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THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON EMPLOYMENT IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

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International cooperation in tourism generates a wide range of political, economic, social, and cultural benefits for participating countries and increasingly serves as a driver of sustainable development. At the same time, the further expansion of international tourism cooperation requires the modernisation of Russia's tourism industry, accompanied by improvements in workforce development and the professional training of personnel capable of delivering high-quality tourism services. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of international cooperation on labour demand in the tourism sector and identify approaches to addressing workforce shortages. The research draws on official statistical data, sample surveys, expert assessments, comparative analysis, and cluster analysis. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening labour-saving strategies through the wider use of flexible forms of employment, including platform-based and project-based work, as key instruments for regulating employment in the tourism sector under conditions of labour market shortages. The proposed approach also includes measures aimed at improving employee retention and expanding the use of labour-saving digital technologies, particularly in labour-intensive segments of the tourism industry, such as hospitality and food services.

Keywords:

international cooperation, tourism, employment, labour-saving policy

Introduction

International cooperation in the field of tourism in modern conditions is an important driver of political, economic, social, and cultural interaction between Russia and other countries. According to the data for nine months of 2025, Russian nationals made 24 million trips abroad (an increase of 6.8 % year-on-year), of which 10 million trips were for tourist purposes (an increase of 15.2 % com-

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pared to the same period in 2024).¹ During the first nine months of 2025, inbound tourism to Russia amounted to 1.285 million trips, representing a threefold decline compared with the corresponding period in 2019.² The structure of inbound tourism changed significantly in 2025, with particularly strong growth in visitor numbers from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. This increase can be attributed to the gradual liberalisation of visa regulations and the expansion of direct air connections. Bilateral agreements on visa-free short-term travel entered into force between Russia and Oman on 18 July 2025 and between Russia and Saudi Arabia on 1 December 2025,³ which also contributed to an increase in the incoming tourist flow.

Table 1

**The dynamics of the incoming tourist flow to Russia (thousand people)
(according to the data for 9 months of 2025)**

Country	2025	2019	2025 as a percentage of 2019
China	690.6	1297.2	53.2
Germany	53.8	464.6	11.6
Turkmenistan	50.7	18.5	274.1
Türkiye	50.5	39.5	127.8
Saudi Arabia	47.7	3.7	1289.2
UAE	38.4	17.9	214.5
Iran	27.5	25.8	106.6
India	26.8	63.7	42.1
Kazakhstan	18.3	37.7	48.5
Oman	15.1	1.4	1078.6
Belarus	14.1	9.5	148.4
Kuwait	14.0	1.9	736.8
Estonia	13.6	38.1	35.7
Uzbekistan	13.1	14.8	88.5
Cuba	11.4	17.2	66.3
Latvia	9.6	41.3	23.2
Israel	9.5	160.4	5.9
South Korea	9.3	341.4	2.7
Vietnam	8.2	17.0	48.2
Italy	7.9	135.0	5.8
Armenia	7.3	9.6	76.0
Thailand	6.9	43.5	15.9
Taiwan	6.8	12.7	53.5

¹ Outbound tourism in Russia: 10 million tourist trips in 9 months of 2025, 2025, *All about hotels*, 13.11.2025, URL: <https://new-hotel.ru/news/vyezdnj-turizm-rossii-10-mln-turisticheskikh-poezdok-za-9-mesyaczev-2025-goda/> (accessed 20.12.2025).

² How and why the geography of incoming tourism has changed in 2025, 2025, *RATTA-news*, 12.11.2025, URL: <https://ratanews.ru/news/general/kak-i-pocemu-v-2025-godu-izmenilas-geografiia-vieezdnogo-turizma> (accessed 20.12.2025).

³ Visa-free regime between Russia and Oman: what will change from July 18, 2025, *Confidence Group*, 14.07.2025, URL: <https://www.confidencegroup.ru/info/news/rossiya-i-oman-otmenili-vizy-dlya-turistov/> (accessed 09.10.2025).

The end of Table 1

Country	2025	2019	2025 as a percentage of 2019
Qatar	6.1	2.1	290.5
France	6.1	129.5	4.7
<i>Total</i>	1284.8	4282.2	30.0

Table compiled based on data from RATA-news.¹

The liberalisation of the visa regime for tourists from China and other countries to enter Russia has contributed to increased tourist flows and some redistribution towards the country's eastern regions. Nevertheless, Moscow and St. Petersburg are still the leaders in the number of foreign visitors. More than 12.5 million tourists visited Moscow in the first half of 2025, 10 % of whom were foreigners from the Middle East and India.² The number of foreign visitors could have been higher were it not for the geopolitical situation and the associated restrictions affecting international air travel. More than 600,000 international tourists visited St. Petersburg between January and September 2025, representing a 5.2 % increase compared with the corresponding period in 2024.³ Of these visitors, 55 % came from non-CIS countries, with China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey among the leading source markets.

In the Kaliningrad region, tourism serves as one of the key drivers of regional development and forms a central element of the region's identity. The official regional brand is built around the concept of "*Your New History*".⁴ On a partnership basis, the region is a participant in international cross-border cooperation projects, including the "CBCycle project: Cross-border bike routes for the promotion and sustainable development of the use of cultural heritage", within the framework of which the bicycle route "From Spit to Spit" is being built. The introduction of a unified electronic visa in August 2023, which replaced the electronic visa regime previously limited to the Kaliningrad Region, expanded travel opportunities for citizens of 64 countries across the Russian Federation. This policy change contributed to a shift in the geography of inbound tourism from the summer of 2024 onwards, with particularly strong growth in visitor arrivals from China, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. The region hosts the West HoReCa International Forum for hospitality professionals, which brought together 1,500 participants from Russia, Belarus, and Azerbaijan in 2024.

¹ How and why the geography of incoming tourism has changed in 2025, 2025, *RATA-news*, 12.11.2025, URL: <https://ratanews.ru/news/general/kak-i-pocemu-v-2025-godu-izmenilas-geografiia-vieezdnogo-turizma> (accessed 20.12.2025).

² The main tourists in Moscow are Muscovites, 2025, *Kommersant*, 16.12.2025, URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8292915> (accessed 22.12.2025).

³ Alexander Beglov: in 2025, the inbound tourist flow to St. Petersburg increased by almost 10 %, 2025, *Administration of Saint Petersburg*, 25.09.2025, URL: <https://www.gov.spb.ru/press/governor/305229/> (accessed 22.12.2025).

