

## TOURIST PRODUCT PROMOTION IN GEORGIA

Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world which is important and dynamically developing branch of economics. The development of tourism in Georgia will promote economic growth, the population will bring additional income, reduce unemployment levels; it will contribute to Georgian traditions and historical-cultural values promotion.

As it is known, Georgia has great tourism potential: 102 resorts, 182 resort places, 2004 mineral medicinal water sources, 12 000 historical and architectural monuments (4 of them are included in UNESCO world heritage list), 7 long-range National Parks, etc[4]. The resorts and tourist bases have long gained wide recognition. Therefore, it becomes more and more attractive for tourists and foreign travelers.

Tourism is the area where success depends on how the country will be able to respond to the needs of tourists and ensure their safety.

As known, in August of 2008, the Russia-Georgia war affected the tourist business and reduced flow of tourists; but by 2012 the situation has improved. In January, February and March of 2012 - 677 278 visitors visited Georgia, while in 2011 it was – 485 835. The total number of Europeans passing the border of Georgia in 2012 is 648 478, but according to the date of 2011, this number was 468 278 [3].

Country	2011: 3 months	2012: 3 months	Change	Change %
<b>Total</b>	<b>485 835</b>	<b>677 278</b>	<b>191443</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>468 278</b>	<b>648 478</b>	<b>180200</b>	<b>38%</b>
Europe (without CIS)	170 115	297 414	127299	75%
Central and Eastern Europe	304 685	358 169	53484	18%
C I S	298 163	351 064	52901	18%
North Europe	3 307	3 944	637	19%
South Europe	4 559	5 023	464	10%
West Europe	5 356	7 016	1660	31%
Eastern Mediterranean Europe	150 371	274 326	123955	82%
<b>America</b>	<b>4563</b>	<b>6012</b>	<b>1449</b>	<b>32%</b>
Caribbean countries	142	180	38	27%

<b>Central America</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>318%</b>
<b>North America</b>	<b>4 259</b>	<b>5 509</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>South America</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>East Asia / Oceania</b>	<b>2930</b>	<b>4574</b>	<b>1644</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>South Asia</b>	<b>8218</b>	<b>14900</b>	<b>6682</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Africa</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>1683</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>East Africa</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>143%</b>
<b>Central Africa</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>West Africa</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>94%</b>

Table1. The number of foreign citizens arrived at the border [4]

According to the World Tourism Organization's classification, the world is divided into 6 tourist regions [4]. It is important for every country to determine if a great number of tourists are coming from the region. The case of the incoming non-resident visitors to the region accounts for the largest share.

European travel market share in the tourism market of Georgia is due to the following factors: geopolitical proximity, culture, etc.

Effectiveness of the tourism product key in CIS a space is efficient. Russia remains the main export market in this area. This can be explained by the fact that on the one hand Georgia and Russia have a common border, on the other hand, historically Georgian tourist product is well known in Russia. Even in the period of the Soviet Union mainly Russian visitors visited the seaside resorts of Georgia. Armenia occupies the second place.

According to the Tourism Administration data, during January – March of 2012 46 438 visitors visited Georgia from Russia, while during the first three months of the last year 33 732 Russian tourists visited Georgia. It is an interesting fact that the increase of Russian tourists in Georgia is recorded from 2008; in 2008, Georgia accepted 114 459 Russian visitors, while in 2007 only 91 361 visitors visited the country from Russia [3].

Therefore, we can say that for the last two years there is a significant increase in the flow of tourists.

I think that the tourist information centers are responsible for the role of the tourism product promotion. Tourism information centers operate in the following cities: Tbilisi, Batumi, Mtskheta, Telavi, Signaghi, Borjomi, Bakuriani, Kvareli and Mestia. On April 26, 2011 tourism information

center was opened in Gori and according to the data of the National Tourism Agency, 10 % of tourist arriving in Georgia visited Gori, while in 2010 65000 visitors visited Gori.

I suppose that occurrence of transnational corporations and investments in the tourism industry of Georgia and, particularly, in the hotel industry will enhance tourism. We think for Georgia as for a small and mountainous area it is much more important to invest for construction of small hotels, guest houses, especially in mountainous regions.

The American tycoon Donald Trump's investment for building a residential complex and a hotel in Tbilisi and Batumi can serve as a good example. At the first stage of construction 250 million U.S. dollars will be invested though, the organization plans to increase investment in the future.

A clear example of the development of tourist products in Georgia is Upper Svaneti region which in 2007 was recognized by the National Tourism Agency as the priority region in the sphere of the local tourism development. The new airport of Mestia will be available for daily flights which will contribute Mestia and Ushguli become an important tourism center.

Among the factor affecting the realization of tourist product, the country's political situation and the current legislation are most important. Tourism in Georgia is regulated by the following laws of Georgia: "On Tourism and Resorts" and "On Resorts and Resort Places Sanitary Protection Zones". Rationalization of transport, especially, air transport service in tourism is essential for the improvement of tourist product. One of the main conditions for the development of tourism in the country is adopting a policy of the reduction of tariffs on air transport service for maintaining the purchasing capacity of tourist product.

In the recent years, the effective changes have been observed for the promotion of the tourist product. In particular, Georgia's participation in international fairs and exhibitions proves this fact. On 18-20 February, 2011, Georgia presented its tourist product on the international Exhibition-Fair "TOURET" of Estonia; on January 19-23 of the same year Georgia was presented in Spain, namely in Madrid [3].

As for the tourist product advertisement, though Tour Operators advertise their product placed in magazine, radio, television, Internet is most effective.

როგორც მოგეხსენებათ, ინტერნეტი, მობილური ტექნოლოგიები და ვაიერლესი ტურისტებს აძლევს საშუალებას დანიშნულების ადგილების შესახებ მიიღოს ღრმა ინფორმაცია მთელი მსოფლიოს მასშტაბით. ტურისტული პროდუქტი იყო პირველი, რომელმაც მოიცვა საინფორმაციო ტექნოლოგიები [2].

The tourist market is developing dynamically. It occupies the first place in the business sector, where business functions are almost exclusively using information and communication technologies (ICT) [1].

It is a well known fact that Internet, Mobile and Wireless technologies enable tourists to get deeper information about places around the world. Tourist product was the first that has embraced information technologies [2].

Travel companies are interested in Internet opportunities:

1. Communication and effective communication;
2. Marketing research;
3. Advertising and tourist product development;
4. Reservation systems.

#### References

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