

Arctic and North. 2022. No. 49. Pp. 150–166.

Original article

UDC 338.48(470.22)(045)

doi: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2022.49.174

## The Tourism Vector for the Karelian Arctic Development

**Svetlana V. Kondrateva**<sup>1</sup>✉, Cand. Sci. (Econ.), Senior Researcher

<sup>1</sup> Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, ul. Pushkinskaya, 11, Petrozavodsk, 185910, Russia

<sup>1</sup> svkorka@mail.ru ✉, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8832-9182>

**Abstract.** The article presents an integrated approach to considering the tourism vector of Karelian Arctic development. Six municipalities of the Republic of Karelia, included into the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, have become a model site for the study. Severe natural and climatic North conditions, along with challenges of socio-economic development, actualize the perspective of tourism and recreation, including for the local population. For the first time in the study, the territory of the Karelian Arctic was comprehensively examined from the standpoint of tourist and recreational development. The study analyzes tourist and recreational potential, tourist infrastructure, including infrastructure of accommodation, catering, leisure and recreation, tourist flow and types of tourism; projects of tourist orientation, strategic directions of tourism development in the municipal context. The opinion of the residents of the Karelian Arctic about the tourist and recreational development of the territory is also taken into account, and limitations and current challenges are highlighted. The study reveals the diversity of municipal districts in the Karelian Arctic in terms of tourism and recreational potential, the degree of tourist development of the territory, tourism development opportunities, the constraints. Despite the existing limitations, on the basis of the identified opportunities, the significance of the tourism development vector of the Karelian Arctic is shown as a promising direction of domestic tourism in the Russian North, as well as a tool to restore physical and emotional strength of the local population.

**Keywords:** *Karelian Arctic, tourism development, local population, municipality, Republic of Karelia, White Sea*

### *Acknowledgments and funding*

The author expresses gratitude to Ekaterina Andreevna Shlapenko, Candidate of Political Sciences, researcher at the Karelian Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, for her help in compiling and conducting a sociological study. The work was carried out as part of the implementation of the state task of the Karelian Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

### *Introduction*

The unique tourist and recreational potential of the Karelian Arctic, the preserved traditions of original culture and hospitality open up opportunities for the development of various types of tourism: from ice diving and ecotourism in specially protected natural areas to ethno-cultural tours to rune-populated villages. Belonging to the Arctic, determining the severity of the natural and climatic conditions of life, actualizes the problems of tourism and recreation of the

---

\* © Kondrateva S.V., 2022

For citation: Kondrateva S.V. The Tourism Vector for the Karelian Arctic Development. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2022, no. 49, pp. 174–192. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2022.49.174

local population as a tool for restoring the physical and emotional strength of a person. The aim of the work is to substantiate the tourism development vector of the Karelian Arctic on the basis of identifying opportunities, limitations and modern challenges for the functioning of the tourism sector.

### *Development of tourism in the Arctic: theoretical aspects*

The Arctic tourism development in recent years has become one of the key areas of tourism research in the northern and Arctic regions [1, Lukin Yu.F.; 2, Kharlampieva N.K.; 3, Kuklina V., Kuklina M., Ruposov V., Rogov V.; 4, Bertosh A.A.]. The greatest attention is paid to cruises in polar latitudes [5, Kunnikov A.V.; 6, Pashkevich A., Lamers M.] and ecotourism [7, Sevastyanov D.V.; 8, Korbut V.V., Tsekina M.V.; 9, Zhagina S.N., Svetlosanov V.A., Nizovtsev V.A.], which is largely due to the specifics of the territory.

Attention is paid to socio-economic aspects [2, Kharlampieva N.K.; 10, Lukin Yu.F.; 11, Yakovchuk A.A.; 12, Zhelnina Z.Yu.], development and implementation of tourism potential in the conditions of Arctic exploration [13, Orlova V.S.]. Proceeding from the fact that “the population of the Arctic is facing many social, economic and environmental problems, which, in turn, increase the difficulties of everyday life in harsh climatic conditions” [14, Druzhinin P.V., Kurilo A.E., Moroshkina M.V.], works devoted to the problems of tourism and recreation of the local population of the Arctic regions of the Russian Federation deserve special attention [15, Kondrateva S.V., Moroshkina S.V.; 16, Tsvetkov A.Yu.], as well as the study of preferences of residents of the northern territories [17, Sidorovskaya T.V., Volovik O.A., Sidoruk A.Yu.] and recreational mobility [18, Morozova T.V., Murina S. G., Belaya R.V.].

The problem of studying tourism in the Karelian Arctic as a single space is just beginning to be considered as a fairly new area of Arctic and northern research, which is due to the gradual separation of the municipalities of the Republic of Karelia from 2017 into the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and the formation of the region. At the same time, it should be noted that there are scientific achievements in the study of tourism in some areas of the Karelian Arctic [14, Druzhinin P.V., Kurilo A.E., Moroshkina M.V.; 19, Gromov V.V.; 20, Klyuchnikova E.M., Titov A.F., Masloboev V.N.].

The strategic works on the socio-economic development of the Karelian Arctic, revealing the opportunities and limitations of the studied territory on the basis of SWOT-analysis [21, Volkov A.D., Tishkov S.V.], sociological studies of the territory deserve attention [22, Suvorova I.M.; 23, Suvorova I.M.].

