

# Accreditation of Tour Guides: The World Experience and the Implementation in Russian Hospitality Industry

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study is to consider professional accreditation of tour guides as an important mechanism for improving and maintaining the overall image of tourist destinations, analyze the main current world types of guide certification and then present another certification model as a mechanism for improving the quality of services provided. The first part of the article describes the results of a publications review and the results of an empirical study of guide accreditation programs. In countries with developed tourism, there is no single approach to the accreditation of guides, and governmental institutions, together with professional communities, decide if it is mandatory. In its second part, the article overviews the approaches to the accreditation of guides in some regions of the Russian Federation. The necessity to regulate the market of guided tour services is certain since poor quality services develop a negative impression of travel destinations, and only professionally trained guides can tell a good story about a particular place or object. The lack of government regulation in the provision of services by tour guides has resulted in a significant proportion of incompetent people who often form a negative impression on tourists. This undoubtedly affects both the brand of tourist destinations in the eyes of current and potential visitors, and economic indicators, since an insufficient influx of tourists does not encourage the development of destinations. The value of the work lies in systematizing the international practices of individual tourist destinations, examining the experience of tour guides in the Russian Federation, and analyzing the legal framework of guided tours. This study contributes to a better understanding of the need to introduce the process of accreditation of guides in the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** accreditation of guides, professional standard, tourism, tourism activities regulation

## 1. Introduction

Successful promoting of any tourist destination does not depend only on the availability of historical, cultural and tourist resources. First of all, it is affected by the professionalism of workers who provide tourism services, which is mentioned in the works of many researchers (Edgell et al., 2008; Esichaikul & Baum, 1998; Semenova et al., 2018; Mango et al., 2020). A low level of professionalism that does not comply with international standards leads to complaints from customers, thereby shattering the tourist image and incurring long-term economic damage to the destination (Arif et al., 2016; Van den Berg, 2016; Hashim et al., 2019; Kireeva et al., 2018).

In world practice, professional accreditation is the mechanism for maintaining and improving professional and technical competence; it can and must be used in the activities of the guide. The concept of a “guide” itself is interpreted as of a person showing visitors or individual tourists the buildings, places and landscapes of a city or region, presenting the cultural and natural heritage in the language of the tourist (Black & Ham, 2005; Kovalenko & Pavliuk, 2020).

Many researchers point out the significant role of guides in shaping the tourist impressions of the visited territory, at the same time performing several functions in their activities: from satisfying the learning interest of visitors to protecting the natural environment and promoting culturally responsible behaviour (Weiler et al., 1998; Weiler & Ham, 2001; Weiler et al., 1997). According to the definition of WFTGA (World Federation of Tourist Guide

Associations), a guide is an interpreter of the culture and heritage of the destination where he works; he must constantly learn and update his knowledge. In addition, a guide is a person accompanying tourists, giving the information, representing the cultural, historical and natural potential of the territory in a language understandable to tourists, having qualifications (accreditation), for a particular tourist region, usually issued and/or recognized by the relevant authority (Weiler & Hall, 1992; Pearce, 2009).

A prerequisite in any profession is competence and professionalism, which are the tools for competitiveness, the introduction of innovations in work and the success of activities. A successful guide should be well organized, be able to plan and logically set up the entire tour program; to be stress-resistant, communicative and energetic, good public speakers, as constant communication is the main job of the guides. A mandatory requirement for guides is to comply with the modern information environment, use new technologies and integrate them during the tour. Universal globalization, which also affected the tourism business, has become the basis for creating new consumer traditions, which are also being formed by global marketing strategies. The marketing of cultural tourism heritage promotes the experience of the so-called “authentic traditional cultures”. The daily practice of tourist guides and how they present and actively create local culture reflects how closely globalization and localization are intertwined. Currently, the role of the guide under the influence of technology, the modern development of society has transformed. The guide used to focus on providing services to tourists, but recently the focus has shifted towards tourist guides being interpreters or intermediaries. It is generally recognized that interpretation plays an important role in tourism as it can help enrich the experience of tourists, expand their historical, cultural, environmental knowledge. That is why the professionalism of the guide is a vital aspect for any tourist area, requiring research and evaluation of their professional competence.

