

MODERN ECO-TRENDS IN THE TOURISM BUSINESS USING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

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Abstract: The integration of innovative technologies into the tourism sector contributes to the development of sustainable environmental practices. The urgency of environmental sustainability and the need to inform the public about the preservation and responsible use of natural resources due to environmental challenges is one of the most important issues in the context of globalization. Today, eco-trends are becoming increasingly important in the development of the tourism industry. This research paper identifies and analyzes the main eco-trends that implemented in the tourism industry based on innovative technologies and contribute to global sustainable development. It is eco-trends that provide new prospects for the development of new specialized types of tourism that will contribute to the conservation of natural resources and environmental sustainability. Innovative technologies in the field of sustainable tourism are important tools aimed at efficient use of natural resources, preservation of a clean environment and raising environmental awareness and will contribute to its development.

Keywords: eco-trends, eco-tourism, sustainable development, environmental certification, innovations

JEL Classification: Q01, Q56, Z32

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the leading sectors of the global economy, which has a significant impact on sustainable development both in Ukraine and globally. The implementation of environmental initiatives and the latest trends will contribute to the conservation and efficient use of natural resources, an environmentally friendly environment, and increase the environmental awareness of society. One of the leading areas among specialized types of tourism today is ecological, natural, rural green tourism, which enhances the introduction of innovative tools such as eco-trends that enable the development and popularization of sustainable forms of recreation.

The concept of ecotourism implies a responsible journey through protected areas. Its goals are to be acquainted with different natural ecosystems, admire the surrounding nature without harming it. An ecotour may include organized walks along eco-trails and routes laid out on the territory of places where the natural conditions preserved to the maximum extent possible and have not been interfered with by humans (nature reserves, natural parks). Such recreation not only introduces the

richness of nature, but also inspires the conservation of natural resources and a more careful attitude towards them (*“Ecological tourism in Ukraine”*, accessed 09.02.2025).

MAIN CONTENT

Travel that minimizes the negative impact on nature and supports local communities is becoming increasingly popular. Tourists are increasingly choosing natural parks, nature reserves, and eco-trails. According to a report by the World Travel and Tourism Council, greenhouse gas emissions from the industry accounted for 6.5% of global emissions in 2023, a significant reduction from 7.8% in 2019, showing a 10.2% drop in emissions intensity. This shows significant progress in reducing the environmental impact of tourism while supporting its development. According to Booking.com, 74% of travelers now believe that urgent action is needed to make greener choices, compared to 66% in 2022, and 65% of travelers prefer accommodation with sustainability certificates, highlighting the growing appeal of environmentally conscious hospitality (*“Tourism industry trends for 2025 - AI, sustainability, and emerging travel norms”*, accessed 09.02.2025).

The tourism industry is actively integrating environmental certification standards, introducing the concept of carbon-neutral housing, and developing community-based tourism models to meet the growing demand for sustainable travel. Digital technologies, such as e-tickets, mobile apps, and interactive audio guides, help optimize resource use and minimize environmental impact by reducing paper waste. The implementation of such strategies not only aligns with consumers' environmental preferences, but also ensures transparency of companies' environmental positioning, which helps to build trust and loyalty among environmentally conscious tourists.

Environmental certification of tourist facilities is an important mechanism for reducing negative environmental impact and encouraging responsible consumer behavior. It contributes to the development of sustainable tourism and the formation of environmental awareness among both industry enterprises and tourists. The certificate confirms that a travel company adheres to the principles of environmental management, implements environmentally responsible practices, and promotes the optimization of natural resources, pollution reduction, and harmonious coexistence with the environment.

Businesses that join the environmental certification system declare their responsibility for preserving the environment and gain additional advantages in the tourism market. From an economic point of view, environmental management systems allow for a significant reduction in the resources consumed and, consequently, in costs. From a marketing perspective, such companies emphasize their environmental image (*“Environmental certification for the tourism business”*, accessed 12.02.2025).