However, the available scientific works on the investigated problems are rather fragmented in the content and spatial aspect, which does not allow forming a comprehensive idea of tourism development in the Karelian Arctic as a whole. This article attempts to fill this gap. On the basis of an integrated approach, the article investigates the tourism vector of development in the

Karelian Arctic by identifying the opportunities, limitations and current challenges of tourism functioning in the territory under study.

### ***Materials and methods***

Six municipalities of the Republic of Karelia (RK) belonging to the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation were the model site of the study: Kostomuksha urban district and Belomorskiy, Kalevalskiy, Kemskiy, Louhskiy, and Segezhskiy districts.

The justification for the tourism development vector of the Karelian Arctic is based on the application of an integrated approach that takes into account the possibilities, limitations and modern challenges of the functioning of the tourism sector.

The study was based on the analysis of state statistics data from the websites of the administrations of the municipalities of the Karelian Arctic, the Internet portal of the RK, the Investment Passport of the Arctic Territories of the RK, the Republican Center for the state protection of cultural heritage objects, unified tourist passports and strategic documents for the socio-economic development of the study areas.

The median values were calculated in the work.

The study of the tourist infrastructure of the Karelian Arctic was carried out on the basis of the calculation of indicators of its structural elements (the method is more detailed: [24, Stepanova S.V.; 25, Shulepov V.I., Stepanova S.V.]).

The section revealing the attitude of the local population of the Karelian Arctic is based on the data of a sociological survey conducted by the author together with her colleague E. A. Shlapenko in 2021 (103 residents of the Karelian Arctic were interviewed), where the ratio of the Karelian Arctic respondents to the total population of the region (17.9%) correlates with the population ratio in the region (18.3%); shares are also reconciled by municipalities.

The problems of the tourist and recreational development of the Karelian Arctic is multidimensional and diverse, it is impossible to analyze in detail the entire set of interrelated blocks and directions in the framework of one article. The work seems to be the beginning of a comprehensive understanding of the development of tourism in the Karelian Arctic as a whole, revealing some of the most significant aspects of the issues under study.

### ***Karelian Arctic: general characteristics of the territory***

The Karelian Arctic unites six of the 18 municipalities of the Republic of Karelia, their allocation to the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation occurred gradually: in 2017 — Belomorskiy, Kemskiy and Louhskiy municipal districts (Fig. 1., blue color), in 2020 — Kostomuksha urban district, Segezhskiy and Kalevalskiy municipal districts (dashed lines). In the west, the state Russian-Finnish border passes through the territory of three municipalities, and the Karelian Arctic also borders on the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk oblasts, washed in the northeast by the waters of the White Sea.



Fig. 1. Municipalities of the Karelian Arctic <sup>1</sup>.

The Karelian Arctic, with an area of 71.4 thousand km<sup>2</sup> or 40% of the RK territory (Table 1), is characterized by low and extremely low population density (the exceptions are the Kostomuksha urban district and the Segezhskiy district). Less than a fifth of the inhabitants of the region (18.3%) live here, the urbanization of most municipalities is also below the average Karelian values (81.2%).

Table 1

*General socio-economic characteristics of the Arctic municipalities of the Republic of Karelia (as of 01.01.2021) <sup>2</sup>*

	Municipality	Area, km <sup>2</sup>	Share of the area of the region, %	Population, thousand people	Share of the region's population, %	Number of inhabitants per 1 km <sup>2</sup>	Urban population, %
1	Kostomuksha urban district	4046	2.2	30273	5.0	7.5	98.4
2	Belomorskiy district	12797	7.1	15151	2.5	1.2	59.6
3	Kalevalskiy district	13260	7.3	6489	1.1	0.5	58.3
4	Kemskiy district	8029	4.4	13961	2.3	1.7	74.9
5	Louhskiy district	22552	12.5	10619	1.7	0.5	70.3
6	Segezhskiy district	10723	5.9	34761	5.7	3.2	94.1

A negative trend in the Karelian Arctic, as well as in the RK as a whole, is the population decline (Table 2) along with an increase in the share of people over the working age (except for the urban district). In 2016–2021, the number decreased by 8.5 thousand people (more intensive rate than the RK average). The problem is most acute in the Loukhskiy and Kemskiy municipal districts.

<sup>1</sup> Source [21, Volkov A.D., Tishkov S.V.].

<sup>2</sup> Source [26, Republic of Karelia].

Table 2

*Population dynamics of the Karelian Arctic for the period 2016–2021, thousand people*<sup>3</sup>

No.	Municipality	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016-2021, %
1	Kostomuksha urban district	30.1	30.0	29.9	29.9	30.1	30.3	+ 0.7
2	Belomorskiy district	17.0	16.7	16.3	15.9	15.4	15.2	-10.6
3	Kalevalskiy district	7.1	6.9	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.5	-8.5
4	Kemskiy district	15.8	15.5	15.0	14.6	14.3	14.0	-11.4
5	Louhskiy district	12.0	11.8	11.5	11.1	10.8	10.6	-11.7
6	Segezhskiy district	37.9	37.3	36.6	35.8	35.3	34.8	-8.2
	<i>Republic of Karelia as a whole</i>	<i>629.9</i>	<i>627.1</i>	<i>622.5</i>	<i>618.1</i>	<i>614.1</i>	<i>609.1</i>	<i>-3.3</i>

The economic entities of the Karelian Arctic industries (logging, woodworking and mining) “annually lose professionals because of labor migration” both due to harsh natural and climatic conditions and sociocultural reality [22, Suvorova I.M.]. The industrial potential of the Karelian Arctic “is characterized by spatial unevenness, concentrating mainly in the cities of Segezha and Kostomuksha... the cities of Kem and Belomorsk have almost lost their industrial significance, retaining nevertheless their logistical, historical and cultural potential” [23, Suvorova I.M.]. However, the transport potential of the Karelian Arctic, taking into account the specifics of the physical-geographical (White Sea) and geopolitical position (EU), represented by various types of transport infrastructure, can be considered as a strong point of high importance for tourism development. Taking into account the severity of the natural and climatic conditions, the importance of restoring the physical and emotional strength of a person on the basis of opportunities for leisure and recreation is increasing [15, Kondratyeva S.V., Moroshkina M.V.].