**2. Method**

Despite the universal role of the guide in various areas of tourism, this aspect has not been studied well academically, and little attention has been paid to assessing the professional level of the guide. Indeed, it is expected that the communicator (in this case, the guide) will be effective while giving the oral story: on tour, he must deliver information in ways that capture and maintain the attention of the audience. Researchers point out that tourism is a coordinated relationship between producers and consumers, but ... the roles of the tourist and the guide are not fixed, since the subjects (of the role) and motives change even within one person even during one tourist visit (Salazar, 2006). For example, the legislation of South Africa, Canada, and Australia stipulate that a guide must be a distributor of lifestyle information for international and national visitors in an appropriate travel destination (McDonnell I., 2001).

The importance of the tourism sector and its correlation with other sectors of the economy (agriculture, hospitality, transportation, entertainment) as well as the consumption of tourism products at destinations necessitates local communities to actively participate in the development and promotion of tourism products. However, it is the professionalism of the guides that can increase the value of the local tourism product, the attractiveness of the territory, and also enrich the experience of tourists. While the term “travel guide” refers to employment (a tour worker serving clients), the concept of a “guide” shifts the focus towards the relationship between the guide, tourists and local residents during a trip or excursion. Table 1 below presents E. Cohen’s model, which describes the main roles of the guide.

Table 1. The matrix of a tour guide’s roles (Cohen, 1985)

	Internal influence		
	Animator (social impact)	Professional tour-guide (communicative impact)	Intermediary area (a person who provides the information about the destination territory)
Leadership area (mentor, teacher, etc.)	Communicator (originality of the impact on the tourist, the so-called subject impact)	Tour-leader (international impact)	
	External influence		

This model defines four main forms of guide function implementation: objective, social, communication and international. Cohen (1985), in his matrix, identifies two types of roles that guides perform: a mentor for tourists, informing about a particular tourist destination and ensuring safety in a foreign environment. The other role is one of a navigator (intermediary), providing access to information about the destination territory. In the modern tourist world, even despite increasing globalization, a situation may arise when, without a guide's active assistance (intermediary), the tourist potential of destination is not accessible to visitors, or even if it is, it can be misunderstood and not appreciated. Only a professional guide can correctly introduce the tourist destination and interpret tourist information.

The guide (tour guide) is the "face" of the tourist destination, their communication with tourists can increase tourist satisfaction from visiting the place and its sights, which will have a multiplier effect and allow you to sell future trips to your country. Despite the fact that tourist guides are regarded as experts "at the forefront" and "ambassadors of tourism" in a certain place, their profession is often perceived as auxiliary and unimportant. However, it is the guide who is able to influence the behaviour, perception and attitude of the visitors in the group to the tourist territory, object, sightseeing route and it is the professionalism of the guide that shapes the tourists' impression. Table 2 presents the main theoretical approaches to the perception of the guide's role in professional tourism activities (Table 2).

Table 2. The role of the tourist guide as an intermediary: terminological definitions (Eschaikul *et al.*, 1998)