⁴ Tourism in the Kaliningrad region, 2025, *RUWIKI*, 17.10.2025, URL: https://ru.ruwiki.ru/wiki/Туризм_в_Калининградской_области (accessed 22.12.2025).

International tourism is one of the most significant forms of international cooperation, contributing to sustainable development and generating economic benefits through the implementation of joint projects and programmes, the promotion of national tourism products and services, market research, the adoption of modern digital technologies, the effective management of tourist flows, the sustainable use of tourism resources, environmental protection, and the training of highly qualified specialists. The Development Strategy of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) until 2035 identifies the strengthening of mutual trust and good-neighbourly relations, the promotion of regional security, and the expansion of cooperation across a wide range of areas, including the economy, finance, investment, labour markets, and tourism, among its key priorities.

In modern conditions, the role of tourism in global sustainable development is growing, and its importance in social progress is increasing. In March 2025, recognition of the importance of these aspects of employment in the tourism sector was reflected in the inclusion of the tourism employment indicator among three new indicators approved by the UN Statistical Commission¹ in the system of indicators for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the period up to 2030. Tourism employment data in the SDG monitoring process will be systematically traced and used for analysis at the national and international levels.

Tourism is increasingly recognised as an important driver of integration, generating multiplier effects across related sectors of the economy, stimulating infrastructure development, and creating new employment opportunities. International cooperation in the field of tourism requires consideration of the needs and expectations of tourists while simultaneously shaping demand for infrastructure, workforce capacity, and professional qualifications. The quality and competitiveness of tourism services and products depend largely on the competencies and skills of those employed in the sector. Accordingly, there is a growing need to examine the reciprocal relationship between international tourism cooperation and the development of the corresponding segment of the labour market.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of international cooperation in the tourism sector on employment patterns in the context of digital transformation and to identify effective approaches to workforce management through the adoption of flexible forms of employment. To achieve this objective, the study pursued the following tasks: (1) to examine the relationship between international cooperation and the development of inbound tourism, including initiatives designed to stimulate international interest in visiting Russia; (2) to analyse the effects of increasing inbound tourist flows on employment and qualification requirements in the tourism sector; and (3) to evaluate the potential of digital technologies to address workforce challenges and facilitate international cooperation in tourism. The research draws on statistical data, expert assessments, comparative analysis, and the grouping method. The novelty of the study lies in its analy-

¹ UN adopts new tourism employment indicator to guide efforts towards the SDGs, 2025, *UN Tourism*, 11.03.2025, URL: https://www.untourism.int/news/un-adopts-new-tourism-employment-indicator-to-guide-efforts-towards-the-sdgs?utm_source=news&utm_medium=crm (accessed 16.09.2025).

sis of how international cooperation and the growth of inbound tourism influence employment in the tourism sector, as well as in its identification of strategies for reducing labour shortages in the industry.

Literature overview

The development of international tourism is directly influenced by international cooperation, which attracts the attention of both specialists and researchers. Regional cooperation in the tourism sector is viewed as a form of integration based on strategic alliances among companies that either operate within the same segment of the tourism industry—such as accommodation, catering, transport, and related services—or serve the same customer groups. This approach is discussed in Shukshin [1]. Integration processes and international cooperation among the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation facilitate the integration of companies into global markets and strengthen their competitive positions across a wide range of sectors and industries, as demonstrated by the studies of Ogneva, Broyan, Kuryleva et al. [2; 3].

According to Xiaoguyang Bai [4], China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative plays a significant role in promoting cultural exchange and international cooperation, particularly in the tourism sector. The author highlights the importance of supporting collaborative projects aimed at developing cultural brands and tourism products, as well as strengthening the strategic role of "cultural soft power".

Ding Xinya [5] examines the development of tourism cooperation among the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, emphasising the growing importance of modern technological solutions, including big data, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, contactless services, virtual tourism, and online exhibitions. Another important dimension of international tourism cooperation, namely the regulation of foreign investment in China's tourism sector, is analysed by Christensen [6]. The challenges associated with increasing tourist flows and rising expectations regarding service quality are addressed by Levchenko and Kumova [7; 8], who emphasise the role of digital platforms as a foundation for the application of artificial intelligence and the development of tourism businesses at the regional level. The effects of digital transformation in the tourism sector and the potential of labour-saving technologies have also been explored in studies by Aksenov and his co-authors, as well as by Voskolovich [9; 10].

Manakov and his co-authors [11] analyse the dynamics of inbound tourist flows in the Baltic region, noting a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic followed by a gradual recovery beginning in 2021. Their findings suggest that the continued development of tourism in the region may be supported by the creation of innovative tourism products and the expansion of travel opportunities to neighbouring destinations. As demonstrated by Alexandrova and Krasavtsev [12], these objectives can be achieved through the use of effective marketing instruments and the strengthening of interregional cooperation, which contribute to the diversification of tourism offerings and the expansion of tourist mobility across neighbouring territories.

Salisheva [13] associates the expansion of international tourist flows with the development of social tourism, while Giampiccoli [14] highlights the contribution of tourism to the sustainable development of local communities, particularly in rural areas. A number of studies have also explored recreational activities in protected natural areas and the development of geotourism as important mechanisms for preserving unique natural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism development [15; 16].

Employment in the tourism sector, the factors shaping labour demand, and labour market trends influenced by political, economic, social, and other factors have been examined by Gonzalez, Gonzalez-Betancor, Rodriguez-Giron, and Vanneste [17; 18]. Bellato and co-authors [19] explore the tourism sector as an integrated system and analyse the role of stakeholders in its development. Particular attention to the formation of regional labour potential in the context of tourism market development is given by Ermakova and Kholodilina [20]. Popova and Oleinikova [21] emphasise the importance of personalised tourist services supported by high levels of information provision and service quality. The relationship between sustainable employment in tourism and the principles of decent work is examined by Harju-Myllyaho, Hakkarainen, and Angeria [22]. Meanwhile, Duncan, Hilman, and Elbe [23] highlight the importance of aligning workforce development and the recruitment of qualified personnel with government tourism initiatives.