### ***Tourist and recreational potential***

The tourist and recreational potential of the Karelian Arctic, represented by unique objects of natural and anthropogenic origin, some of which have no analogues either in the Russian Federation or in the world, reveals the possibilities for developing various types of tourism and recreation. The unique potential of the territory is conditioned by:

- specifics of the border position (Green Belt of Fennoscandia, rune-song villages);
- specifics of the physical and geographical position (White Sea);
- original culture and traditions of the local population (Pomor culture, White Sea petroglyphs, sieidid);
- historical milestones of state life (Osudareva Road, White Sea – Baltic Canal).

According to the data of the Republican Center for State Protection of Cultural Heritage Objects (Table 3), one fifth of the RK cultural heritage objects (18.5%) is located in the Karelian Arctic. Moreover, 75.7% of them are objects of federal significance, half of which are located on the territory of the Belomorskiy district (50.1%), the smallest part of them are in the Segezhskiy

<sup>3</sup> Source: compiled by the author based on state statistics.

district (4.9%). In addition, 26.1% of the identified objects have not yet been included in the Unified State Register (potential).

Table 3

*Cultural heritage sites of the Karelian Arctic (as of April 21, 2022)*<sup>4</sup>

No.	Municipality	Objects included in the unified state register			Identified objects
		Total	Federal significance	Regional significance	
1	Kostomuksha urban district	56	45	11	33
2	Belomorskiy district	239	207	32	134
3	Kalevalskiy district	74	46	28	90
4	Kemskiy district	68	47	21	152
5	Louhskiy district	66	44	22	78
6	Segezhskiy district	37	20	17	37
	<i>Total</i>	<i>540</i>	<i>409</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>524</i>

The unique ecological frame “Green Belt of Fennoscandia”, which has no analogues in other border regions of the Russian Federation, stretches along the state border from the Barents Sea to the Baltic Sea and represents a system of protected areas of federal and regional subordination with a total area of about 1/3 million hectares (over 80% are on the Russian side) with valuable recreational facilities that are promising for the development of tourism. Rune-song villages with preserved original traditions and culture (the village of Kestenga of the Louhskiy district, the village of Kalevala of the Kalevalskiy national district, the village of Voknavolok of the Kostomuksha urban district) have aroused interest since the late 19th century due to the publication of the world-famous Karelian-Finnish epos “Kalevala” [23, Stepanova S.V.]. White Sea petroglyphs on the territory of the Karelian Arctic are examples of monumental fine art of the primitive era, dating back to the end of the 5th – the first half of the 4th millennium BC. In 2021, the petroglyphs of the Onega and White Seas are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites<sup>5</sup>. The uniqueness of the White Sea is revealed by the possibilities of organizing diving, including under-ice diving (several diving centers operate on the territory); Pomor culture and nearby Spaso-Preobrazhenskiy Solovetskiy Monastery deserve special attention.

### ***Tourism infrastructure development***

A comparison of the Karelian Arctic municipalities with the rest of the Karelian districts reveals a significant lag in the level of development of the accommodation infrastructure (almost twice as much) (Table 4).

<sup>4</sup> Source: compiled by the author based on data from [27, Statistical information].

<sup>5</sup> Lobanova N. Skaly s petroglyfami trebuyut berezhnogo otnosheniya [Rocks with petroglyphs require careful treatment]. URL: <https://gazeta-licey.ru/science/faces-of-science-in/100850-nadezhda-lobanova-skaly-s-petroglyfami-trebuyut-berezhnogo-otnosheniya> (accessed 18 July 2022).

Table 4

*Tourism infrastructure development by structural elements, median<sup>6</sup>*

No.	Territory	Accommodation infrastructure	Catering infrastructure	Leisure and recreation infrastructure
1	Karelian Arctic	0.54	1.05	1
2	Republic of Karelia	1	1	0.9

In addition, there is an uneven distribution of structural elements within the municipalities, which is manifested in some “patterns of localization of tourist infrastructure objects” [24, Stepanova S.V.]:

- accommodation infrastructure near the coasts of water bodies (for the Karelian Arctic: the White Sea, as well as picturesque lakes and rivers) and along the Karelian section of the federal Kola Motorway;
- catering infrastructure in administrative centers and along the Karelian section of the federal Kola Motorway;
- leisure and recreation infrastructure in administrative centers and near tourist attractions.

Largely due to the specifics of the location and the unique tourist and recreational potential, the Loukhskiy district occupies a leading position among the studied municipalities in terms of the development of tourist infrastructure, the values of indicators of all structural elements of the tourist infrastructure of which exceed the medians of the Republic of Karelia and the Karelian Arctic (Fig. 2, Petrozavodsk urban district is not presented).

<sup>6</sup> Source: calculated by the author.

