of a competitive component of the tourist market are a set of factors of tourist production and demand, related and supporting industries (“clusters”), management strategies, structure and nature of competition between tourist firms. The formed system of these determinants creates conditions for a successful functioning of tourism organizations.

The institutional component of tourism is determined by the following conditions and factors: stability of tourism institutions; approaches to the management of the tourism sector; formation of the legislative framework; scientific support for the tourism development; symmetry of the territorial and regional representation of tourist organizations to promote tourist products; a set of strategic goals and operational tasks to enhance interregional cooperation in the tourism sector.

An innovative component of tourism combines internal characteristics and external conditions of the innovation process in the tourism industry. Internal innovation component includes the innovation potential, which is formed through the material, financial, intellectual, information, scientific, technical, and other resources necessary for the implementation of innovative activities in tourism. When determining the level of innovation

potential, data on a number of employees engaged in research and development, financial costs for research and development, as well as innovation activity, measured through a number of patent applications and the volume of innovative technologies, are taken into account. The external innovation component is determined by the national innovation system, which promotes the innovative development of the tourism sector.

The identified components of the tourism potential served as the basis for its evaluation in December 2019. It was carried out by seven experts – regional tour operators working in the tourism market for more than 10 years on the territories of the European North. All experts (managers, their deputies and specialists) are competent in the examined field, which was the main criterion for selecting the participants of the expert group. A 10-point scale was used for the evaluation. At the first stage, each selected component of the tourism potential of entities was evaluated. At the same time, experts’ group assessments were used to identify their relative significance and the level of their manifestation. The group examination was carried out using the Delphi method. At the second stage, an integral indicator of the potential of tourist territories was determined. The overall tourism potential index was calculated using the following formula:

$$Pt = \sum_{k=1}^n \frac{Svk \times Uvk}{Svk},$$

where:

$Pt$  – index of the territory’s tourist potential;

$Sv$  – degree of importance of the tourism potential component ( $k$ );

$Uv$  – level of manifestation of the tourism potential component ( $k$ );

$n$  – number of components ( $k$ ) of the tourism potential.

At the final stage, comparative characteristics of the tourist regions of the European North were formed. At the same time, the problems hindering

the development of tourism in the northern territories were identified. The concordance coefficient was 0.79, which proves the consistency of experts' opinions and allows us to consider a selected number of experts sufficient to make an informed decision.

### The results of the assessment of the tourist potential of the European North and their interpretation

The identified evaluation characteristics allowed us to distribute the territories of the European North by the level of the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sector (*Fig. 2*).

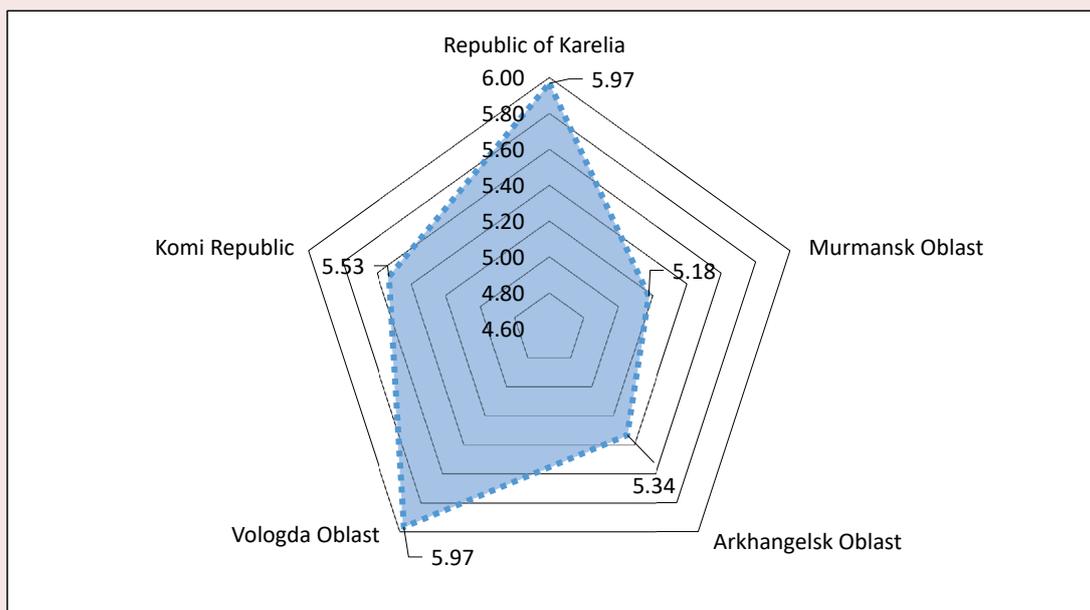
The Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Karelia are characterized by the highest level of the resource potential of tourism and recreation ( $Pt = 6$ ), and the discrepancy between the values of the index of the potential in these entities is insignificant and does not exceed 0.8. A degree of formation of tourist infrastructure and the level of development of labor potential in most entities are estimated by experts as average (5–6 points), which is confirmed by a lack of collective accommodation facilities and public