Support of international cooperation through specialised projects in the field of tourism

Inbound tourism to Russia expanded significantly during the first half of 2025, although it remained below pre-pandemic levels. The principal source markets for inbound tourism were China, the Gulf states (including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Oman), India, Iran, and countries in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia (Table 1). Visitors from these countries are attracted not only by Russia's rich natural, cultural, and historical heritage, diverse traditions, and cultural events, but also by the opportunity to travel in comfortable conditions and gain new experiences and knowledge.¹

International cooperation between Russia and China in the field of tourism has a long history of development. The cooperation was initiated by the visit of the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, to China in May 1989,² and then, two years later, the visit of the Chinese leader to the USSR. The Agreement on Visa-Free Group Tourist Travel, signed on 29 February 2000, contributed significantly to the development of Russian—Chinese cooperation in the tourism

¹ Foreign tourist flow to Russia in the summer season of 2025. Preliminary results, 2025, *Association of Tour Operators*, 09.09.2025, URL: <https://www.atorus.ru/article/inostrannyi-turpotok-v-rossiyu-v-letnem-sezone-2025-goda-predvaritelnye-itogi-64018> (accessed 19.09.2025).

² The history of perestroika. Mikhail Gorbachev visited China on May 15–18, 1989, 2019, *Gorbachev Foundation*, 15.05.2025, URL: https://www.gorby.ru/presscenter/news/show_30018/ (accessed 19.09.2025).

sector. Several areas have been particularly important in strengthening bilateral tourism relations. First, the visa-free regime has served as an effective instrument for stimulating tourist mobility between the two countries.¹ Second, the establishment of the Russian—Chinese Tourism Forum in 2012 created a platform for cooperation among tourism industry experts, businesses, and public authorities responsible for tourism development. Third, professional cooperation has been promoted through collaboration between the World Without Borders Association for International Cooperation in Tourism and the Chinese Association of Tourism Services (CATS). In addition, bilateral cooperation has included the organisation of exhibitions and marketing events, information exchange, the training of guides and interpreters, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at promoting tourism products and services.

The growth in the flow of Chinese tourists in 2018—2019 was stimulated by the visa-free regime for group trips, but it was not sufficiently regulated by Russia, which negatively affected the quality of service and the organisation of tourist routes, as follows from the analysis of Machalkin and Moreva [24]. The results of an online survey in the Baikal Region conducted in 2018 and analysed by Golovchenko and Rubtsova revealed a low assessment of the tourist infrastructure services offered to Chinese tourists, which necessitated the adaptation of the hotel industry, tourist routes, and information support to the needs of Chinese guests [25]. Similar results were obtained by a team of specialists during surveys in the Irkutsk Region, Primorsky Krai and other regions hosting Chinese tourists. It is concluded that it is necessary to improve the quality of tourist services and products with a more complete consideration of the interests of travellers from China [26].

The development of China's national economy, rising household incomes, and the expansion of the middle class have created favourable conditions for growing interest in international travel among Chinese citizens. Alongside the emergence of a large domestic tourism market, China has become one of the world's leading sources of outbound tourism. Tourism is increasingly serving as an instrument of China's economic and geopolitical influence and an important component of its soft power. At the same time, the geographical scope of international travel is expanding, while the share of younger travellers and tourists interested in educational travel and small-group or family-oriented trips continues to grow. These trends generate demand for a wider range of tourism products, routes, accommodation options, and leisure activities, as demonstrated in the study by Sazykin and Shirokova [27]. The number of Chinese tourists visiting Russia has also been increasing, contributing to the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the tourism

¹ On the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the People's Republic of China on visa-free group tourist trips, Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated 06/13/2019 № 1274-r, *Electronic fund of legal and regulatory documents*, URL: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/560304013> (accessed 19.09.2025).

sector. Ongoing organisational and economic changes are enhancing the attractiveness of Russia as a tourist destination for Chinese travellers, a conclusion supported by the research of Voskolovich and Resmyatova [28].

The relationship between tourist flows along domestic and international routes and the development of the Russian tourism sector has been examined by Abudemaleks and Chhotua [29]. Their findings suggest that the growth of the tourism industry provides a foundation for the development of new and attractive tourism routes covering different regions of the country. At the same time, the expansion of the tourism sector, together with advances in digital technologies and payment systems, enhances the economic potential of regions and contributes to further growth in tourist flows.

An important contribution to improving the reception and servicing of Chinese visitors has been made by the *China Friendly* ecosystem and the *Russian Club* established under the Chinese Association of Tourism Services. The *China Friendly* programme is aimed at creating comfortable conditions for Chinese visitors travelling in Russia while simultaneously promoting Russian tourism products and services in international markets.¹ The standard covers various types of tourist services, along with hotels, restaurants, retail, entertainment, etc. The Programme expands the possibilities of incoming calls to the tourism business and creates additional channels for promotion and sales, strengthening the competitive position of companies in the market. For Chinese consumers, the range of choice of high-quality travel products, services and geography of comfortable travel is increasing.

To strengthen the promotion of Russian tourism products and services in the Chinese market, a catalogue of 11 tourism routes has been developed under the Discover Russia brand, six of which have been specifically designed to reflect the preferences and travel interests of Chinese visitors. In addition, promotional activities have been intensified through social media platforms and major tourism exhibitions in China.² During the construction of new hotel facilities, the *China Friendly* standard is taken into account, and measures are being developed to increase the accessibility of payment systems for Chinese guests.

The *China Friendly* quality label is awarded to tourism enterprises that comply with a set of professional standards designed to reflect the cultural characteristics, expectations, and travel preferences of Chinese visitors. Meeting these standards requires appropriately qualified personnel, including employees with Chinese-language proficiency who are capable of responding effectively to the needs and concerns of Chinese tourists. The implementation of the programme generates both reputational and economic benefits. Chinese travel intermedia-

¹ Program China Friendly, *Pogostite*, URL: <https://www.pogostite.ru/gruppovoe-bronirovanie/programma-china-friendly> (accessed 24.09.2025).

² The first China Friendly tourist facilities have appeared in Russia, 2025, *ProKachestvo*, 15.09.2025, URL: <https://kachestvo.pro/news/v-rossii-poyavilis-pervye-turisticheskie-obekty-formata-china-friendly/> (accessed 24.09.2025).

ries actively cooperate with participating Russian businesses, particularly those located in border regions, placing considerable emphasis on service quality and customer experience.

