

As the urgent task for the Republic of Belarus is to enter the global innovation cooperation and to integrate into the European knowledge-based economy, it's crucially important to cultivate the positive image of the country. In the face of economic crisis Belarus planes to gain profits from international investments. The government has developed a special investment program and targets to push up foreign investments and hit 15 – 20 % of GDP.

It's quite evident that business communication with investors requires knowledge of partners, their place in the world of economy and culture. However, the survey of Internet information on the Republic of Belarus doesn't inspire and leaves much to be desired. Some Internet sights are quite outdated and describe Belarus as one of the republics of the former Soviet Union. According to the TV poll of February 2, 2009 72% of Belarusians consider our country "the unknown planet". The task of advertising Belarus as a European country with many attractions belongs to every citizen of Belarus. Yet the leading role in it should be performed by tourism.

The industry of tourism is a complex socio-economic system. It has its own structure with a heap of connections, but on the other hand it's a component part of three mutually connected mega-systems: society, environment & economy. The modern tourist is not a person carrying lots of bags with him. He needs good accommodation, delicious food, comfortable transportation & good entertainment facilities.

Many countries have become truly rich by selling travel service, without having abundant mineral resources of their own. Belarus can be one of such countries. Rich & beautiful virgin forests, numerous lakes & rivers is what can be commonly called a natural product which will make Belarus a desirable travel destination. One can't help admiring historical & cultural monuments, cathedrals, unique territories & folk traditions of Belarus countryside, hospitality of Belarusian national character, peculiar Belarusian cuisine.

It's necessary to point out the following targets of the development of the tourist market in the Republic of Belarus. Among them are effective usage of tourist potential; improving of tourism equipment; harmonization of tourist development with natural conditions; increasing reliability & profit of transport organizations; the employment of population & the profit ability of tourism during the so called "dead seasons"; constant adaptation of offer to the changes of tourist tastes; encouragement of competition among tourist organizations; intensive & active development of advertising, etc.

The main task of the country lies in satisfaction of tourist needs by means of realizing tourist potential & providing its stable development.

The industry of tourism is influenced by certain technologies. They are divided into three spheres: transport, equipment of hotels & restaurants, means of communication. Development of transport techniques gives tourists an opportunity of free movement. Equipment of hotels & restaurants simplifies & standardizes the work in hotels & restaurants, partly economizes working force. The use of computers gives a great impulse to satisfying the needs of clients.

Belarus can develop every direction in tourism, but the most promising are the varieties that would tap the natural potential of Belarus. Our wealth is nature that has been preserved in its primeval state in many places across the country. And surely we need to have strong & wise advertising for our natural wealth. In the next 2 years all advertising events in the region should be carried out into execution under the motto "Come and visit the oldest nature reserve in Europe!" So, what is it that will help us to attract tourists? No other European country has a nature reserve like Belovezhskaya Pushcha.

Special attention should be given to hunting tourism. It's a very promising business because a foreign hunter pays from 1 to 3 thousand Euros for the chance to hunt in virgin Belarus forests. Everybody knows hunting even in small "portions" is very lucrative. It's worth mentioning that annual income from hunting tourism in the USA is about 30 milliard American dollars. Unfortunately, Belarus foreign hunting is still terra incognita.

Another promising area for us is transit tourism. If you travel from Western Europe to Russia and back, you won't find a better route for this than crossing Belarus. That's why it's necessary to develop interesting travel routes for transit tourists & make it comfortable for such tourists to cross our country, to have a rest & good time here.

But the real contribution to the tourism industry is agro-tourism. For the successful development of agricultural tourism & its quality delivery we must radically improve its management. Agro-tourism of today offers a wide range of accommodations from simple intimate family run cottages to guest houses. In recent years farms have become increasingly popular for their rural appeal, folk performances, beautiful surroundings and national dining. Belarusian cuisine is noted for local supply of beef, meaty pork, fish, game and infinite ethnic variety of dishes. Another specialty of agro-tourism dining is health food for vegetarians and herbal tea, which can make Belarus a touring country in any season of a year.

Yet, one must admit that Belarusian service is far from being perfect and one of the roots of this phenomenon is lack of speech skills in foreign languages. If the staff can't speak any foreign language properly (English, Germany, Polish, etc) they can't run services smoothly and take good care of tourists. The staff should offer plenty of hospitality and gladly cater to all foreigners. Thus foreign language proficiency is a must in building up a positive image of the country. We need to remove all the obstacles that do not let us shape an appealing image of the country and attract foreign investments and tourists