

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM AND
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OF GEORGIAN UNIQUE BALNEO-CLIMATIC RESORT
UTSERA

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Abstract: The number of tourists, vacationers (unorganized and organized migrate recreants) are increasing significantly in Georgia, which contributes to the growth of economic activity both in the tourism industry and in adjacent sectors. For a balneo-climatic resort Utsera, considering this growth trend, it is necessary to find the right niche, draw up a target plan and strive for its implementation.

Key words: Balneo-climatic resort, development of sustainable tourism, ecotourism, ecosystems, conservation of mountain and highland biomes, resort and tourist-recreational systems, endemic flora, and fauna, biogenocenosis, habitats with high conservation value, air, water and soil pollutants, waste utilization.

Main Part

During the last ten years, tourism, unlike other sectors, has turned into the most dynamic and rapidly developing branch of the world economy, which is why it is recognized as an economic phenomenon of modern times, one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and its sustainable development is vital for the resort-recreation systems of Georgia, in particular, for Utsera, as a balneo-climatic resort with a special tourist potential.

The development sustainable tourism

of Utsera, the implementation of a correct integrated policy at the national, regional and local levels will bring long-term economic benefits to the country, will increase the income of the local population, create jobs both in a specific field and in adjacent sectors, will promote the inflow of foreign currency, reduce the national currency inflation and increase budget revenues, will reduce the scale of migration in the region, contribute to the increase in the volume of local agricultural products, and the development of the service sector. At the same time, the state is obliged to carry out preventive and effective measures for the protection of cultural heritage, which will protect natural ecosystems from exhaustion, pollution, and destruction.

Located on the southern slope of the main (watershed) range of the Greater Caucasus, in the valley of the Rion River, in this unique area with one of the highest ecological value and potential for ecotourism development in Georgia, where the balneo-climatic resort is located, with moderately cold winters and long warm summers, in the near future for the purpose of conservation the mountain and high mountain biomes, it is planned to create specially protected natural areas of Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti, the approximate area of which is 229 532 hectare.



Fig. 1 Climatic zones and biomes of Utsera

The protected area will include Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti National Park, 12 natural monuments and 4 sanctuaries, with endemic flora and fauna of

the Caucasus, Georgia, and the region, as well as dozens of species of plants and animals included in the Red List of Georgia.



Fig. 2 Endemic species of plants

In Utsera (healing factor: mountain air and carbonic acid hydro-carbonate and iron-containing mineral water "Utsera", medical profile: pulmonological, allergic, gastroenterological diseases), for the sustainable development of the tourism industry, it is necessary, integrated participation and simultaneously involvement of all interested parties (government, local population, visitors,

Unorganized and organized migrating recreants, business sector, investors, non-governmental organizations), for fulfill the following requirements:

- Should be studied tourism potential and tourism development trends, establish priorities for the development of tourism proceed from the status and location of the resort

and determine their development opportunities;

- Should be determine the obstacles in the way of effective implementation of the sustainable development of tourism;
- Should be conducted an analysis of the competitiveness of the tourism industry;
- Should be evaluated the role and importance of the tourism industry in the development of the resort economy;
- Should be determined the participation share of public and private sectors, community, non-governmental organizations in the development of the tourist destination;
- Should be assessed the role of harmonious coexistence of all sectors using tourist-recreational resources in the development of sustainable tourism;
- Should be analyzed and evaluated the role of the development of directly

and indirectly dependent sectors on the development of tourism.

A necessary and strict requirement for the economic development of any tourist region or center, resort, and recreational systems, is the presence of hotels and an open and closed network of high-level catering facilities.

National cuisine is a major element of knowledge of local culture and hospitality. Utsera, as a monument of cultural heritage and a unique territorial entity that has the status of a resort, is indeed experiencing a shortage of high-level facilities in the service sector. In Utsera today, this level is low or needs to be improved.

The resort Utsera does not have a legislative strategic action plan based on the principles of territorial development, space arrangement and urban planning, so its development is unplanned and haphazard, which limits the effective use of important natural resources and restrains the growth of vacationers and tourist flow. Uncontrolled construction causes discontent among the population and requires an urgent response.



Fig. 3 Biodiversity and building development area of the resort Utsera

Spontaneously arising settlements in the existing resort area, the further development of entrepreneurial activity with

disregard basic requirements of spatial planning, have a negative impact on the remaining habitat, biogeocenosis of the

resort, which causes even greater damage to its already impoverished biodiversity.



Fig. 4 Consequences of anthropogenic loads, highly vulnerable unique ecosystems

The resort Utsera is positioned in the system of Georgian and international tourist destinations with its uniqueness - healing

microclimate, drinking mineral water and resources of elevated emotional impressions.



Fig. 5 Attractiveness and exposure of natural complexes, the area of protected and conservation importance.

The concept of the master plan for the development of the resort, based on the main natural, anthropogenic and technogenic challenges, should include a report in the framework of the strategic environmental assessment, in which the following issues will be discussed and described:

- Access to healthy, safe, green resort-recreational areas of general use; use of

natural resources provided for by the regulation;

- Construction of sports and health facilities; Ways to increase physical activities, reduce injury and injury tendencies;
- Ways to take into account the interests of persons with limited abilities, to reduce the demand for private car transport and

to introduce alternatives, to arrange pedestrian and bicycle paths;

- Studying the issue of water supply and sanitary conditions, drainage and sewage system in new construction areas (types, quality of drinking water, continuity, availability, water pollution, monitoring, etc.), possibilities of its expansion;
- Ways to reduce the pollution of rivers with sewage effluents, the results of surface water analysis, including microbiological research, including measures to be taken to protect soil and water in the conditions of new development, as well as measures to create sanitary protection zones in accordance with the legislation of Georgia in order to protect water that is used for drinking, domestic use intended for water supply, treatment and resort needs;
- Measures for the assessment of the provision of lifeguard functions;
- Noise measurement, assessment, reduction measures;
- Evaluation of the possibility of deterioration of the basic level of soil contamination with various pollutants and appropriate mitigation measures;
- Appropriate measures for electromagnetic field radiation assessment;
- Existing shortcomings of household and other types of waste management, improvement their ways and plans, taking into account the rapidly growing tourism potential;
- Ways to protect and preserve areas with exceptional biodiversity and habitats with high conservation values;
- Detailed information about the demographic and health status of the population in the building development area;
- How many jobs are expected to be created under the conditions of the development of the resort, as well as what positive changes should be

expected in terms of employment in the agricultural direction, what kind of educational activities are to be conducted;

- Information about medical services, specifically about the development of first aid medical points of hotels, as well as pharmacy network;
- Information on air pollutants and monitoring results for specific pollutants, it is also important to analyze information about pollutants of indoor air of the building, and finally, take into account the WHO recommendations regarding the creation of tobacco-free places;
- Detailed information on the determination of the amount of all types of existing and expected waste, their collection, throw out and utilization measures;
- Detailed plan, estimated cost and volume of work of measures aimed at climate change adaptation and reduction of health damage;
- Formulate recommendations at the expert level for the beginning of the transboundary environmental impact assessment procedure for the protection of habitats under the jurisdiction of Georgia from pathogenic and invasive species.

Conclusions

1. It is necessary Integrated participation and involvement of all interested parties in the process of taking measures for the development of sustainable tourism in the resort-recreational system.
2. It is necessary to develop a territorially spatial strategic action plan for the resort of Utsera based on the principles of legislation for spatial arrangement and urban planning.
3. A strategic environmental assessment report should be included in the concept

of the general plan for the development of the resort of Utsera.

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