catering facilities that meet international standards (mainly in rural settlements), and a low quality of tourist services.

Among entities of the European North in 2018, the largest increase (by 2.2 times) in a number of collective accommodation facilities (CAF), compared to 2013, is observed in the Vologda Oblast. This is related to the formation and development of a tourist cluster in the region (*Tab. 2*). However, a number of tourists accepted by the collective accommodation facilities of the region increased only by 42% in the studied period (*Tab. 3*). In general, in the territory of the European North, a number of collective accommodation facilities in 2018 increased by 75.4% compared to 2013, and a number of tourists placed in CAF – by 22.5%

We should mention that, in the European North in 2013–2018, a number of tourist organizations also increased, amounting to 691 units in 2018, which is 27.7% more than in 2013. The Arkhangelsk Oblast and the Republic of Karelia were the leaders according to this indicator (179 and 176 travel agencies, respectively; *tab. 4*). The Murmansk

Figure 2. The level of the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sector of the European North



Source: own compilation based on the results of expert assessment.

Table 2. Number of collective accommodation facilities in the European North in 2013-2018, un.

Entity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018 to 2013, %
Vologda Oblast	131	120	200	210	266	291	by 2.2 times
Republic of Karelia	129	133	182	198	213	238	184.5
Arkhangelsk Oblast	112	145	166	152	150	173	154.5
Komi Republic	86	87	132	134	139	131	152.3
Murmansk Oblast	118	119	143	117	197	179	151.7
European North, total	581	611	830	818	970	1019	175.4

Source: *Tourism in the Vologda Oblast: Stat. Coll.* Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Vologda Oblast. Vologda, 2019. 104 p.

Table 3. Number of people served by collective accommodation facilities of the European North in 2013-2018, thous. people

Entity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018 to 2013, %
Vologda Oblast	353,7	318,0	412,3	382,1	455,3	502,3	142,0
Murmansk Oblast	216,2	214,5	216,4	240,1	302,2	300,0	138,8
Republic of Karelia	372,0	377,1	411,6	420,2	414,6	461,5	124,1
Arkhangelsk Oblast	281,6	286,3	352,8	282,1	272,1	309,6	109,9
Komi Republic	221,9	199,9	272,2	212,5	198,4	210,8	95,0
European North, total	1463,6	1413,3	1686,3	1549,7	1650,2	1793,1	122,5

Source: *Tourism in the Vologda Oblast: Stat. Coll.* Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Vologda Oblast. Vologda, 2019. 104 p.

Table 4. Number of tourist organizations in the European North in 2013–2018, un.

Entity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018 to 2013, %
Republic of Karelia	85	102	104	171	140	176	by 2.1 times
Arkhangelsk Oblast	127	136	132	132	157	179	140.9
Murmansk Oblast	65	81	58	71	87	85	130.8
Vologda Oblast	132	145	90	103	116	141	106.8
Komi Republic	127	135	115	110	114	108	85.0
European North, total	541	606	504	590	618	691	127.7

Source: *Tourism in the Vologda Oblast: Stat. Coll.* Territorial body of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Vologda Oblast. Vologda, 2019. 104 p.

Oblast was characterized by the smallest number of travel agencies (85 units).

The entities of the European North have limited transport accessibility, which is proved by the results of the expert assessment (4 points). A significant part of rural areas is characterized by poor development of the transport network. The results of the assessment are confirmed by the Russian independent investment company “InfraONE”, which determines the “transport index” on the basis of statistical reports on the quantity and quality of transport infrastructure in the regions of the Russian Federation. At the time of the expert assessment,

the transport infrastructure development index of the entities of the European North did not exceed 3.3 (with a maximum possible value of 10; *tab. 5*).

