

Intercompany Network Interaction in the Field of Regional Tourist and Recreational Services: Specifics and Development Trends (on the Baikal Regions Experience)

Natalia Rubtsova^{1*}, Nina Hamnaeva², Arina Astrakhantseva¹

¹Baikal State University, Irkutsk, Russia

²East Siberian State University of Technology and Management, Ulan-Ude, Russia

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Abstract

The purpose of the research was to study the network interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services in two regions of Russia (the Irkutsk region and the Republic of Buryatia) that are similar in a number of signs, to identify the nature of the ongoing changes in the inter-company relations of tourist and recreational enterprises in the long term. The research hypotheses were based on the assumption of the intercompany interaction specificity due to the territorial concentration of enterprises, the unstable economic situation, and the lack of an effective coordination mechanism in the field of regional tourist and recreational services.

The research methodology was based on the formed list of inter-company relations characteristics and indicators, the practical manifestation of which in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal regions was estimated in the long term by comparing the results of two empirical studies series (2013 – 2019).

Empirical verification of intercompany relations in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal regions revealed that cooperation in the industry is characterized by a low degree of integration and readiness for joint activities, information disclosure and relationships designed for long-term cooperation.

Moreover, in the long term, these negative trends in the regions under consideration vary ambiguously. A significant factor influencing the development of relationships between partners was determined by the level of competition in the industry.

Межфирменное сетевое взаимодействие в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг региона: специфика и тенденции развития (на примере регионов Прибайкалья)

Наталья Рубцова, Нина Хамнаева, Арина Астраханцева

Аннотация

Цель работы состояла в изучении сетевого взаимодействия в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг в двух сходных по ряду признаков регионах России, выявлении характера происходящих изменений в межфирменных отношениях туристско-рекреационных предприятий в долгосрочной перспективе. Объектом исследования являлась сфера туристско-рекреационных услуг двух регионов – Иркутской области и

* Автор для связи: runatasha21@yandex.ru

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Республики Бурятия. Гипотезы исследования заключались в предположении о специфичности межфирменного взаимодействия, обусловленного территориальной концентрацией предприятий, неустойчивой экономической ситуацией, отсутствием действенного координационного механизма в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг регионов.

Методология исследования базировалась на сформированном перечне характеристик и показателей межфирменных отношений, практическое проявление которых в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг регионов Прибайкалья в долгосрочной перспективе было оценено посредством сравнения результатов двух серий эмпирических исследований (2013 г. и 2019 г.). Основными исследовательскими методами являлись экспертный опрос и сравнительный анализ.

Эмпирическая верификация межфирменных отношений в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг регионов Прибайкалья позволила выявить, что взаимодействие в отрасли характеризуется низкой степенью интеграции и готовностью к совместной деятельности, раскрытию информации и отношениям, рассчитанным на долгосрочное сотрудничество. При этом в долгосрочной перспективе данные негативные тенденции в рассматриваемых регионах изменяются неоднозначно. Существенным фактором воздействия на развитие взаимоотношений между партнерами был определен уровень конкуренции в отрасли. Исследование подтвердило заинтересованность предприятий сферы туристско-рекреационных услуг регионов Прибайкалья в активном сотрудничестве с органами государственной власти, однако было обнаружено, что представители региональных государственных структур по развитию туристско-рекреационной сферы слабо ориентированы на взаимодействия с бизнес-сообществом.

Спецификой сетевого взаимодействия в сфере туристско-рекреационных услуг регионов Прибайкалья является существенная региональная концентрация ключевых партнеров по бизнесу, а также прямо пропорциональная зависимость между условиями конкуренции и развитием сетевого взаимодействия.

Introduction

In recent years, the global and domestic tourism market has been marked by deep shocks associated with the liquidation of several large multinational companies - tour operators.

In particular, in 2018, two oldest and fairly large tour operators declared bankruptcy: DSBW Tours, which has been operating in the world tourism market since 1991, and Natalie Tours (established in Russia), which has been operating since 1992. In 2018, several more well-known Russian tour operators such as Neva, Labyrinth, and Southern Cross also announced financial problems. September 2019 was marked by the bankruptcy of the largest British tour operator and air carrier Thomas Cook (the company was founded in 1841), the owner of two large Russian tour operators Intourist and Biblio-Globus, which in turn adversely affected their activities. The Russian tour operators and travel agencies number change dynamics is presented in Table 1.

According to the Table 1 data, during the 2017–2019 period a decrease in the number of tourist enterprises was present in the majority of Russian tourist destinations, traditionally characterized by good functioning indicators of the tourist and recreational services sphere.