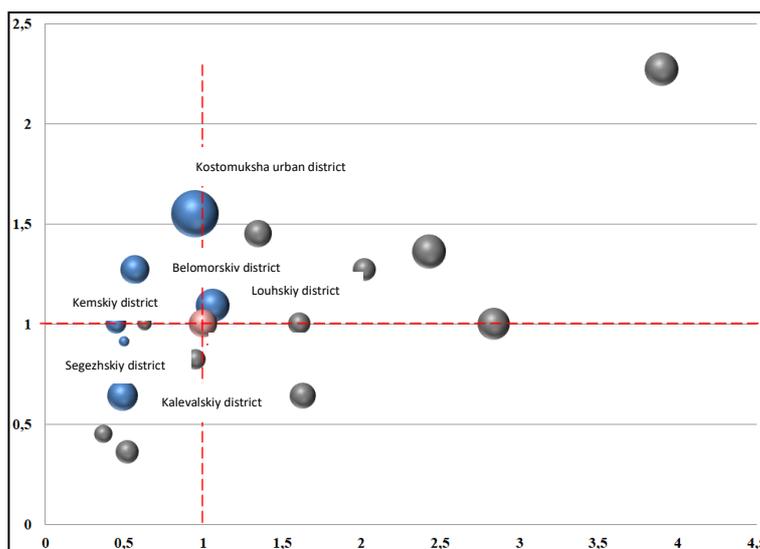


Fig. 2. Municipalities of the Karelian Arctic according to the level of development of tourist infrastructure: X (accommodation infrastructure); Y (catering infrastructure); Z (circle size — leisure and recreation infrastructure) <sup>7</sup>.

The high values of the catering infrastructure indicator and the low values for the location of the Belomorskiy, Kemskiy and even Segezhskiy districts are determined by the focus on transit travelers; the Kostomuksha urban district occupies a border position (the distance to the checkpoint Lyttya–Vartius is 30 km), which was an incentive for the development of cross-border mobility before the pandemic.

Thus, most of the municipalities of the Karelian Arctic belong to the territories of the restrained development of tourist infrastructure and only the Kostomuksha urban district and Louhski district are characterized by its active development. At the same time, the existing territorial disproportions, determined by the specifics of the economic development of the territory, tourist and recreational potential, and other factors, may be natural, without requiring leveling if they are able to meet the needs of the local population in leisure and recreation.

### *Tourism in the Karelian Arctic: facts and figures*

Tourist flow to the Karelian Arctic in 2019 amounted to more than 150 thousand people, a third of which was received by the Belomorskiy district (more than 50 thousand people), the second third fell on the Kemskiy and Louhski districts. The high recreational load is due to the presence of a unique potential (White Sea, White Sea petroglyphs, Paanajärvi National Park), as well as the advantage of the location (the city of Kem — the Solovetskiy Spaso-Preobrazhenskiy Monastery). The specifics of the location, along with the insufficient level of development of tourist infrastructure, despite the uniqueness of the territory, have a restrained development in the incoming tourist flow to the Kalevalski national district (about 2.5 thousand people per year).

The dominant share of visitors (more than 65%) independently organizes the program of stay on the territory. The main tourist flow is represented by domestic tourists (Moscow, St. Pe-

<sup>7</sup> Compiled by the author based on the data [24, Stepanova S.V.].

tersburg, etc.), as well as a sufficient number of transit travelers (Karelian section of the federal Kola Motorway).

The priority and promising types of tourism in the Karelian Arctic include:

- *ecological*, including various types of recreation in protected areas;
- *cultural and educational*, including ethno-cultural, military-historical, religious, industrial tourism, etc.;
- *rural*, recreation in the countryside;
- *active*, including fishing and hunting, diving, canoeing, rafting, cycling tours, etc.;
- *event-based*, involving cultural events of various levels and directions;
- *sports*, related to competitions.

Separately, it should be noted that tourism achievements of a number of Karelian Arctic companies are highly recognized at the level of the Republic of Karelia. The guest house “Kotiranta” (Kostomuksha urban district) more than once became the winner of the regional competition “Leaders of the Karelian tourist business” in the nomination “The best small hotel” (up to 30 rooms). In 2019, VeIT–Karelian Travels LLC (Kalevalskiy national district) was awarded in the nomination “For creative tourist offer (route, excursion, service)” for the excursion “Floating in the ice of North Karelia”. In addition, the route of this company “Along the ancient paths. Journey to Voknavolok and Kormilo” on a hovercraft was recognized as the best ethnographic route of the Russian Federation in the final of the IV annual All-Russian award “Route of the Year 2017”, supported by Federal Tourism Agency. It is also worth mentioning the Karelian Hundred ultramarathon for amateurs, organized by them since 2008, which is unique because it is a 100 km long single-circle route (the only such route in the Russian Federation).

Due to the border position and the development of cross-border tourism on the territory of the Karelian Arctic, two cross-border tourist and recreational micro-regions formed around two checkpoints are at different stages of creation. These checkpoints (Kostomuksha urban district and Loukhskiy district) served a quarter of the total traffic on the Karelian section of the Russian-Finnish state border (about 500 thousand people annually). Adjacent territories are connected by cross-border tourist routes: “Kantele Route”, uniting rune-singing territories associated with the epic Kalevala; “White Road”, stretching along the ancient trade route from the White Sea to the Baltic [21]. At the same time, the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic of the past two years and the events in Ukraine in recent months have a significant impact on the development of cross-border tourism, the final impact of which can be seen later.