Table 5. Index of the transport infrastructure development on the territory of the entities of the European North

Entity	Index
Murmansk Oblast	3.24
Komi Republic	2.99
Vologda Oblast	2.94
Republic of Karelia	2.76
Arkhangelsk Oblast	2.70

\*Source: The index of development of infrastructure in Russia. 2019. Available at: [https://infraone-research.ru/index\\_id/2019\\_regions](https://infraone-research.ru/index_id/2019_regions)

According to experts, the environmental situation in the European North is generally favorable (7–8 points). However, it is worth noting that, in the national environmental rating of Russian regions, the Arkhangelsk Oblast ranked 44th in 2019 due to its low environmental index (*Tab. 6*).

The level of comfort and safety of tourists in all regions is rated at 7 points. This indicates a sufficient degree of psychological comfort for those traveling in the European North. The existing problems with the improvement of rural areas, the harsh climate of the Arctic zones, as well as the criminal situation in some regions reduce the level of comfort and safety. In the ranking of criminality in Russian regions, conducted by the Institute of Regional Problems (as of peer review period), Komi and Karelia republics were characterized by the worst criminal situation among the territories of the European North (positions 2 and 6, respectively). It is associated with high levels of criminality, including violent and economic crimes (*Tab. 7*).

A competitive component of the tourist market of the European North, as shown by the results of the study, is at the development stage (4–5.8 points). At the same time, expert assessments (6–6.5 points) indicate the need to improve the level of institutional support for the tourism sector. An innovation component received the lowest average score (2–3 points), which determines the significance of changes in the tourism industry.

The results obtained are consistent in key aspects with the analytical studies of the rating agency “RAEX”, which determines the level of labor, institutional, innovation, and tourism potential of the Russian regions within the framework of the investment potential assessment (*Tab. 8*). According to the agency’s data presented for 2019, the Republic of Karelia and the Vologda Oblast have the greatest tourist potential among the entities of the European North (the 21st and 24th place in the rating, respectively). At the same time, all regions of the European North are characterized by a low level of labor, institutional, and innovation potential.

Table 6. Positions of entities of the European North in the environmental rating of Russian regions

Entity	Ranking
Komi Republic	9
Murmansk Oblast	12
Vologda Oblast	27
Republic of Karelia	37
Arkhangelsk Oblast	44
*Source: Environmental rating of the entities of the Russian Federation. Available at: <a href="https://greenpatrol.ru/ru/stranica-dlya-obshchego-reytinga/ekologicheskij-reyting-subektov-rf?tid=388">https://greenpatrol.ru/ru/stranica-dlya-obshchego-reytinga/ekologicheskij-reyting-subektov-rf?tid=388</a>	

Table 7. Positions of constituent entities of the European North in the ranking of criminality among Russian regions

Entity	Ranking
Komi Republic	2
Republic of Karelia	6
Arkhangelsk Oblast	25
Murmansk Oblast	42
Vologda Oblast	56
Source: Rating of criminality in regions. Available at: <a href="https://www.irpr.ru/2019/05/31/pervyj-rejting-kriminogennosti-regionov">https://www.irpr.ru/2019/05/31/pervyj-rejting-kriminogennosti-regionov</a>	

Table 8. Positions of the European North entities in the rating according to the level of labor, institutional, innovation, and tourism potential of the Russian regions

Entity	Labor potential (ranking)	Institutional potential (ranking)	Innovation potential (ranking)	Tourism potential (ranking)
Republic of Karelia	73	57	50	21
Vologda Oblast	55	40	45	24
Arkhangelsk Oblast	56	49	48	47
Komi Republic	65	52	59	55
Murmansk Oblast	61	55	61	60
Source: own compilation on the basis of data from the rating agency “RAEX”. Available at: <a href="https://raex-a.ru/ratings/regions/2019/att3">https://raex-a.ru/ratings/regions/2019/att3</a>				

Among the main problems hindering the development and realization of the resource potential of the northern tourist territories, we can highlight a low degree of their transport accessibility and the formation of tourist infrastructure, poorly developed innovative activities in the field of tourism.

In the assessments of the importance and manifestation of the components of the tourism potential in most regions, significant differences (4.6–5.5 units) are recorded for the innovative component of the tourism sector. This proves the urgency of the problem of creating favorable conditions for the emergence of innovations in the industry. The smallest discrepancy between the values of importance and manifestation (less than 0.5 units) can be traced in the estimates of the institutional component. It should be noted that, when forming the institutional environment, special attention should be paid to the currently unresolved problem of legal certainty and legitimacy of the status of the Arctic territories.