These events are caused by a number of global changes: a significant expansion of communication capabilities, the transport infrastructure and information technologies development. Today, in the tourism and recreation sector, turnkey ready-made offers are becoming less and less popular, they are being replaced by customized products - value chains of a tourist product, the composition of which depends on the needs of a particular individual who independently determines the links in the chain [2].

In this regard, intercompany interaction and cooperation of tourism and recreation enterprises, in the form of chains or networks for a tourist product value creating, are the new stage in the development of tourism as a type of economic activity in Russia and abroad.

Large tourist corporations are being replaced by new forms of inter-company cooperation, which presuppose the stable interaction of legally independent companies involved in the process of creating and implementing a tourism product.

Table 1

Dynamics of the tour operators and travel agencies number in Russian regions 2017–2019

Territory / region / city	Unit	Period			Absolute change	
		2017	2018	2019	2019/2017	2019/2018
Russian Federation	Travel agent	11 133	11 172	10 249	-884	-923
	Tour operator	723	751	753	30	2
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	1 723	1 751	1 688	-35	-63
Moscow (Federal city)	Travel agent	380	332	173	-207	-159
	Tour operator	70	74	58	-12	-16
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	157	164	125	-32	-39
St. Petersburg (Federal city)	Travel agent	594	456	324	-270	-132
	Tour operator	87	130	132	45	2
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	223	201	197	-26	-4
Kaliningrad region	Travel agent	58	65	58	0	-7
	Tour operator	5	11	5	0	-6
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	25	35	26	1	-9
Crimea Republic	Travel agent	148	129	136	-12	7
	Tour operator	18	16	17	-1	1
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	48	59	50	2	-9
Primorskiy region	Travel agent	108	80	104	-4	24
	Tour operator	17	19	17	0	-2
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	34	64	51	17	-13
Irkutsk region	Travel agent	179	176	151	-28	-25
	Tour operator	21	24	23	2	-1
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	48	51	53	5	2
Buryatia Republic	Travel agent	26	37	32	6	-5
	Tour operator	4	3	4	0	1
	Travel agent and tour operator (both)	13	13	18	5	5

Reference: [1]

By an intercompany network in the field of tourist and recreational services, we mean a form of independent (autonomous) economic market entities association, based on a high level coordination of interests and interdependence of its participants, to achieve common goals in the tourist product formation and its further implementation. Intercompany cooperation in the tourism sector, carried out on the basis of formally incomplete and implied contracts, provides flexibility in relations in the process of adaptation to unforeseen circumstances. The autonomy of the parties in the legal sense implies that the enterprises of the tourism and recreational services sector participating in the value chain of the tourism product coordinate their functions, but do not combine them, which involves the exchange of information and the need for partial joint management (coordination mechanism). The indicated type of interaction provides formal framework contracts, within which informal relations based on social ties and trust, formed as a result of experience of anticipatory interaction, are actively developing.

The problem formulation

Partnerships in the field of tourist and recreational services, including in the applied perspective, are the subject of study by a number of foreign researchers [3-7].

However, empirical studies devoted to the study of intercompany interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services in Russia are still extremely insufficient.

In particular, such studies were carried out by Shemrakova V.N. [8], Sheresheva M.Yu. and Polyanskaya E.E. [9], Rubtsova N. [10, 11], Golovchenko T.P. and Rubtsova N.V. [12]. At the same time, currently there are no studies based on the specifics of intercompany interaction in the tourism and recreation sector in the long term, reflecting the conditions of instability and uncertainty in the Russian economy.

It should be noted that intercompany relations are a long-term phenomenon, on the one hand, and quite dynamic, on the other hand, undergoing constant changes due to the influence of not only external factors, but also internal changes occurring in enterprises participating in the network. It seems that the study of inter-company relations changes in dynamics will allow us to determine the specifics of relations between partners, to characterize the directions of network interaction development, and will allow to identify factors that influence them. In our opinion, it is advisable to carry out such studies through a comparative analysis of the changes and parameters that characterize inter-company relations in the field of tourist and recreational services in the long term period.

Methodology and research methods

The purpose of the research was to study the network interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services in two regions of Russia that are similar in a number of signs; to identify the nature of the ongoing changes in the inter-company relations of tourist and recreational enterprises in the long term period.

The object of the study was the sphere of tourist and recreational services in two regions: the Irkutsk region and the Republic of Buryatia. These regions are largely similar in geographical location, climatic and socio-economic characteristics, available tourist resources [13-20].