### ***Tourism-oriented projects***

The republic of Karelia has a large number of projects directly or indirectly related to tourism development, including international, federal, regional and individual projects of organizations which are effective instruments for enhancing tourism. The practice of the Republic of Karelia

demonstrates significant results in the implementation of projects: the creation of tourist attractions, routes, tourist information centers, the construction and equipping of tourist infrastructure facilities, the promotion and restoration of natural and anthropogenic heritage, the development of strategic documents, advanced training of specialists, marketing, development of cross-border regions, creation of mobile services and applications.

The analysis of international tourism projects supported by various programs (TACIS, INTERREG, Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, etc.) and implemented in the Karelian Arctic for the period 1990–2020 reveals the leading positions of the Kostomuksha urban district (third place in the Republic of Karelia). Loukhskiy district, ranking fourth in terms of the number of implemented international projects, was the only beneficiary from the Russian side in four of them [28, Kondrateva S.V.].

Federal projects make it possible to add various infrastructural facilities. Thus, according to the results of the federal competition (2020), about 106 million rubles were allocated for 20 Karelian project ideas, of which 46.5 million rubles were provided by Federal Tourism Agency. Within the Karelian Arctic, the following should be indicated: “The path of ancient artists” (LLC “Karelika”, Belomorskiy district) — an eco-route to the White Sea petroglyphs from the village Vygostrov and the year-round 100 km trail “Karelian Hundred” (“VeIt–Karelian Travels”, Kalevalskiy national district). In addition, the Republic of Karelia was included in the list of 19 regions of the Russian Federation, which will receive a subsidy in the amount of 250 million rubles for the construction of modular hotels.

### *Tourism development in the Karelian Arctic: opinion of residents*

The opinion of the local population, interested or, on the contrary, wary of the development of this sphere of economic activity, is important in the tourist and recreational development of the territory. This section presents some results of the 2021 survey on tourism development in the Republic of Karelia.

One of the key issues was the prospects of tourism as a direction for the economic development of the municipality in the opinion of the local population (Table 6).

*Table 6*  
*Do you consider tourism a promising area of economic development for your region? (2021)*<sup>8</sup>

No.	Municipality	Total number of answers, pers.	Respondents' answers, pers.		
			I believe that tourism can become one of the key sectors of the economy of my region	I believe that tourism in my area can be developed, but mainly to meet the needs of the local population for recreation	I believe that tourism is not promising for my area
1	Kostomuksha urban district	26	17	4	5

<sup>8</sup> Compiled by the author.

2	Belomorskiy district	12	9	3	0
3	Kalevalskiy district	8	4	1	3
4	Kemskiy district	14	7	3	4
5	Louhskiy district	12	9	0	3
6	Segezhskiy district	31	12	5	14
	<i>Total, %</i>		56.3	15.5	28.2

The dominant number of respondents (71.8%) has a positive attitude towards the development of tourism, and most of them consider tourism as a key area of the municipal economy. Residents of the Belomorskiy district are unanimous in the prospects for the development of tourism (100%), followed by residents of the Kostomuksha urban district (80.8%), Louhskiy and Kemskiy districts (75% and 71.4%, respectively). At the same time, the proportion of those who are skeptical and/or negative about the development of tourism in the Karelian Arctic is high in comparison with the rest of the RK territory (4.9%), with almost half of them living in the Segezhskiy district. The second question allows deeper understanding of the mood of the local population regarding the development of tourism and reflects the problems of growth in the inbound tourist flow accompanied by the development of the sphere (Table 7).

Table 7

*How do you feel about the possibility of an increase in the tourist flow (both Russian and foreign tourists) to your area? (2021)<sup>9</sup>*

No.	Municipality	Total number of answers, pers.	Respondents' answers, pers.		
			I have a positive attitude, because this will improve the economic situation of the region	Difficult to answer	I have a negative attitude, because I think that tourists create only problems and difficulties
1	Kostomuksha urban district	26	23	2	1
2	Belomorskiy district	12	12	0	0
3	Kalevalskiy district	8	8	0	0
4	Kemskiy district	14	11	2	1
5	Louhskiy district	12	8	2	2
6	Segezhskiy district	31	26	3	2
	<i>Total, %</i>		85.4	8.8	5.8

Respondents' answers demonstrate an increased share of positive sentiments (85.4% versus 56.3% in the previous question), revealing the hidden conviction of the inhabitants of the Karelian Arctic in the importance of tourism development. It should also be noted that there was a decrease in the share of negative answers (5.8% versus 8.7%) and unformed opinions concerning tourism (similarly: 80.8% and 19.5%).

In the municipal context, the situation seems to be even better, even if the issue of leisure and recreation of the local population is excluded from consideration (Table 8).

Table 8

*Opinion of Karelian Arctic residents about the prospects of tourism development, 2021<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> Compiled by the author.

<sup>10</sup> Compiled by the author.