#### **Development and realization of the potential of tourism and recreation in the European North within the Arctic development**

In our opinion, the efficient functioning and development of the tourist sphere of the European North, the elimination of problems identified during the assessment of the tourist potential, will contribute to the creation of tourist and recreational complexes, tourist infrastructure facilities that meet modern international standards; development of interregional tourist routes and the formation of new destinations, including the Arctic zones. In order to increase and evenly distribute the tourist flow, it is advisable to combine northern regions with different levels of tourist potential within the framework of tourist projects. For example, it is proposed to develop an interregional tourism project on the territory of the Vologda and Arkhangelsk oblasts. The tourist route will pass through the Kotlassky municipal district of the Arkhangelsk Oblast and the

municipal Veliky Ustyug district, Vologda Oblast, where the project “Veliky Ustyug is a homeland of Ded Moroz”, which attracts significant tourism flow.

Integrated development of the northern territories, development and implementation of regional target programs, as well as the formation of special economic zones will contribute to the activation of innovation and investment activities in the tourism industry. At the same time, the implementation of interregional and inter-municipal tourism projects within the framework of cooperation can become an efficient direction for further development and use of the tourist potential of the European North.

In our opinion, the main vector of the development of the northern tourist territories in current conditions should be the implementation of a problem-oriented concept, which is aimed at solving the difficulties that hinder the development and effective usage of the tourist potential of the European North. At the same time, it is important to take a timely set of measures to adjust the strategic directions of the development of tourism and recreation in the European North in the conditions of increased dynamism of the external environment. The current trend of rapid environmental changes is caused by a number of factors that affect the tourism development: changes in the socio-economic and epidemiological situation in the country and the world, deterioration of environmental favorability, problems and prospects for the development of the Arctic zones. In this regard, the implementation of the problem-oriented approach will allow the following steps:

- promotion of innovation and investment processes in the northern tourist territories, including development and implementation of new tourist projects (including interregional ones), the creation of tourist products using innovative technologies (for example, artificial intelligence, mixed and augmented reality, etc.), etc.;

- development of the tourist infrastructure (mainly rural areas) of all the entities of the European North, including the expansion of the network of collective accommodation facilities and public catering facilities, increasing the level of transport security of tourist areas, modernization of berths, seaports, airports;

- formation of the resource base for the diversification of the tourism product during the pandemic through an active usage of digital technologies, development of domestic tours for small groups, expanding the geography of tourist routes, as well as through the implementation of an individual approach to tourists and updating the environmental aspects of tourism products;

- improvement and control of the quality of tourist services, including ones provided under extreme weather conditions;

- development of the labor potential of the tourism sector, increasing the level of its communicative and creative components that contribute to the emergence of innovations in tourism;

- increase of the level of institutional support and efficient management of the tourism sector in the northern territories; development of a set of strategic goals and objectives to enhance interregional cooperation in the field of tourism and recreation in the European North;

- development and implementation of a set of measures to support and stimulate domestic tourism in the northern territories, including development of children's and youth tourism, tourism for pensioners;

- preservation of natural resources, cultural and historical heritage, traditions and crafts of the northern peoples; maintenance of environmental friendliness of the entities of the European North;

- formation of a system of information support and support of tourist activities in the northern territories; digitalization of tourist services;

- activation of the process of promoting the tourism and recreation potential in the European North.

The elaboration and detailing of the proposed directions are defined by us as the main tasks of a further research concerning the studied problem.

### **Conclusion**

Summing up, we can conclude that the methodology for identifying the level of the tourist potential, developed within the study and tested in relation to the northern territories, deepens and continues the existing theoretical research in this area. The author's methodology allows a comprehensive assessment of the resource potential of the tourism and recreation sector in the northern territories, which determines its specificity and scientific novelty. The originality of the methodology is associated with a system of criteria that includes the image of the tourist territory, development degree of the tourist infrastructure, the labor potential of the tourism industry, transport accessibility and environmental friendliness of a region, comfort and safety of tourists, competitive, institutional and innovative components of the tourism sector. The results of the assessment allow us to determine the projection of the development of tourism and recreation in the European North. The main difficulties of the northern tourist territories are identified, including a low level of infrastructure and transport security, low innovative activity of organizations in the tourism industry. To solve the identified problems, it is necessary to develop and implement a set of measures within the framework of a problem-oriented approach as the main vector of tourism development in the European North in the conditions of the Arctic development. The practical significance of the study is a possibility of applying its results by regional authorities and administration in order to make timely management decisions, determine strategic directions, and develop programs and projects for the development of the northern territories.

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