Intercompany relations are a complex category, characterized not only by ambiguity, but also by non-obviousness in manifestation [21]. The existing developments of domestic and foreign authors on this issue determine a fairly wide list of parameters characterizing the degree of development of intercompany relations, e.g. R. Welborne, V. Kasten define such a parameter as “the possibility and need for the cooperation abilities development” [22]; D. Tees considers the “need for coordination” to be an important characteristic [23]; R. Gibbons, J. Farrell - “the presence of the control institution” [24]; D. Rousseau, S. Sitkin, R. Bart, S. Kameron «the interdependence of the parties» [25].

Based on the list of characteristics of intercompany interaction formed by E. Popov and V. Simonova [26], we determined a set of indicators that reflect the state of each of the characteristics (Table 2).

Table 2

Groups of intercompany relations characteristics and indicators

Groups of characteristics	Contents	Indicators
Institutional	Reflect the prevailing norms of interaction between network participants	Trust between partners Formality of relations
Communicatory	Characterize the strategic orientation of intercompany interaction	Information exchange intensity Availability of network databases and technical communications quality
Managerial	Reflect the knowledge system and information exchange effectiveness between network participants and the coordination mechanisms used	Common goals for strategic development Coordination mechanisms
Resource	Characterize the complementarity of network participants	Complementarity Mutual investment

Reference: Compiled by the authors, based on [26]

The hypotheses (H) to be tested in an empirical study were as follows.

H1. In the tourism sector of the Baikal regions, the institutional and communication characteristics of intercompany interaction are quite clearly manifested, while the managerial and resource characteristics are weakly expressed. Relations between network participants are characterized by a low degree of integration and readiness for joint activities, information disclosure, and long-term cooperation.

H2. In the long run, negative trends in the field of tourist and recreational services of the Baikal regions network interaction are smoothed out, and interaction is intensifying.

H3. A large coordination company in the form of public-private partnership can become an effective coordination mechanism in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal region, such coordination company can determinate the network’s development strategic goals.

A confirmation of the first hypothesis would indicate not the absence of network interaction in the tourism and recreation sector of the Baikal regions, but its specificity, due to the territorial concentration of enterprises, an unstable economic situation, the absence of an effective coordination mechanism and low interaction efficiency. The results of testing the second and third hypotheses of the study will allow us to assess the network interaction dynamics development; to get an answer to the question of the advisability of coordinating intercompany interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services in the regions under consideration by involving regional and municipal administrations.

The indicators of intercompany relations (Table 1) were analyzed by us according to the results of two series of studies (2013 and 2019), the objects of which were the heads of enterprises in the field of tourism and recreation services (tourism organizations (tour operators and travel agents) and accommodation facilities (hotels, hotels, recreation centers, boarding houses, etc.)), as well as regional and municipal authorities of the two regions.

Expert survey was selected as the main research method. The sample characteristic of both studies series is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The sample characteristic of both studies series 2013 and 2019

Representatives of tourism and recreation services enterprises	2013		2019	
	<i>Irkutsk region</i>	<i>The Republic of Buryatia</i>	<i>Irkutsk region</i>	<i>The Republic of Buryatia</i>
Tour operators and travel agents	15	5	15	5
Accommodation facilities	12	11	15	12
Regional administration	1	1	1	1
Municipal administration	2	2	2	2
Total:	49		53	

Reference: Compiled by the authors

According to Table 3, when conducting two series of studies in 2013 and 2019, 49 and 53 respondents participated in the survey, respectively. Of these, 33 and 47 respondents (2013 and 2019, respectively) were heads of tourism organizations and accommodation facilities, the rest were representatives of regional and municipal administrations that coordinate the sphere of tourism and recreation services.

In order to comply with the requirement of representativeness, a sample of experts was formed as follows:

1) from the side of the authorities, the experts were the heads (or their deputies) of the regional (Irkutsk city) and republican (Ulan-Ude city) tourism agencies, as well

as the heads of the tourism departments of municipalities (Irkutsk city and Ulan-Ude city) - 6 respondents in each of the series of studies;

2) a sample of experts - representatives of the tourism business - included heads of enterprises in the field of tourism and recreation services: tour operators and travel agents with 20 respondents in each of the series of studies (15 of them from the Irkutsk region and 5 from the Republic of Buryatia) and accommodation facilities (hotels, hotels, recreation facilities, etc.) 23 respondents in 2013 (12 of them from the Irkutsk region and 11 from the Republic of Buryatia) and 27 in 2019 (15 and 12, respectively).

Working documents (questionnaires) for the study were developed for each group of experts (government and business). At the same time, for representatives of tourist and recreational enterprises, the questionnaire contained questions about the type and extent of cooperation between partners, the interaction of enterprises with authorities, and the forms of support for networking in the field of regional tourist and recreational services. The questionnaire for government representatives contained questions about the effectiveness of government policy aimed at developing the field of tourist and recreational services in the region, the forms of business support used. During the study, we were also interested in the existing mechanisms for coordination and interaction within the network. Working documents were designed so that all interviewed participants in the relationship expressed their opinion on a similar list of issues.