No.	Municipality	Total number of answers, pers.	Respondents' answers, pers.			
			I believe that tourism can become one of the key sectors of the economy of my region	Share, %	I have a positive attitude, because this will improve the economic situation of the region	Share, %
1	Kostomuksha urban district	26	17	65.4	23	88.5
2	Belomorskiy district	12	9	75	12	100
3	Kalevalskiy district	8	4	50	8	100
4	Kemskiy district	14	7	50	11	78.6
5	Louhskiy district	12	9	75	8	66.7
6	Segezhskiy district	31	12	38.7	26	83.9
	<i>Total, %</i>		56.3	-	85.4	-

Hope for the tourism vector of the development of the Karelian Arctic is revealed in the responses of residents to the possibility of an increase in the flow of tourists, which is especially evident for the Segezhskiy and Kalevalskiy districts. In this regard, the conclusion arises about the need to create and maintain conditions for tourism development in the Karelian Arctic regions, both as a factor of socio-economic development of municipalities and as a platform for maintaining and restoring the physical, emotional strength and health of the local population.

### *Strategic directions of tourism development*

With the recognition of tourism as a promising (priority) direction of the socio-economic development of the Republic of Karelia, since the 1990s, a system of strategic management of the development of this sphere of economic activity has been elaborated and improved in the region.

For example, in 2007, the Institute of Urbanistics, jointly with the Institute of Economics of the Karelian Research Center of RAS, developed the “General scheme for the Location of tourism facilities and infrastructure in the Republic of Karelia”. According to the document, among the 12 tourist zones (basic and secondary), five belong to the territory of the Karelian Arctic: Pyaozerskaya, Pripolyarnaya, Kalevalskaya, Kemsko-Belomorskaya and Segezhszkaya with a total predicted tourist flow of more than 1.1 million people.

At the federal level, among the key factors and competitive advantages of the Karelian development, the Federal target program “Development of the Republic of Karelia for the period up to 2020” indicated “a rich tourist and recreational potential, a unique natural landscape complex”; “favorable economic and geographical position, including border position, transit potential (transit rail and road communication, international road and simplified checkpoints, border infrastructure, water corridor — the White Sea-Baltic Canal)”, as well as developed trade and economic links, including positive experience in implementing cross-border cooperation programs <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Federal'naya tselevaya programma «Razvitie Respubliki Kareliya na period do 2020 goda»: postanovlenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 09.06.2015 g. №570 [Federal target program "Development of the Republic of Karelia for the period up

However, despite the perception of tourism as a sphere of recreation and social activity, in contrast to the modern interpretation of the tourism business as a factor of regional development, spatial planning of tourism was first paid attention to in the USSR. In 1979, the Leningrad Design Institute for Urban Planning (now Institute of Urbanistics) developed a "Scheme for the development of recreation, treatment and tourism areas in the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" for the period up to 2000. Among the settlements of the modern Karelian Arctic, the cities of Belomorsk, Kem and settlement Kalevala was assigned the role of additional tourist service centers. Later, in 1985, the Institute "Lengiprogor" prepared "District planning scheme of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic", which was approved by the Council of Ministers of the Karelian ASSR and entered into force in 1987. According to the document, five large recreational areas were allocated on the territory of the Karelian ASSR, including the White Sea (Karelian coast of the White Sea), uniting the Belomorskiy, Kemskiy, Loukhskiy and Kalevalskiy districts [19].

At present, the management of the tourism sphere in the Karelian Arctic is carried out within the framework of documents of the federal and regional levels. It should be emphasized that tourism is a significant area of socio-economic development of the municipalities of the Karelian Arctic, for example:

- "Development of the tourist complex of the urban district, including the development of a system of specially protected natural areas" is one of the Strategic tasks of the Kostomuksha urban district (Strategy for the socio-economic development of the municipality "Kostomuksha urban district" up to 2030. Decision of the Council of the Kostomuksha urban district dated March 26, 2020 No. 457-SO/III);
- "The Belomorskiy municipal district is one of the main tourist centers of attraction of the Republic of Karelia" (Strategy for the socio-economic development of the municipal formation "Belomorskiy municipal district" of the Republic of Karelia for the period up to 2030. Decision of the Council of the Belomorskiy Municipal District of December 28, 2020 No. 165);
- "The Loukhskiy municipal district is seen as a tourist center with a developed infrastructure of hospitality, catering, shopping and entertainment and sports centers by 2030" (Strategy for the socio-economic development of the Loukhskiy municipal district of the Republic of Karelia for the period up to 2030. Decision Council of the Loukhskiy municipal district dated June 24, 2021 No. 176);
- Despite the fact that the Segezhskiy district is considered to be the industrial territory of the Republic of Karelia, the Municipal strategy emphasizes its significant tourism potential, outlining plans to "create a tourist and recreational cluster "Karelian White Sea" by 2041 (Strategy for the socio-economic development of the Segezhskiy municipal district

---

to 2020": Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 09.06.2015 No. 570]. URL: [government.ru/docs/all/102226/](http://government.ru/docs/all/102226/) (accessed 04 May 2022).

up to 2030. Decision of the Council of the Segezhskiy municipal district dated November 31, 2021 No. 202).

### ***Constraints and contemporary challenges***

The development of tourism in the Karelian Arctic is limited by a number of constraints, which, according to municipal Strategies, can be grouped as follows:

- *economic problems* associated with the lack of large investors, weak management and marketing;
- *social problems* caused by the negative trend of population decline, unemployment, lack of qualified personnel in hotel and tourism services, etc.;
- *infrastructural problems*, including insufficient development of tourism infrastructure; significant moral and physical depreciation of the material base, especially vehicles; unsatisfactory condition of highways, both national and local; low level of arrangement of tourist attractions;
- *ecological problems* associated with the deterioration of the quality of the environment and unfavorable environmental conditions in industrial areas;
- *organizational problems*, including imperfect measures to support investment activity; lack of tours and tourist routes, insufficient number of events.