Surveys in 2025 show that 95 % of Chinese tourists are interested in visiting Russia again.¹ A study of tours on Chinese travel platforms has revealed new trends in Chinese requests: there is an increasing interest in flexible forms of travel and customized information services instead of a decreasing share of group trips; more than half of tourists are interested in budget tours and about a third are wealthy tourists; tourists who prefer a deeper immersion in Russian culture choose medium-term trips for 6—10 days.² At the same time, the willingness of Chinese tourists to travel again largely depends on the ability to use convenient online tools to search for information in Chinese and book via mobile applications, make payments in yuan, and the availability of online support.³ Chinese tourists, especially young ones, prefer to use WeChat, Weibo, and Xiaohongshu social networks to choose their travel destinations, which creates additional opportunities for promoting Russian products and services.

Overall, the practical implementation of the China Friendly Programme has been assessed positively, as it creates favourable conditions for accommodating Chinese visitors and improving the quality of tourism services. At the same time, further growth in tourist arrivals from China will require the expansion of tourism infrastructure, particularly accommodation facilities, as well as an increase in the number of personnel with Chinese-language proficiency.

International tourism cooperation is expected to benefit from China's introduction of a visa-free regime for Russian citizens from 15 September 2025. At present, the measure has been introduced as a one-year pilot initiative. At the same time, efforts are underway to further simplify entry procedures for Chinese visitors travelling to Russia.

Another important dimension of Russia's international tourism cooperation is its engagement with Muslim-majority countries. A new stage in the development of Russia's halal industry began with the establishment of the Technical Committee for Standardisation "Halal Products, Processes and Services". The Committee's activities are aimed at ensuring product and service quality and safety, compliance with religious requirements, and alignment with international standards. To improve services for both domestic and international Muslim travellers, Roskachestvo launched the *Muslim Friendly* project. The project provides a set of standards and recommendations for hotels, catering establishments, healthcare providers, and organisers of international events. These standards are intended

¹ The majority of Chinese tourists are ready to return to Russia, the survey showed, 2025, *Prime*, 21.10.2025, URL: <https://1prime.ru/20251021/bolshinstvo-863738268.html> (accessed 24.09.2025).

² The demands of Chinese tourists in Russia are changing, 2023, *Profi.Travel*, 10.10.2023, URL: <https://profi.travel/news/58247/details> (accessed 24.09.2025).

³ Russia is gaining popularity with Chinese tourists. 95 % want to repeat the trip. CSR research, 2025, *Yandex Travel*, 22.10.2025, URL: <https://travel.yandex.ru/pro/rossiya-nabiraet-populyarnost-u-kitayskih-turistov/> (accessed 24.09.2025).

to facilitate the harmonisation of halal-related requirements and to create a more welcoming and accessible environment for Muslim visitors.¹ Similar standards have already been adopted in 32 countries, including Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore. Depending on the range of products and services provided, certified establishments may be assigned different levels of compliance. In the hotel sector, for example, a three-tier certification system is applied. The highest certification level signifies full compliance with halal standards, whereas the basic level indicates the provision of a minimum set of required services. In addition, the *Muslim Friendly* certification system allows accommodation providers to designate only a portion of their room inventory for certification. This flexible approach expands accommodation options for Muslim travellers while enabling hospitality businesses to respond more effectively to the diverse needs and preferences of different visitor groups.

In accordance with the *Discover Russia* national tourism brand, the Centre for Strategic Development, together with the Ministry of Economic Development, has developed a Time to Travel catalogue, which includes seven routes across Russia for Muslim travellers.² Sochi turned out to be in high demand among Muslim tourists, which is explained by their interest not only in recreational, but also in business and other types of tourism.³ The hotel industry requires appropriate development, as well as increased monitoring of the catering of tourists according to Halal standards, this is the conclusion reached by the research of Kendzerskaya, Mazlyan et al. [29; 30]. As the need for personnel training for this project increases, the Roskachestvo Academy has launched a course on Halal hospitality, which should be perceived as an investment in international cooperation and, at the same time, solving labor market problems to overcome the shortage of qualified workers. On the basis of the Russian Islamic University in Kazan, several educational projects are being opened in online and offline formats for different groups of students and advanced training, including managers, technologists, export specialists, etc.⁴

The implementation of the principle of friendliness towards Islamic guests through the *Muslim Friendly* project has already created the basis for opening standard rooms in hotels in Bashkiria, Tatarstan, Dagestan, as well as in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other regions.⁵

¹ What is Muslim Friendly?, 2024, *ProKachestvo*, 05.07.2024, URL: <https://kachestvo.pro/kachestvo-produktsii/sertifikatsiya-i-deklarirovanie/chto-takoe-muslim-friendly/> (accessed 24.09.2025).

² Russia has developed seven routes for Muslim tourists, 2025, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 29.09.2025, URL: <https://rg.ru/2025/09/29/reg-dfo/v-rossii-razrabotany-sem-marshrutov-dlia-turistov-musulman.html> (accessed 26.09.2025).

³ Flights from Bahrain and the Muslim Friendly Hotel: Sochi welcomes Oriental guests, 2024, *Expert South*, 19.06.2024, URL: <https://expertsouth.ru/articles/reysy-iz-bakhreynai-otel-muslim-friendly-sochi-prinimaet-vostochnykh-gostey/> (accessed 26.09.2025).

⁴ Friendly tourism: what the Muslim Friendly project promises for business, 2024, *Hotel report*, 21.05.2024, URL: <https://ru.hotel.report/promotion/druzhelyubnyj-turizm-chto-sulit-biznesu-proekt-muslim-friendly> (accessed 26.09.2025).

⁵ The first Russian hotels to receive Halal compliance confirmation this summer, 2024, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 16.05.2024, URL: <https://rg.ru/2024/05/16/standartnyj-nomer.html> (accessed 26.09.2025).

Other examples of successful international cooperation in the field of tourism include the cooperation of the CIS countries, whose Tourism Council has developed and is implementing the Travel Hub “Sodruzhestvo” (“The Commonwealth”) project,¹ the project of the Eurasian Alliance of Mountain Resorts,² which served as the basis for the creation of new interstate tourist routes, the exchange of information and experience, and the promotion of best practices.