Results

Institutional characteristics

The survey found a lot of evidence of the mutually beneficial cooperation importance and intercompany interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services. In particular, according to a 2019 survey with the statement that "long-term relationships with partners are an important factor in ensuring competitive advantages", 76% of representatives of the tourism sector of the Irkutsk region and 88% of the Republic of Buryatia - agree.

The results obtained revealed a decrease in the need to establish informal relations in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Irkutsk region, which also applies to the Republic of Buryatia. So, according to a 2019 survey, 55% of experts in the Irkutsk region agree that informal relations are necessary for successful cooperation, 45% consider them important in resolving non-standard situations. At the same time, 63% of respondents from the Republic of Buryatia answered that there was no need for informal relations (note that in 2013 no such assessments were revealed, and 86% of respondents noted the importance of informal relations).

The data obtained demonstrate that in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal region there is a transition from informal relations to conscious cooperation, strengthening the importance of formal contracts.

Analyzing the level of trust between partners, it was found that in 2019 compared with 2013, enterprises in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal region show changes in the choice of key business partners in favor of partners located in the same region. The regional concentration of intercompany interaction is growing. In particular, if in 2013 key partners were located in the same region with 56% of the tourism enterprises in the Irkutsk region, then in 2019, 79% of respondents gave such an assessment. In the Republic of Buryatia in 2019, the regional concentration of partners increased to a greater extent. The share of tourism industry enterprises heads, who indicated that their key partners are located in other regions of Russia or abroad has decreased significantly (a decrease from 86% to 44% and from 57% to 6%, respectively) (Fig. 1).

Generally it was possible to identify that the level of trust in partners among the representatives of the tourism business is quite high, 72% of respondents from the Ir-

kutsk region and 80% from the Republic of Buryatia consider reliable relationships within the network.

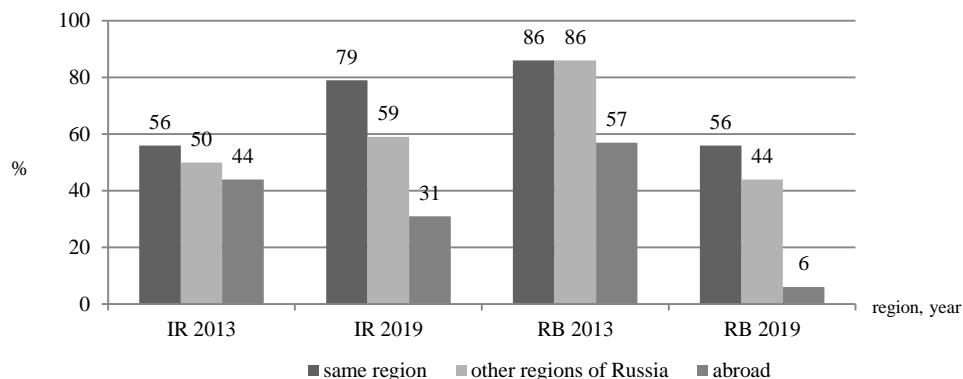


Figure 1. Placement of the main business partners, %

Reference: Compiled by the authors

The results obtained may indirectly indicate the presence of trust and interaction improving between tourism entities within the same region in the long term period. In addition, the change of key business partners in favor of Russian enterprises could be affected by the ambiguous geo-political and unstable economic situation of modern Russia, observed during the period of 2013-2019 under consideration. The data obtained, in particular, confirm the specificity of intercompany interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal region, due to the territorial factor.

Communication characteristics

Cooperation with competitors is a distinctive feature of a special relationship form in the field of tourism and recreation services, when, despite competition for resources and consumers, companies find opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation that increases the effectiveness of all participants in the relationship [27]. Table 4 provides information on forms of competitors cooperation that the tourist and recreational services enterprises of the Baikal regions use and ready to use in the future. Comparison of the results of both studies series in 2013 and 2019.

As we can see, the communication characteristics of intercompany relations in the field of tourist and recreational services in the regions under consideration are detected, while in 2019 compared with 2013 they became more pronounced. In 2019, in both regions, such forms of cooperation with partners as the production technology sharing, exchange of information on demand, cooperation in the framework of individual business projects, joint training or professional development programs became popular.

Although in the both regions all kinds of interaction with partners are considered by experts as possible, in practice comprehensive cooperation is difficult due to growing competition, which is especially evident in the Republic of Buryatia.