Tourism is one of the most public sectors of business and is able to influence the consciousness of the general population, transmit knowledge, and raise public awareness, primarily by setting an example of sustainable consumption of resources, production of goods and services (*“Tourism industry trends for 2025 - AI, sustainability, and emerging travel norms”*, accessed 09.02.2025).

Many hotels and tourist facilities receive environmental certificates confirming their compliance with the principles of sustainable development:

Green Key is an international certificate of environmental responsibility for hotels, restaurants and tourist facilities. It confirms compliance with high standards in the field of sustainable tourism. To receive this certificate, you must meet a number of environmental criteria, such as efficient use of resources, waste reduction, and implementation of environmental practices. Green Key holders are subject to regular inspections and must constantly improve their environmental strategies. Among the

facilities that have already received this certificate are hotels, campsites, restaurants and other tourist facilities around the world (“Green Key”, accessed 14.02.2025).

EarthCheck is an international sustainability certification program for the travel industry that helps organizations minimize their negative impact on the environment. The program evaluates businesses on criteria such as energy and water management, waste reduction, social responsibility, and biodiversity protection. To receive the EarthCheck certificate, companies undergo an audit that assesses their environmental performance. Among the facilities that have already received this certificate are well-known hotels, resorts and tourist destinations around the world (“EarthCheck Certified”, accessed 14.02.2025).

LEED “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design” is one of the most widespread types of voluntary certification of green buildings or construction. The non-profit organization U.S. Green Building Council developed this LEED certification system in 1998 to create an assessment system for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of green buildings, homes and their environments. LEED certification designed to inspire developers to seek innovations in the field of environmental and social protection. In other words, LEED is primarily about a viable and thriving environment that less affected by human activity by reducing air emissions, increasing energy efficiency and efficient use of natural resources (“What is green building? Certification according to the LEED standard” accessed 14.02.2025).

Transportation is a major source of carbon emissions, and the travel industry is addressing this with innovative solutions. Electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more affordable and widespread not only for local travel, but for rental services. Companies such as Tesla and Rivian are collaborating with car rental agencies to provide electric options, making it easier for tourists to choose environmentally friendly transportation (“Revolutionising Travel: The Latest Trends in Sustainable Tourism for 2024” accessed 17.02.2025).



Figure 1. Carbon Footprint of Global Tourism.

Source: Sustainable Travel International <https://sustainabletravel.org/issues/carbon-footprint-tourism/>

One of the important tasks in the tourism industry is to reduce the negative impact of transport on the environment. The following environmental solutions are proposed to address this problem: increasing the number of travel arrangements via transport modes such as ferries, buses and trains; the use of electric vehicles, the development of cycle paths and bicycle transport.

One of the most significant trends in sustainable tourism for 2024 is the rise of eco-friendly accommodations. From luxury resorts to budget hostels, more properties are adopting eco-friendly practices. This includes using renewable energy sources, implementing water conservation methods, and reducing waste. Modern travelers are increasingly thinking about the environmental impact of their travels, including the level of their carbon footprint, and are actively implementing measures to reduce and offset it. Airlines, tour operators and travel agencies offer carbon offset programs that allow tourists to offset their travel emissions by investing in environmental projects such as reforestation and renewable energy initiatives. In 2024, the transparency and effectiveness of these programs increased significantly, with companies providing detailed reports on how offsetting funds are used. In addition, responsible travel practices such as reducing single-use plastic, minimizing waste and respecting wildlife and natural habitats are becoming a standard expectation for environmentally conscious travelers (*“Revolutionising Travel: The Latest Trends in Sustainable Tourism for 2024”* accessed 17.02.2025).

The use of digital platforms that offer options for eco-friendly hotels and eco-friendly transport leads to the popularization of ecological and rural green routes reduces the traffic in certain regions and develops the environmental awareness of tourists, which is an important component of its sustainable development.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of innovative technologies in the form of eco-trends to promote sustainable tourism development contributes to its transformation and popularization of new types of tourism. Due to the introduction of environmental initiatives at the level of globalization changes, eco-trends are increasingly becoming tools for raising awareness of tourists about the conservation and efficient use of natural and recreational resources, raising environmental awareness and promoting tourism development in the future.

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