Author and research field	The intermediary role of a tour guide	Interpretation
Schmidt (1979) Sociology	A buffer between the tourist and social environment, influencing the preferences of tourists, ensuring the visibility of the tourist sights, relationships with the local population	Assistance in the access to tourist sights and the meeting on arrival
Holloway (2004) Sociology	An informant, providing access to a tourist site, a catalyst for group interaction, a mediator of interaction between tourists and local people.	Information transfer and meeting on arrival
Pierce (1982) Socio-psychology	Establishing contact between tourism and the local population (territory), which acts as a catalyst for group solidarity, affects the perception of tourists by the local community	Information transfer and meeting on arrival
Cohen (1985) Sociology	Interpretation (translation of the unfamiliar), selection (what a tourist can see and what cannot), mediation in contacts between cultures	Assistance insights access, information and meetings
Hughes (1991) psychology	Promoting communication between cultural groups, raising awareness of the local lifestyle, a buffer between a group of tourists and the unfamiliar, providing access to uncommon tourist places	Assistance insights access, information and meetings
Weiler & Ham (2001) Tourism and tour studies	Cultural mediation and interpretation of the tourism potential of the place	Information transfer
Pond (1993) Tourism and tour studies	Informing, creating memorable impressions	Information transfer
Getz (2008) Tourism and tour studies	Mediator between tourists describes the cultural and natural features of the destination, shows interesting places	Information transfer
Smith (2001) Sociology	Mediation between hosts and guests, cultural interpretation, ethnic visualization, selection of cultural features, decision making.	Assistance in getting information, meetings and access

Yu et al. (2002) intercultural communication, Tourism and tour studies	Promoting communication, understanding and interaction between different cultural groups	Assistance in getting information and access
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Given Table 2, it can be concluded that in the presented studies they do not distinguish between the social and cultural intermediary role of the guide, but divide it into three categories: access mediation (access to tourist destinations), access to information about the tourist venue and mediation in meetings. For example, a professional guide will provide access to sight by determining which part of the local environment, heritage and culture are to be shown to the tourist and which should be hidden. The guide's professionalism is very important in selecting sights and choosing the information to be presented, the ability to give it in a simple and accurate way so that to allow tourists to see and understand everything. The guide helps and leads tourists on a trip to an unfamiliar place, giving directions, describing the territory, accompanying visitors on a journey, being an intermediary between tourists and a tourist destination.

An efficient, professional guide is one of the most valuable assets a travel company or country can have. According to Noel B. Salazar (2006), guides must acquire specialized knowledge in order to become professional travel experts. To be effective in their role as cultural guides of tourist destinations for visitors, guides must be experts both in the reliable knowledge field of the tourist place itself and understand the culture of the tourist well. However, in personal interaction with tourists, tour guides do not simply reproduce stories, they must become creative storytellers.

Guide accreditation is accepted in many countries and is fixed in various regulatory documents. For example, in South Africa, Canada, and Australia, certain governmental institutions (training and advisory bodies) are responsible for the professionalization and standardization of tourism within the country. These organizations operate under the legal system of each country, and their functions include assistance in organizing and regulating the professional activities of tour guides and facilitating cooperation between tour guides and tourism authorities.

For example, in Australia, guides do not have to confirm their qualifications, while in South Africa and Canada; the activities of guides are strictly regulated by government tourism agencies.

Guide accreditation is not mandatory in *Australia*. The Industry Development Association, which includes the Australia Tourism Organization (ITOA), has developed a voluntary guide accreditation scheme. According to the developed procedure, accreditation is given to tour guides professionally engaged in tourism activities as a tour guide for at least one year. All those wishing to work as guides must be accredited by ITOA, as well as undergo training (receive additional education) for at least 242 hours (one full day per week for one semester of training). In the course of preparation, they study intercultural communication, tourist safety issues, tourist formalities, and particular features of various categories of tourists (McDonnell, 2001, p. 3-4). However, unfortunately, the course is often a review of the secondary school courses in geography, history, cultural heritage of certain regions, and first aid, neglecting the cultural interaction with tourists.

Australia defines three main types of guides (Van Dyk et al., 2019).

- 1) Site guides - These guides who have reached the minimum level of qualification who are allowed to conduct tours about a limited geographical area;
- 2) Province guides - These guides have the right to conduct tours throughout the province or state;
- 3) National guides - They are allowed to conduct tours throughout the country, crossing all provincial or state borders.

In addition, the following types of guides whose skills require special confirmation are distinguished:

- 1) Adventure guides - Conduct dangerous tourist tours, for example, climbing, rowing, diving, etc.;
- 2) Nature guides - They conduct tours in the natural landscape in a limited geographical area (reserves, national parks, reserves, trails, etc.);
- 3) Cultural guides - Conduct cultural and educational tours in a certain territory (museum, community, wine farm, historical site, etc.).

