

The role of protected areas in tourism – ecotourism

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Protecting natural areas worldwide in agreement with state facilities are managed by international organizations such as: 1) International Union for Conservation of Nature; **IUCN**. 2) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; **UNESCO**. International classification of natural protected areas is developed and approved by **IUCN**, which contains six categories: I. A) Strict nature reserve, B) Wilderness area; II. National park; III. Natural monument; IV. Habitat/species management area; V. Protected landscape/seascape; VI. Managed resource protected area. Tourism development is possible in every type of protected areas except I category. In tourism among used protected areas national parks have the biggest history. Taking into account worldwide experience and history, we can separate three trends between creation of national parks: 1) creating national parks for tourism development and recreation (North America); 2) granting the status of national park to the places where tourist routes already existed (Europe); 3) creating protected areas for scientific and nature conservation purposes (Strict nature reserve) and assigning national park or habitat/species management area status for tourism purposes to or around the surrounding terrain (post soviet countries). With the development of complex cultural and aesthetic tours, it is becoming increasingly popular **IUCN** category V protected area - **Protected landscape/seascape. Biosphere reserve protected areas** – protected areas, that are created to preserve the natural ecosystem and genofound in a given region, to study and monitor the natural environment in and around it. Biosphere reserve protected areas are created under the auspices of **UNESCO** on the basis of an international and national program. Biosphere reserve protected areas have three zones: A) main part – strict protection zone; B) buffer zone, which is located around the core; C) intermediate zone, where the largest area of action exists for human economic, socio-cultural and environmentally sustainable development.

There is a multifaceted definition of the term “ecotourism”, we can most optimally refer to “the world tourism organization” (UNWTO) definition: “ecotourism – it is a wise journey through the natural terrain, for a deeper understanding of local culture and the natural environment, which does not damage the ecosystem, at the same time it makes protecting the environment more profitable for the local population.”