

Program of Ecological Tourism Development in the Coastal Zone of the Russian Far East and Environmental Education

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Ecological tourism is a way to ensure harmonious relations between least disturbed natural areas, on the one hand, and tourists visiting these areas, on the other hand. Such kind of activities also envisages involvement of native population of these areas.

The program which is being implemented is aimed at ecological tourism development in specially protected natural areas (reserves and buffer zones adjoining them) in the coastal zone of the Russian Far East, assuming preservation of their natural peculiarities and popularization of environmental education.

In a process of the program development and implementation, the following features of ecotourism development in coastal-zone reserves were distinguished:

- ecotourism is being developed, mainly, in the buffer and adjacent areas. Thus, the main reserves are not subject to tourist load;
- unlike places of mass recreation, in reserves, it is expedient to organize specialized long (and expensive) programs for small number of visitors. For mass tourists, only one-day excursions to ecocenters and natural ethnography museums should be organized, in addition to visiting special "ecological paths" in the buffer zones;
- tourists are accommodated in small inns in the buffer zones;
- the employees of the reserves participate in the program working as tourist operators and guides on a contractual basis.

Special attention was paid in the program to advertizing materials, necessary for attracting Russian and foreign tourists: publishing advertisement booklets, setting up a special web-site in Internet, elaboration of business plans for ecotourism development, arranging DEMO tours along new routes for professional guides and tourist operators, etc.

Problems of environmental education are no less important. Special educational programs for all types of ecotourism (involving the participation of both employees of reserves and native population) are being developed; special training courses, workshops and conferences are regularly organized. In this respect, much attention is paid to the development of special programs for "environmental" students, involving the description of all reserve and buffer areas in the region under consideration, their flora and fauna, and substantiation of their role in maintaining ecological balance in the region.

The Program takes into account practical experience of various tourist programs in the coastal zone, testifying to the necessity of individual approach to each reserve or buffer zone. In addition, special attention is paid to the involvement of native population of the reserve and buffer areas in the development of ecotourism, providing economic advantages to them. The necessity of rational use of recreation resources that determine the tourist demand and are

aimed at restoration, estimation and protection of the recreation potential of the region, as well as to create a new image of the region is emphasized in the Program.