Russia and Myanmar have agreed to deepen cooperation in tourism, simplify the visa regime, and improve transport links.³ Russia and Bahrain have signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism, which will increase the tourist flow between the countries.⁴ Joint initiatives to expand cooperation between Russia and other countries contribute to strengthening friendly political, economic, cultural and other ties between the countries, and the multiplier effects of tourism development create opportunities for the development of national economies, but at the same time, there is a need to train qualified personnel to serve tourists.

Rosstandart’s approval of new standards in the field of tourism is important for the development of international tourism: one defines the requirements for hotels, and the second formulates recommendations for working with foreigners, effective from June 2026.⁵

Employment in the field of tourism and hospitality

The further development of international cooperation in the field of tourism poses a set of challenges for Russia, the solution of which in the period up to 2030 is associated with the need to attract about 400,000 additional employees, including 320,000 in the hotel industry, 80,000 in tour companies, as well as guides, tour guides, instructors and other specialists. Under the National Project “Tourism and Hospitality”, the number of domestic tourist trips is projected to reach 140 million annually by 2030, necessitating the creation of approximately 1.5 million jobs.⁶ Workforce shortages at all levels of the tourism and hospitality industry, ranging from senior management to frontline staff, have become a significant concern. In 2024, even before the onset of the high season, the number of vacancies substantially exceeded the available labour supply, resulting in increased demand for

¹ Travel Hub “Sodruzhestvo” (“The Commonwealth”), URL: <https://www.travelhubforum.com/> (accessed 26.09.2025).

² The Eurasian Alliance of Mountain Resorts, URL: <https://eagk.org/> (accessed 26.09.2025).

³ Russia and Myanmar have agreed to promote cooperation in the field of tourism, 2025, *RIA News*, 04.03.2025, URL: <https://ria.ru/20250304/rossiya-2003070575.html> (accessed 26.09.2025).

⁴ Russia and Bahrain will sign a memorandum of cooperation in the field of tourism, 2025, *RIA News*, 01.06.2025, URL: <https://ria.ru/20250601/rossiya-2020302471.html> (accessed 30.09.2025).

⁵ Russia has approved two new standards in the field of tourism, 2025, *T-Business secrets: news*, 09.09.2025, URL: <https://secrets.tbank.ru/novosti/standarty-dlya-turizma/> (accessed 30.09.2025).

⁶ Personnel for tourism: the path from the service sector to the happiness industry, 2024, *Expert analytical report*, p. 6, URL: https://национальныепроекты.рф/upload/turizm/Доклад%20Туризм_2024.pdf (accessed 30.09.2025).

occupations such as cooks, bakers, housekeepers, waiters, bartenders, and hotel administrators.¹ The largest number of vacancies was recorded in major cities and tourist destinations, including Irkutsk, Sochi, Astrakhan, Kaliningrad, and Krasnodar. The persistent labour shortage in these locations was associated with the relatively low attractiveness of tourism-sector employment, the predominance of low-skilled occupations, and comparatively low wage levels.

It should be noted that workforce shortages in the tourism sector are not unique to Russia. According to the report, “The Future of the Workforce in Tourism”, presented at the 25th Global Summit of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) in Rome, global tourism is expected to require an additional 91 million workers by 2035. Based on an analysis of 20 countries, the report forecasts that the global workforce deficit in the tourism sector could reach 43 million workers.² China is projected to face the largest shortage, estimated at 16.9 million workers, followed by India with 11.0 million and the European Union with 6.4 million. The report also predicts particularly acute labour shortages in countries such as Japan, Greece, and Germany, where workforce deficits may reach 29, 27 and 26 %, respectively.

Employment in the Russian tourism sector is represented by three main groups of workers:

- line workers without special qualifications, who account for 60 % of the total number of employees (maids, dishwashers, waiters, handymen, movers, etc.);
- the middle segment of workers with secondary vocational education, including a relatively small proportion of individuals with higher education (managers, guides, cooks);
- the third segment consists mainly of managers and other employees with higher education, but most often non-core education, which necessitates retraining and/or advanced training.

Employment in the tourism sector is characterised by several distinctive features. One of the most significant is seasonality, which results in substantial fluctuations in labour demand between the peak summer season and the off-season period. This often necessitates the use of part-time employment arrangements and the combination of multiple job functions. The sector is also characterised by a high proportion of female employees, many of whom are engaged in low-skilled occupations. In addition, opportunities for the adoption of labour-saving technologies that could enhance labour productivity and, consequently, wage levels remain limited. Addressing these challenges requires measures aimed at improving employee retention, enhancing the attractiveness and prestige of tourism-sector employment, increasing wages and improving working conditions, as well as strengthening the training of specialists with a particular emphasis on personalised service and the effective use of digital technologies.

¹ Search spread: why there are not enough tourist staff in Russia, 2024, *Izvestia*, 04.04.2024, URL: <https://iz.ru/1676562/kseniia-nabatkina-valeriia-mishina/poiskovyirazbros-pochemu-v-rossii-ne-khvataet-turisticheskikh-kadrov> (accessed 30.09.2025).

² By 2035, the global tourism industry will need an additional 91 million new jobs, 2025, *Ostrovok B2B*, 03.10.2025, URL: <https://b2b.ostrovok.ru/blog/k-2035-godu-mirovomuturizmu-potrebuetsya-eshhyo-91-mln-novykh-rabochix-mest/> (accessed 02.10.2025).

The implementation of Federal Projects, such as the “Five Seas and Lake Baikal” Project to create year-round seaside resorts, macro-territories uniting several federal subjects for cooperation in the tourism industry, and clusters specialising in certain types of tourism, will increase the need for personnel. For example, a new stage in the development of the Baltic region opens with the implementation of the “White Dune” resort town in the Kaliningrad region as part of the “Five Seas and Lake Baikal” Federal Project.¹ It is planned to build 41 hotels with a total number of 10.5 thousand rooms of different comfort levels, combined with a 6 km boardwalk.² Retail facilities will be located within a dedicated Festival Square and a Free Trade Zone, connected by a road network exceeding 21 km in length. The tourism infrastructure of Belaya Dune is projected to accommodate up to 1.4 million visitors annually, including approximately 1.1 million tourists staying in collective accommodation establishments and 300,000 same-day visitors.³ It is planned to create 17.8 thousand new jobs, which raises the problem of workforce.⁴ According to Anokhin, Kropinova, and Spiryaev, assessing the current state and future prospects of international tourism cooperation is essential for preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Baltic region [31]. Forecasts for 2025 indicate that tourist arrivals in the region are expected to increase by 8–9 % compared with the 2024 level of 2.2 million visitors. At the same time, as noted by Valentin Korneevets, Professor of Geography at the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, workforce shortages remain a significant challenge. In particular, there is a shortage of managers, hotel administrators, and personnel engaged in guest reception and accommodation services.⁵ There is a movement of staff between hotels by offering higher salaries, which creates unjustified labour migration. They are trying to compensate for the lack of personnel by employing pensioners, which affects the quality of service.