Note that in 2019 compared with 2013 in the Republic of Buryatia, the level of trust between partners decreased, which in particular was reflected in a decrease of using almost all forms of cooperation (Table 4). In 2019, in the tourism sector of the Buryatia Republic, cooperation between competitors is limited to the exchange of information on demand (31%) and cooperation in the framework of individual business projects (25%).

In the Irkutsk region over the period under review, cooperation between competitors has become higher, and the number of forms of cooperation is greater. Thus, 55% of respondents use information exchange on demand as a form of inter-

competitive cooperation, 42% use joint training or professional development programs, 39% cooperate on individual business projects, 35% hold joint lobbying interests in executive bodies, exchange successful experience in the application of management technologies - 31%. We also note that in 2013 the situation in the regions under consideration was exactly the opposite.

Table 4

Forms of cooperation with partners that are used and ready to be used by network interaction participants in the Baikal regions tourism sector (the results comparison 2013 and 2019), %

Forms of cooperation with partners	Use				Ready to use			
	Irkutsk region		The Republic of Buryatia		Irkutsk region		The Republic of Buryatia	
	2013	2019	2013	2019	2013	2019	2013	2019
Joint proposal development	28	24	43	0	44	41	57	31
Sharing innovation	11	17	14	13	17	21	57	25
Joint use of assets (buildings, structures, transport infrastructure, etc.)	28	20	29	0	28	27	57	13
Joint training or professional development programs	6	42	29	13	39	66	43	19
Cooperation in the framework of individual business projects	33	39	71	25	39	45	86	44
Exchange of successful experience in applying management technologies	61	31	29	13	28	66	43	56
Exchange of information on demand	44	55	57	31	33	45	43	38
Production technology sharing	0	24	14	6	6	24	29	13
Joint lobbying of interests in executive bodies	28	35	43	19	29	36	100	38

Reference: Compiled by the authors, based on [27]

Changes in the use of intercompany interaction forms in the regions under consideration can be explained by changes in the state of competition (Fig. 2).

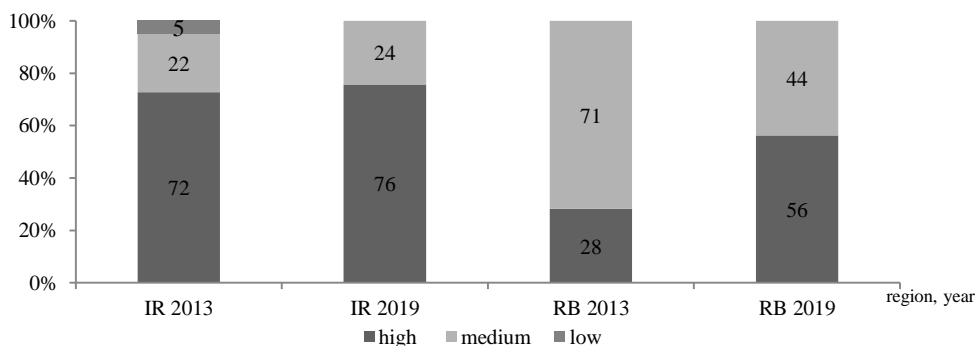


Figure 2. The level of competition in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Baikal regions (2013 and 2019)

Reference: Compiled by the authors

In the Irkutsk region, the level of competition for the period under review has not changed. However, in the Buryatia Republic, competition, according to respondents, intensified significantly, which in particular affected the willingness of companies to inter-competitive cooperation. It should be noted that in 2019 in the Republic

of Buryatia the number of tourist enterprises increased by 26%, and accommodation facilities increased as well by 14% compared with the period of six years ago. In the Irkutsk region, the trends in the number of tourism industry enterprises for the period under review were similar (an increase of 24% and 18%, respectively), however, six years ago, most experts in the region noted a high level of competition in the field of Irkutsk regional tourism and recreation services, whereas in the Republic of Buryatia they rated it as average.

In general, the communication characteristics of intercompany relations in the regions under consideration are ambiguous, while they are largely determined by the state of competition in the industry.

Thus, the second hypothesis was partially confirmed: in the long run, network interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services is strengthened only if the competitive situation in the market is maintained or improved. In the case of increased competition, relationships within the network deteriorate, and willingness to collaborate together becomes lower.

Managerial characteristics

The managerial characteristics of intercompany relations were studied by using the parameters “the presence of common goals of strategic development” and “the presence of coordination mechanisms”.

These parameters were analyzed through the prism of the «authority-business» relationship.