The restrictions of the last two years, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have had a negative impact on the development of tourism in the Karelian Arctic. First of all, this is almost complete cessation of the tourist flow of visitors from neighboring Finland. Secondly, it is necessary to indicate the reduction in the internal tourist flow of Russian tourists, including Karelian residents. However, in the face of modern challenges, domestic tourism is becoming a priority type of tourism development in the Karelian Arctic, one of the support tools for which is the Basic Tourist Cashback Program and cashback for families for trips to children's camps. Another significant tool to support the development of this area of economic activity is the implementation of tourism projects.

### ***Conclusion***

Summarizing the above, it is possible to formulate several main conclusions about the tourism vector of the Karelian Arctic development.

The studied municipalities, cumulatively serving about 150 thousand tourists and sight-seers per year, are diverse in terms of tourist and recreational potential, the degree of tourist development of the territory, and the possibilities for developing tourism.

The tourist and recreational potential of the Karelian Arctic, represented by unique objects, a number of which have no analogues either in the Russian Federation or in the world, opens up opportunities for the development of various types of tourism and recreation. At the same time,

economic, social, infrastructural and other constraining factors have an impact on the tourist and recreational development of the territory.

The significance of the development of the tourist vector for the development of the Karelian Arctic is confirmed by a set of strategic documents of the federal, regional and municipal levels, indicating the priorities of the tourist and recreational development of the territory. In addition, there is a significant positive and expectant opinion of the local population about the effects of the tourism sector of activity on the socio-economic development of municipalities.

In the face of contemporary challenges, the focus on domestic tourism and the emphasis on the leisure and recreational needs of the local population as a tool for physical and emotional recreation is significant.

Further research will be aimed at identifying the opportunities and needs of the local population for leisure and recreation in order to develop recommendations for strengthening the tourism component for residents of the Karelian Arctic.

## References

1. Lukin Yu.F. The Arctic Tourism in Russia. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2016, no. 25, pp. 211–216. DOI: 10.17238/issn2221-2698.2016.25.211
2. Kharlampieva N.K. Theory and Methodology of the Arctic Tourism Development. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2016, no. 23, pp. 124–129. DOI: 10.17238/issn2221-2698.2016.23.124
3. Kuklina V., Kuklina M., Ruposov V., Rogov V. Multi-Polar Trajectories of Tourism Development within Russian Arctic. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 2017, vol. 3, pp. 379–385. DOI: 10.2991/ttiess-17.2017.63
4. Bertosh A.A. Arkticheskiy turizm: kontseptual'nye cherty i osobennosti [Arctic Tourism: Conceptual Features and Particularities]. *Trudy Kol'skogo nauchnogo tsentra RAN* [Transactions Kola Science Centre RAS], 2019, vol. 10, no. 7–17, pp. 169–180. DOI: 10.25702/KSC.2307-5252.2019.7.169-180
5. Kunnikov A.V. Perspektivy razvitiya arkticheskogo kruiznogo turizma v zapadnom sektore Rossiyskoy Arktiki [Prospects for the Development of Arctic Cruise Tourism in the Western Sector of the Russian Arctic]. *Arktika: ekologiya i ekonomika* [Arctic: Ecology and Economy], 2020, no. 4, pp. 130–138. DOI: 10.25283/2223-4594-2020-4-130-138
6. Lamers M., Pashkevich A. Short-Circuiting Cruise Tourism Practices along the Russian Barents Sea Coast? The Case of Arkhangelsk. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 2018, vol. 21, pp. 440–454. DOI: 10/1080/13683500.2015.1092947
7. Sevastyanov D.V. Arkticheskiy turizm i rekreatsionnoe prirodopol'zovanie — novyy vektor razvitiya severnykh territoriy [Arctic Tourism and Recreational Nature Management — a New Vector of Northern Territories Development]. *Rossiya v global'nom mire* [Russia in the Global World], 2017, no. 10 (33), pp. 75–88.
8. Korbut V.V., Cekina M.V. Dyuny letnego berega Belogo morya kak ob"ekt poznavatel'nogo turizma [Dunes of the White Sea Summer Coast as an Object of Educational Tourism]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 5: Geografiya* [Vestnik MGU. Series 5. Geography], 2017, no. 3, pp. 91–95.
9. Zhagina S.N., Svetlosanov V.A., Nizovtsev V.A., Pakhomova O.M. Razvitie i perspektivy ekologicheskogo turizma v Murmanskoy oblasti i ego svyaz' s ustoychivym razvitiem regiona [Development and Prospects of Ecological Tourism in the Murmansk Region and Its Relationship with Sustainable Development of the Region]. *Ekologicheskie sistemy i pribory* [Ecological Systems and Devices], 2022, no. 3, pp. 3–8. DOI: 10.25791/esip.3.2022.1287
10. Lukin Yu.F. Arctic Tourism: the Rating of Regions, the Opportunities and Threats. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2016, no. 23, pp. 77–100. DOI: 10.17238/issn2221-2698.2016.23.96