Faced with persistent labour shortages, Russian businesses began to scale back recruitment activity and reduce the number of advertised vacancies in 2025, shifting towards more selective and efficient hiring practices,⁶ aimed at achieving a

¹ The results of the architectural competition for the development of the White Dune resort have been summed up in the Kaliningrad Region, *Development Corporation*, URL: https://www.kgd-rdc.ru/media/news/press_reliz/v_kaliningradskoy_oblasti_podvedeny_itogi_arkhitekturnogo_konkursa_razvitiya_kurorta_belaya_dyuna/ (accessed 02.10.2025).

² The amazing length of the future White Dune boardwalk has been named, 2025, *The Russian West*, 08.08.2025, URL: <https://ruwest.ru/news/151202/> (accessed 02.10.2025).

³ “City of hotels”: what will be the resort “White Dune” near Yantarny, 2024, *Zen*, 30.09.2024, URL: https://dzen.ru/a/ZvrS18TYZy-VNX_q (accessed 02.10.2025).

⁴ Kurenkov — about the “White Dune”: “We will build a new one and destroy the old one”, 2025, *RBC*, 04.09.2025, URL: <https://kaliningrad.rbc.ru/kaliningrad/04/09/2025/68b975869a79471bcdf32c37> (accessed 02.10.2025).

⁵ The expert of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University named the key trends of the tourist season-2025 for the Kaliningrad region, 2025, *IKBFU News*, 19.03.2025, URL: <https://kantiana.ru/news/ekspert-bfu-im-i-kanta-nazval-klyuchevye-trendy-turisticheskogo-sezona-2025-dlya-kaliningradskoy-obl/> (accessed 22.12.2025).

⁶ Shakirova, M. 2025, Russian business has started to reduce hiring, *Vedomosti*, 06.06.2025, URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/economics/articles/2025/06/06/1115424-rossiiskii-biznes-nachal-sokraschat-naem> (accessed 03.10.2025).

better match between employers' needs and job seekers' expectations. The most sought-after jobs in 2025 are cooks / bakers, waiters / bartenders / baristas, restaurant managers, maids, and hotel receptionists.¹ Given the mismatch between the expectations of job seekers and the employment opportunities offered by employers, greater use of flexible forms of employment may help improve labour market matching. Such measures include seasonal and part-time employment, the combination of related functions and responsibilities with additional remuneration, and the use of hybrid compensation systems that combine fixed and piecework pay.

At the same time, qualified specialists are needed, trained by three federal resource centres in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan, where industry specialists can undergo free retraining, as well as practice-oriented educational programmes.² The federal programme "Professionalitet" has been launched for students completing Grades 9—11, providing opportunities to pursue vocational training and qualifications in tourism and hospitality.³

In the context of persistent workforce shortages, it appears advisable to develop approaches aimed at the more efficient utilisation of existing human resources, the adoption of more targeted recruitment practices, and improved alignment between the expectations of employers and job seekers. One promising direction is the implementation of lean production principles. In this regard, the National Project "Tourism and Hospitality" includes a range of measures designed to enhance labour productivity in 57 organisations.⁴ Participating organisations implemented a number of pilot projects aimed at improving operational efficiency. These included the optimisation of hotel maintenance processes, for which standardised procedures for room cleaning were developed, reducing service time by 29 %. Additional improvements involved optimising meal ordering procedures and food storage operations in warehouses and kitchens, resulting in a 27 % reduction in processing time, a 34.1 % decrease in work in progress, and a 10.8 % increase in productivity.⁵ Experts in lean production are developing schemes to speed up the arrival of tourists in hotel rooms, reduce queues for ski slopes, and improve other service standards.

Workforce shortages hinder the development of new tourist routes, particularly in areas located outside major urban centres, including Altai, Siberia, the

¹ The labor market in the tourism industry, *SuperJob*, URL: <https://www.superjob.ru/pro/6389/> (accessed 03.10.2025).

² Personnel for tourism, *National projects*, URL: <https://xn--80aapampemcchfmo-7a3c9ehj.xn--p1ai/new-projects/turizm-i-gostepriimstvo/kadry-dlya-turizma/> (accessed 04.10.2025).

³ By 2030, 400 thousand new employees will be in demand in the tourism industry of the Russian Federation, 2023, *Regnum News Agency*, 27.09.2023, URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/3835417> (accessed 04.10.2025).

⁴ National project "Tourism and Hospitality", *The Russian Government*, URL: <http://government.ru/rugovclassifier/920/about/> (accessed 04.10.2025).

⁵ The tourism industry is introducing lean production methods, 2025, *Steppe dawns*, 12.03.2025, URL: <https://stepzory.ru/turisticheskaya-otrasl-vnedryaet-metody-berezhlivogo-proizvodstva/> (accessed 04.10.2025).

Lake Baikal region, and the Russian Far East. The experience from developing countries suggests that establishing and operating hotel facilities in remote regions requires substantial investment in infrastructure and technical equipment. At the same time, labour costs in such areas are often relatively low. For example, servicing a single hotel room requires an average of 1.6 employees in Kenya and 1.8 employees in the Seychelles.¹ In the Nordic countries, such types of employment are provided by foreigners, whose share in France and Germany reaches 25 %.

Additional measures to address workforce shortages in the tourism industry include increasing wages to competitive market levels, improving financial incentive systems, retaining older employees through targeted retraining programmes, and mitigating seasonal fluctuations in employment through multi-skilling and the combination of related job functions. Greater cooperation between vocational and higher education institutions and tourism businesses is also required, including the development of joint programmes aimed at supporting tourism clusters. At the same time, demand is growing for specialists with a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the tourism industry, capable of developing and implementing innovative tourism products and services, as well as enhancing the quality of service. According to experts, the current education and training system meets only around half of the sector's demand for qualified personnel.² At the same time, programmes in tourism and hospitality remain relatively unattractive to prospective students, which increases the importance of career guidance and outreach activities among school pupils and university applicants. It is also advisable to further develop educational programmes tailored to the needs of specific occupational groups and employers, incorporating varying durations of practice-oriented training and work-based learning.