The obtained results allow us to state that 56% of tourism business experts from the Irkutsk region and 88% from the Republic of Buryatia are aware of the administration’s economic policy and development strategies for the tourism and recreation services in the region (compared to 2013, this indicator has not changed, and in the Buryatia Republic - decreased). The decrease in this parameter in the Republic of Buryatia can partly be explained by the change of the regional administration heads and the heads of regional tourism agencies during the period under review. The survey data allow us to note the weak nature of the interaction between enterprises in the field of tourist and recreational services and regional authorities in the Irkutsk region, and, on the contrary, fairly developed relations between business and government in the Republic of Buryatia. Moreover, the tourism business in both regions of the Baikal region has a high willingness to cooperation with state authorities, in particular, 83% of experts from the Irkutsk region and 88% from the Republic of Buryatia note the importance of discussing the problems of developing the tourism business with regional authorities.

However, the steps taken by authorities to improve interaction with representatives of the tourism business are not yet sufficient. In 2019, only 31% of tourism business experts from the Irkutsk region noted that they were personally acquainted with the heads of executive authorities in the region, responsible for the development and implementation of policies in the field of tourism development. In the Republic of Buryatia there are much more such experts - 75% of respondents. Note that in 2013 the value of this indicator was higher - 41% and 91%, respectively.

Experts of the both regions assess the effectiveness of state support for tourism and recreational services ambiguously. Answers to questions about the effectiveness of state policy in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Irkutsk region made it possible to establish that only 41% of respondents - representatives of the tourism business and half of the respondents - representatives of the executive branch of the region, consider it effective. In the Republic of Buryatia, much more positive assessments were received: half of the business community representatives and all

representatives of the government are satisfied with the state policy aimed at developing the regional sphere of tourist and recreational services.

Compared with the period of six years ago, the enterprises heads in the field of tourism and recreation services have changed their ideas about the ways of state support they need. According to the 2019 study, the most popular ones were named (Fig. 3): “government projects involvement”, “assistance in attracting investments” and “providing the government with guarantees of compliance with the agreements”. Measures quite popular in 2013 - “organization of conferences” and “creation of associations and other things for acquaintance and exchange of experience” – in 2019 turned out to be unclaimed.

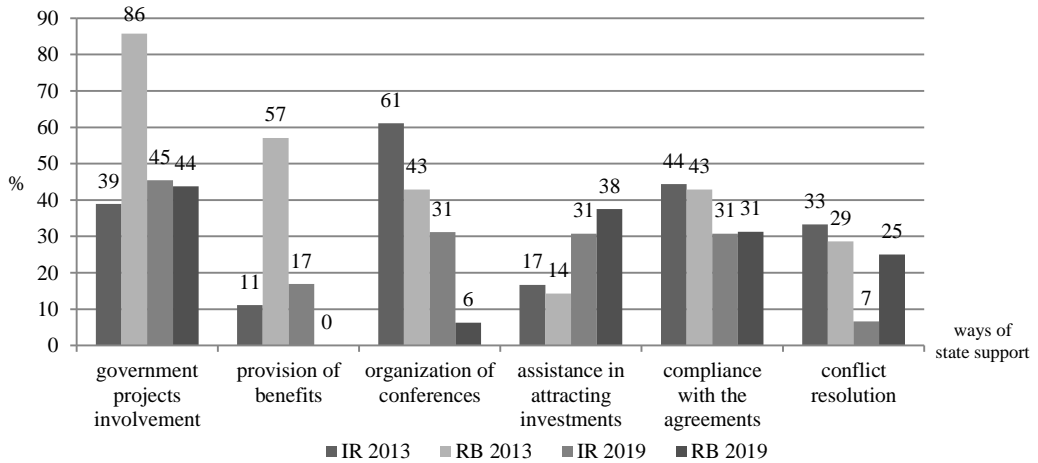


Figure 3. Ways of state support for tourism and recreation service enterprises needs
Reference: Compiled by the authors

Necessary ways of state support for the development of interaction between Baikal Regions companies of the tourist and recreational services sphere in 2019 were named by respondents (Fig. 4): “administrative procedures simplification”, “joint projects financing”, “assistance in the information search and dissemination” (Irkutsk region). A sufficiently important support measure in 2013 in the Republic of Buryatia was called “assistance in the real estate and infrastructure provision”, but in 2019 it turned out to be unpopular, which may indicate an effective solution to this problem by the regional administration.