11. Yakovchuk A.A. Tourism Industry Development Issues in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2020, no. 38, pp. 55–72. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2020.38.56.
12. Zhelnina Z.Yu. Turizm Murmanskoy oblasti kak drayver razvitiya territorii [Tourism of the Murmansk Region as a Driver of Territory Development]. *Obshchestvo: politika, ekonomika, pravo* [Society: Politics, Economics, Law], 2021, no. 9, pp. 65–75. DOI: 10.24158/pep.2021.9.11
13. Orlova V.S. Potentsial sfery turizma i rekreatsii Evropeyskogo Severa: otsenka i napravleniya razvitiya v usloviyakh osvoeniya Arktiki [Potential of the Tourism and Recreation Sphere in the European North: Evaluation and Development Vector in Terms of the Arctic Development]. *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: fakty, tendentsii, prognoz* [Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast], 2021, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 141–153. DOI: 10.15838/esc.2021.1.73.10
14. Druzhinin P.V., Kurilo A.E., Moroshkina M.V. Razvitie munitsipalitetov poberezh'ya Belogo morya [Development of the White Sea Coast Municipalities]. *Problemy razvitiya territorii* [Problems of Territory's Development], 2022, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 7–22. DOI: 10.15838/ptd.2022.2.118.2
15. Kondrateva S.V., Moroshkina M.V. Tourism and Recreation of the Russian Arctic Population: Opportunities and Limitations. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2021, no. 45, pp. 113–126. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2021.45.113
16. Tsvetkov A.Yu. Logistic Basis for Organizing Weekend Recreation for the Population of the Arkhangel'sk Urban Agglomeration. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2021, no. 43, pp. 215–228. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2021.43.215
17. Sidorovskaya T.V., Volovik O.A., Sidoruk A.Yu. Vnutrenniy turizm: issledovanie predpochteniy zhiteley severnykh territoriy [Domestic Tourism: a Study of the Preferences of Residents of the Northern Territories]. *Korporativnoe upravlenie i innovatsionnoe razvitie ekonomiki Severa: Vestnik Nauchnoissledovatel'skogo tsentra korporativnogo prava, upravleniya i venchurnogo investirovaniya Syktyvkar'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* [Corporate Governance and Innovative Economic Development of the North: Bulletin of Research Center of Corporate Law, Management and Venture Investment of Syktyvkar State University], 2019, no. 2, pp. 38–50. DOI: 10.34130/2070-4992-2019-2-38-50
18. Morozova T.V., Murina S.G., Belaya R.V. Rekreatsionnaya mobil'nost' kak element kachestva zhizni: izmerenie tipologicheskogo raznoobraziya [Recreational Mobility as a Component of the Living Standard: Measuring the Typological Diversity]. *Trudy Karel'skogo nauchnogo tsentra* [Transactions of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences], 2012, no. 6, pp. 58–67.
19. Gromov V.V., Zhirnel E.V., Kozyrev V.V., Kotkin E.E., Savelyev Yu.V., Tolstoguzov O.V., Shishkin A.A., Shishkin A.I. *Upravlenie razvitiem turizma v regione. Opyt realizatsii Strategii Respubliki Kareliya* [Management of Tourism Development in the Region. Experience in Implementing the Strategy of the Republic of Karelia]. Petrozavodsk, 2008, 227 p. (In Russ.)
20. Klyuchnikova E.M., Titov A.F., Masloboev V.N., Petrov V.N. Zelenyy poyas Fennoskandii kak faktor sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya prigranichnykh territoriy [Green Belt of Fennoscandia as a Factor for Socio-Economic Development of Border Areas]. *Trudy Karel'skogo nauchnogo tsentra* [Transactions of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences], 2019, no. 4, pp. 144–153. DOI: 10.17076/them1022
21. Volkov A.D., Tishkov S.V. Strategic Development Priorities for the Karelian Arctic Region in the Context of the Russian Arctic Zone Economic Space Integration. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2022, no. 46, pp. 5–32. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2022.46.5
22. Suvorova I.M. Axiological Preferences of Residents of the Karelian Arctic in the Modern Sociocultural Situation. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2020, no. 41, pp. 248–260. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2020.41.248
23. Suvorova I.M. Osobennosti aksiosfery zhiteley severnogo karel'skogo prigranich'ya [Specific Axiosphere of the Residents of the Northern Karelian Border Area]. *Studia Humanitatis Borealis*, 2020, no. 3, pp. 12–19.
24. Stepanova S.V. Territorial'nye disproportsii razmeshcheniya infrastruktury turizma v Respublike Kareliya [Territorial Disproportions of the Tourism Infrastructure Location in the Republic of Karelia].

- Izvestiya DVFU. Ekonomika i upravlenie* [The Bulletin of Far Eastern Federal University. Economics and Management], 2019, no. 3, pp. 89–97. DOI: 10.24866/2311-2271/2019-3/89-97
25. Shulepov V.I., Stepanova S.V. Way to Assess the Development of Municipal Tourism Infrastructure. *Journal of Applied Engineering Science*, 2019, no. 1, vol. 17, pp. 87–92. DOI: 10.5937/jaes17-17073
26. *Respublika Kareliya. Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik* [Republic of Karelia. Statistical Yearbook]. Petrozavodsk, 2021, 374 p.
27. Kondrateva S.V. Vovlechennost' regiona v integratsionnye protsessy: proekty turizma (karel'skaya praktika) [Involvement of the Region in Integration Processes: Tourism Projects (Karelian Practice)]. *Pskovskiy regionologicheskiy zhurnal* [Pskov Regional Journal], 2021, no. 1 (45), pp. 62–76. DOI: 10.37490/S221979310013150-8

*The article was submitted 18.07.2022; approved after reviewing 19.07.2022;  
accepted for publication 20.07.2022.*

*The author declares no conflicts of interests.*