An interesting example of a regional youth career-guidance initiative has been implemented in Crimea through the establishment of "Hospitality Classes", which support adolescents in their career choice through a programme consisting of nine profession-oriented modules covering different occupations in the tourism and hospitality sector.³ The project helps to reduce the shortage of personnel and, at the same time, introduces modern standards of service.

In our opinion, platform employment, as a flexible form of work that is increasingly used in the service sector, has considerable potential to alleviate workforce shortages. In particular, it can facilitate the labour market participation of women by enabling a better balance between professional and family respon-

¹ International tourism and employment, *Tourism Management*, URL: https://vfmgui-tourism.ru/sistema_upravleniya_turizmom_33/mejdunarodnyi_turizm_i_zanyatost_309/index.html (accessed 02.10.2025).

² Zadera, S., Ignatova, O. 2025, The tourism industry needs up to two million new employees, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 20.03.2025, URL: <https://rg.ru/2025/03/20/priglasiat-gostej.html> (accessed 02.10.2025).

³ 10 best tourism projects in 2024, 2025, *RUSSPASS Journal*, 30.01.2025, URL: <https://mag.russpass.ru/business/rubric/biznes/10-luchshih-proektov-v-turizme-za-2024-god> (accessed 23.12.2025).

sibilities. In some cases, platform employment also allows individuals to combine their primary occupation with supplementary work and generate additional income. Moreover, modern digital technologies reduce the importance of geographical constraints, enabling workers from regions and smaller towns to access better-paid employment opportunities. The growing role of flexible and digitally mediated forms of employment is particularly relevant for the tourism sector. In the first half of 2025 alone, 76.5 thousand new small and medium-sized enterprises were established in tourism with state support, contributing to the development of tourism infrastructure and the creation of new tourist attractions.¹ At the same time, during this period, employers were looking for employees for the positions of cooks, bakers, administrators, waiters, baristas, bartenders, and cleaners.²

Platform employment creates additional employment opportunities for people with disabilities and supports the activities of social entrepreneurs implementing socially oriented projects. However, its share in the tourism sector remains relatively small (Table 2). At the same time, platform employment is not yet fully covered by labour legislation and does not provide self-employed workers with the same level of social protection and employment guarantees as traditional forms of employment. These limitations constrain its wider adoption and highlight the need for further refinement and clarification of the relevant provisions of labour legislation.

Table 2

Platform employment as primary employment in the Russian service sector, 2023

Type of activity	Total, thousand people	As a percentage of the total	Proportion of men, %	Proportion of women, %
Total employed in the service sector	3224	100.0	57,5	42,5
including Hotels and restaurants	73	2.3	36.7	63.3

Compiled and calculated on the basis of Rosstat data.³

Flexible employment is seen as one of the mechanisms for addressing workforce shortages. Among its forms is project-based employment, whereby a worker is engaged for a specified period to carry out a particular project of a temporary or non-recurring nature. In the tourism sector, project-based employment may

¹ More than 5 thousand tourist SMEs appeared in Russia in six months, 2025, *RIA News*, 16.07.2025, URL: <https://ria.ru/20250716/turizm-2029407784.html> (accessed 02.10.2025).

² The most in-demand employees in tourism are named, 2025, *Izvestia*, 20.05.2025, URL: <https://iz.ru/1889025/2025-05-20/nazvany-samye-vostrebovannye-sotrudniki-v-turizme> (accessed 02.10.2025).

³ Labor force, employment and unemployment in Russia (based on the results of sample surveys of the labor force), 2024, *Rosstat*, Moscow, URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Rab_sila_2024.pdf (accessed 03.10.2025).

be associated with the development and implementation of new tourist routes and products, as well as with the emergence of new professional roles, such as designers of individual and family heritage tours, territorial development specialists, and destination marketing experts. For employees, participation in project-based work provides opportunities to engage in innovative and professionally interesting activities while receiving additional remuneration. At the same time, it requires rapid adaptation to new projects and teams and is generally associated with a lower level of social protection than standard forms of employment. Recruitment for project-based positions is typically conducted through freelance platforms, social networks, and specialised websites used to attract professionals in areas such as marketing, education, event management, and related services. Like platform employment, project-based employment requires further refinement of labour legislation.

Digital technologies in addressing human resources problems in the development of international cooperation in the field of tourism

Digital transformation in the tourism and hospitality sector is creating an integrated information environment that facilitates interaction among all tourism market participants and supports the promotion of tourism products and services. Modern digital technologies are aimed at optimising business processes, including operations that traditionally require substantial labour inputs, thereby reducing costs and, in some cases, decreasing staffing requirements. Artificial intelligence technologies contribute to the personalisation of customer service and enable the use of big data and predictive analytics to better meet customer needs while improving the efficiency of workforce utilisation.

The digital transformation of the tourism and hospitality sector also creates opportunities for mitigating labour market risks and strengthening international cooperation. This is particularly important in the implementation of joint programmes and projects involving companies from different countries that possess diverse experience and practices in performing similar functions and operations. At the same time, the pace of digital transformation varies considerably across different segments of the tourism industry. Large tour operators and hotel chains actively employ digital platforms, cloud services, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and related technologies to enhance competitiveness, increase transaction volumes, expand their customer base, improve service quality, and strengthen cooperation with partners. Their ability to do so is largely explained by greater access to technological infrastructure and qualified personnel.

By contrast, the digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the hotel and restaurant sector remains at an early stage (Table 3). This limits opportunities for the development and implementation of new tourism products and routes and constrains the integration of natural, cultural, and historical sites located in remote regions into the tourism economy.

Table 3

**Use of digital technologies by hotel and restaurant businesses,
% of total organisations**

Digital technologies	The average for the Russian economy	Hotels and restaurants
Cloud services	26.7	31.2
Digital platforms	17.1	19.2
Technologies for collecting, processing and analysing big data	15.3	19.0
Geographic information systems	12.2	12.3
The Internet of Things	11.2	12.7
RFID-technologies	9.1	11.3
Artificial intelligence	4.9	2.7
Industrial robots / automated lines	2.7	2.6
Additive technologies	1.9	1.8
The “Digital Twins”	1.5	1.4

Compiled based on: Abashkin, V. L., Abdrakhmanova, G. I., Vishnevsky, K. O. et al. 2025, *Digital Economy: 2025: a short statistical collection*, Moscow, p. 50—57.