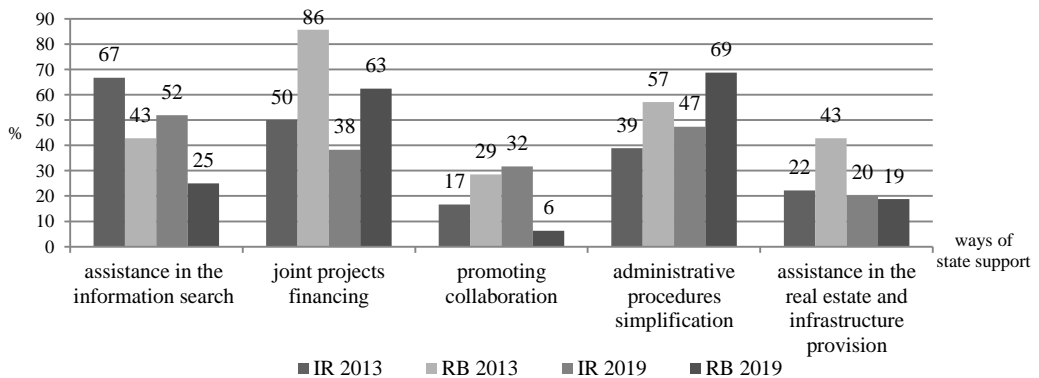


Figure 4. Ways of state support for the development of interaction between tourism and recreation service enterprises
Reference: Compiled by the authors

An important research question was the identification of the need for the emergence of a large company in the form of public-private partnership, coordinating the activities of enterprises in the field of tourist and recreational services in the region [28]. The respondents' answers allow us to conclude that in 2019, 52% of a business representatives from the Irkutsk region and 88% from the Republic of Buryatia positively assess this method of coordinating network interaction (compared to 2013, these estimates decreased slightly). Thus, in the tourism sector of the region, a rather high business willingness to develop interaction with the help of the authorities remains. Consequently, the third of the hypotheses put forward by us was confirmed.

In general, representatives of the tourism and recreational services sector in both regions showed a demand for attracting authorities to develop intercompany cooperation. The results obtained in both series of studies indicate that in the long term, government support measures are still in demand.

Baikal Sphere project is a good sample of successful intercompany cooperation in the field of Irkutsk regional tourist and recreational services. The project unites entrepreneurs, designers, planners, land owners, investors, experts and government. The goal of the project is comfortable Baikal region touristic conditions creation and ecotourism development. Baikal Sphere acts as a unifying structure - managerial company, which creates synergy with other projects and provides them with comprehensive support. All partner companies that collaborate with the Baikal Sphere project complement and strengthen each other's work, exchange experiences and ideas, and create joint projects. The main Baikal Sphere activity areas are tourism infrastructure creation, complex recreational projects, investments attraction, regional tourism development strategy implementation, Baikal region branding. Currently, the project Baikal Sphere includes the following companies: the tour operator "Baikalov", the park-embankment "Solnechnaya Road", the business workshop "Open Lands", "Baikal-Alaska. Siberian merchant path", the "Polyana" sports park and the "Ostrog" ethnopark.

As a result of inter-organizational interaction under the Baikal Sphere patronage, several projects were created and implemented: the Baikal Region Promotion Center, the Baikal Territory Development Map, Angara Park, the Baikal-Alaska Hotel, and the Baikal Quarter.

Resource characteristics

The manifestation of resource characteristics was evaluated using the parameters of complementarity and interdependence of network participants. When asked about their readiness to provide additional opportunities to their partners, the majority of respondents chose options such as: "changing the composition or quality of the services provided" (65% - Irkutsk region and 31% - Republic of Buryatia); "Payments terms revision" (45% Irkutsk region and 25% Republic of Buryatia). Less than half of respondents from the Republic of Buryatia (44%) noted that there was no need to provide additional opportunities to business partners. Thus, companies in the field of tourist and recreational services in the Irkutsk region are more willing to complement each other than in Buryatia Republic. At the same time, the specifics of intercompany cooperation in the field of tourist and recreational services include the impact of competition on the willingness to support a partner, when personal relationships and past experience are not able to cover the risks associated with increased competition and general economic instability.

At the same time, the majority of experts in the Baikal regions note the encountered difficulties when changing business partners - 58% from the Irkutsk region and 56% from the Republic of Buryatia. Less than a third of experts in the Irkutsk region (29%) note the absence of difficulties in changing business partners, only 6% of experts from the Republic of Buryatia agree with them. Thus, in the field of tourist and

recreational services of the regions in question, there is a locking effect (partner enterprise insularity). Note that, compared with 2013, the situation has not changed, and in the Republic of Buryatia it has even worsened; in 2013, expert estimates were 55% and 29%, respectively. Thus, intercompany relations in the field of tourist and recreational services in both regions look quite stable, however, at the same time, the specificity of network interaction, which is determined by the geographical concentration (location in the same region) of key partners, is revealed.