The use of artificial intelligence, neural networks, and other digital technologies is bringing about significant changes in the professional activities of workers employed in the tourism sector. For example, artificial intelligence is increasingly used for tasks such as providing information on visa requirements, processing travel schedules, generating tour descriptions, managing email communications, operating chatbots, handling bookings and documentation, and analysing customer reviews. These technologies automate routine operations, improve service efficiency, and enable employees to focus on more complex and customer-oriented tasks.¹ As a result of digital transformation, certain professional functions traditionally performed by tourism-sector employees are increasingly being automated. For example, artificial intelligence can rapidly translate information into multiple languages, while virtual guides and digital navigation systems can provide tourists with information about destinations and attractions. These technologies are particularly valuable in international tourism, including for Chinese visitors to Russia and Russian tourists travelling in China. Rather than completely replacing most occupations, artificial intelligence is more likely to transform their functional content. For instance, virtual concierge systems can provide information about accommodation facilities, recommend local attractions, and assist with restaurant reservations. Automated travel-planning systems can help select tourism products, process bookings, and prepare documentation, while sales and marketing specialists can use AI-based tools to analyse demand patterns and support decision-making. At the same time, the impact of artificial intelligence is expected to be more limited in occupations that require intensive

¹ How artificial intelligence will change professions in tourism: Microsoft research, 2025, *Association of Tour Operators*, 14.08.2025, URL: <https://www.atorus.ru/article/kak-iskusstvennyy-intellekt-izmenit-professii-v-turizme-issledovanie-microsoft-63563> (accessed 04.10.2025).

interpersonal interaction, emotional intelligence, and responsibility for customer safety, such as tour guides, instructors, and rescue personnel. In general, the introduction of artificial intelligence will automate routine operations, reduce the time required for information processing, and enhance labour productivity, while allowing employees to focus on more complex and customer-oriented tasks.

The use of neural networks is transforming the nature of administrative work, as their application as intelligent assistants enables employees to focus more on creative tasks, customer interaction, and the search for innovative solutions. Under current conditions, online systems can support the entire process of creating a tourism product, from combining services and products offered by different suppliers to customer support, including information services and payment transactions. This relieves online intermediaries of many routine operations, allowing them to focus on interacting with loyal customers, expanding their market niche, and developing new routes and products. With the help of artificial intelligence, aggregator companies can prepare comparative assessments of hotels based on comfort, price, and other characteristics, generate personalised offers in response to customer requests, process reviews, and perform a range of other analytical and customer-service functions.

Artificial intelligence-based technologies significantly expand opportunities for service personalisation, which is particularly important in inbound tourism, where visitors often seek customised travel experiences and complex itineraries. The use of intelligent booking systems, dynamic pricing tools, virtual translation services, and virtual tours enhances service accessibility and quality while increasing customer satisfaction. At the same time, these technologies improve operational efficiency by optimising logistics, demand forecasting, and business planning within the tourism sector.

Tourists benefit significantly from the combined use of artificial intelligence technologies and the Internet of Things in hospitality services. These technologies facilitate a wide range of functions, including room-service management (e.g., temperature control, Wi-Fi access, and food ordering), automated check-in procedures, biometric room access, and baggage tracking. The integration of artificial intelligence with virtual and augmented reality technologies also enables tourists to navigate unfamiliar destinations more easily and to explore attractions in advance when planning their travel itineraries. The gradual spread of smart hotel models makes it possible not only to make extensive use of smart gadgets, but also to replace staff with robots that perform routine cleaning, deliver food and drink orders to guests' rooms, and take on the functions of an administrator, concierge, and security guard, among others.

At the same time, the relatively low level of adoption of software tools, including electronic document management systems, electronic transaction processing, access to databases through global information networks, and digital training programmes, creates an additional demand for labour and reduces the efficiency of business processes. Overcoming these constraints, therefore, represents an important prerequisite for improving productivity and enhancing the performance of tourism enterprises (Table 4).

Table 4

Use of digital software tools by hotel
and restaurant organisations, % of total organisations

Software tools	The average for the Russian economy	Hotels and restaurants
Electronic document management systems	55.8	48.9
Financial calculations in electronic form	46.4	47.1
Providing access to databases through global information networks	27.8	30.4
Training programmes	26.2	25.7

Compiled based on: Abashkin, V.L., Abdrakhmanova, G.I., Vishnevsky, K.O. et al. 2025, *Digital Economy: 2025: a short statistical collection*, Moscow, p. 59.

Conclusion

International cooperation in tourism creates favourable conditions for the sustainable development of both Russia and its partner countries by generating political, economic, social, and cultural benefits. Its further expansion requires, above all, improvements in the quality of tourism services, including through the implementation of specialised programmes and initiatives such as China Friendly and Muslim Friendly. By providing a high level of comfort and taking into account the national, cultural, and religious preferences of foreign visitors, these initiatives contribute to the growth of tourist flows and encourage repeat visits. Addressing this challenge requires both the development and modernisation of tourism infrastructure and the wider adoption of high service standards, supported by the training of qualified personnel, including specialists with foreign-language competencies. In the field of employment and human resource management, greater emphasis should be placed on labour-saving strategies through the use of flexible forms of employment, including platform-based and project-based work. At the same time, measures aimed at employee retention should be expanded, including the combination of related functions and occupations, additional payments and bonuses during peak seasons, the provision of enhanced social benefits, and differentiated employment policies targeting women with children, young people, older workers, and persons with disabilities.

In our opinion, in the context of a constrained labour market, particular attention should be paid to the adoption of modern labour-saving digital technologies, especially in labour-intensive segments of the tourism sector, such as the hotel and restaurant industry. Priority areas also include the training of young specialists, the professional development of existing employees, and the improvement of the technological infrastructure and software capabilities of small and medium-sized enterprises.

In addition, it is advisable to develop regional projects aimed at creating new tourism routes for foreign visitors and improving the quality of tourism services. Such initiatives should make greater use of modern digital technologies while expanding opportunities for personnel training and retraining.

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