In the course of the study, it was found that the willingness to maintain relationships with partners is not the same, even if there are additional costs for representatives of the tourism and recreation services of both regions. In the Irkutsk region, 62% of respondents positively relate to such interaction measures, in the Republic of Buryatia only 38%. Thus, the signs of fairly stable inter-company relations between companies of the tourism and recreation services sphere, based on informal cooperation of geographically close enterprises, are observed only in the Irkutsk region. In the Buryatia Republic, network interaction is more likely the result of interdependence in ensuring the value chain of a tourist product, and the lack of an alternative when choosing a partner. An interesting fact is that in 2013, the marked nature of relations in the tourism sector of the regions under consideration was exactly the opposite.

In general, the obtained data made it possible to summarize the changes in the parameters characterizing intercompany relations in the field of tourist and recreational services of the both regions (Table 5).

Table 5

Changes in the indicators of tourist and recreational services intercompany relations in the Baikal regions (2013-2019)

Feature Groups	Indicators	Character of indicators change	
		Irkutsk region	The Republic of Buryatia
Institutional	Trust between partners	Improved	Improved
	Relationship formalization	Not changed	Decreased
Communication	Information exchange intensity	Improved	Decreased
	Availability of network databases and quality of technical communications	Improved	Improved
Managerial	Common goals for strategic development	Not changed	Decreased
	Availability of effective coordination mechanisms	Decreased	Decreased
Resource	Complementarity of the participants	Improved	Decreased
	Mutual investments	Not changed	Decreased

Reference: Compiled by the authors

The estimates presented in Table 5 allow us to note the parameters improvement of the long term Irkutsk region network interaction in the field of tourist and recreational services and, on the contrary, their deterioration in the Republic of Buryatia, which is especially evident in the estimates of managerial and resource characteristics.

Conclusion

The hypotheses put forward have received partial confirmation. In particular, the hypothesis was confirmed that tourism enterprises in the Baikal regions are characterized by a low degree of integration and readiness for joint activities, information disclosure and long-term cooperation relationships. At the same time, it was concluded that in the long term, these negative trends change ambiguously. For example, in the Republic of Buryatia, networking in the field of tourism and recreation services has deteriorated due to increased competition. In the Irkutsk region, inter-company cooperation between tourism and recreational services enterprises has improved, but it

is premature to talk about the emergence of a stable interaction form of an inter-company strategic alliance or a tourist cluster.

The second hypothesis was partially confirmed: in the long term perspective, tourism and recreation services networking is enhanced only if the competitive situation in the market is maintained or improved. In the case of increased competition, relationships within the network deteriorate, and willingness to collaborate together becomes lower.

The third hypothesis was confirmed: the regional tourism and recreational services sector enterprises are interested in active cooperation with state authorities; however, representatives of regional government agencies for the development of tourism and recreation are poorly oriented towards mutual cooperation between government and business.

The specifics of the Baikal regional tourist and recreational services interaction can be called a significant regional concentration of some key business partners, as well as a directly proportional relationship between the competition conditions and network interaction development.

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Сведения об авторах / About authors

Рубцова Наталья Владимировна, кандидат экономических наук, доцент, доцент кафедры менеджмента, маркетинга и сервиса, Байкальский государственный университет. 664003, Россия, г. Иркутск, ул. Ленина 11, корпус 3, каб. 3-905. *E-mail: runatasha21@yandex.ru*

Natalia V. Rubtsova, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Management, Marketing and Service, Baikal State University. Off. 3-905, Building 3, 11, Lenin Str., Irkutsk, Russia, 664003. *E-mail: runatasha21@yandex.ru*

Хамнаева Нина Ивановна, доктор технических наук, профессор, зав. кафедрой «Социальный и технологический сервис», Восточно-Сибирский технологический университет технологий и управления. 670000, Россия, г. Улан-Удэ, ул. Ключевская, 40 В. *E-mail: hni@bk.ru*

Nina I. Khamnaeva, Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Social and Technological Service, East Siberian Technological University of Technology and Management. 40B, Klyuchevskaya Str., Ulan-Ude, Russia, 670000. *E-mail: hni@bk.ru*

Астраханцева Арина Сергеевна, кандидат экономических наук, доцент, доцент кафедры государственного управления и управления человеческими ресурсами, Байкальский государственный университет. 664003, Россия, г. Иркутск, ул. Ленина 11, корпус 3, каб. 2-305. *E-mail: arina.personal@gmail.com*
Arina S. Astrakhantseva, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Public Administration and Human Resource Management, Baikal State University. Off. 2-305, Building 3, 11, Lenin Str., Irkutsk, Russia, 664003. *E-mail: arina.personal@gmail.com*