Professional tourist guides in Australia have excellent communication and organizational skills and is accredited by professional guides; they are also qualified in the first aid and health and safety issues.

Although Australia does not have official requirements for the level of professional education of guides, most of those who choose tourism activities prefer to acquire specialized knowledge and skills, as Australia's educational institutions often provide employment or provide recommendations for travel employers. At the same time, travel companies strive to hire candidates who attended guide school and do not cost them anything for additional retraining. Often, a certain travel company in Australia teaches tour guides on its own program and then certifies them.

Australia's national tourism accreditation system, known as T-QUAL Accreditation, stopped operating on June 30, 2014. The government transferred responsibility for accrediting T-QUAL to the tourism industry and is currently responsible for the guide accreditation by the PTGAA (Professional Tour Guide Association of Australia), which guarantees the expertise level of a trained and accredited guide. Accredited tour guides are all individually assessed and must have a current certificate II (senior ambulance) and tour guide liability insurance worth \$ 10 million (PTGAA). The picture shows a sample guide certificate.

Another significant accrediting body in Australia is Australia's Tour Guide Network (GOA), which uses the National Standard for Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management to accredit guides. The program provides for various accreditation options:

- 1) Level III certificate in management (replaces certificate III in tourism (management));
- 2) Certificate IV in management (replaces certificate IV in tourism (management));
- 3) Certificate IV in the field of tourism (natural and cultural heritage).

GOA supports registered educational organizations in the training field of guides in Australia, which are accredited to prepare guides to achieve a minimum level III certificate in tourism management or its equivalent. Once a year, guides must confirm their qualifications: develop and submit a tour plan, conduct an imitation tour in real conditions, and provide a portfolio. All guides have accreditation cards that list accredited tourist destinations (Fig. 2).

Identification cards should be visible to tourists as well as other interested parties. As a rule, all certified guides are members of professional communities; the fee is from \$ 80 per year for full membership, \$ 40 for temporary membership, and up to \$ 10 for the associate. Full members are professional guides who work in this area; temporary are those newly qualified guides who are in the process of gaining experience before applying for full membership; associate membership is open to volunteer guides and those who have quitted other management activities. Currently, training and accreditation of guide activities in Canada are mandatory only in Montreal and Quebec, but recently many other territories are considering such a possibility of regulating the guide activities.

Since 1985, the only institution providing training and retraining in tourism, as well as determining the program, content and structure of a training course for a guide in cooperation with the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies, is the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality of Quebec. In 1992, the proposed course was revised and amended depending on the needs of the market. Due to the changing requirements, the guide must now speak at least three languages. Applicants for a tour guide position must have a driver's license and speak English and French. The guide training program in Montreal includes the course of history, geography, politics, architecture (including monuments, works of art, etc.), of the development of Montreal, the cultural communities of the city and tourists coming to the city, the physiology of the visitor or tourist, cultural events, economics; natural landscape and religion (awareness of other religions), and much more. The travel guides who successfully complete the course receive a diploma from the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality of Quebec, after which the Institute will introduce potential guides to the city's tourism permit department, where the guides can then obtain their Montreal Tour License (CTGA).

In Montreal, all areas of activity related to tourist services (taxi or limousine services for tourists, tours offered in the hotel), can be provided only by a licensed professional guide. There are no unskilled taxi drivers or limousines in tourism. Cycling guides in Montreal must be trained in Velo Quebec, take a first aid course and become a member of APGT Montréal to offer cycling tours. This also applies to scooters and Segway tours. In Toronto, another city in Canada, there are several ways to become a guide. The first is membership in the Canadian Tour Guide Association of Toronto, which supports educational activities for its members, a training program for guides in Toronto, and licensing and accreditation of guides in the Niagara area. Most CTGA members in Toronto are "step-by-step" tour guides, who get on the bus and direct it around the city, giving the driver directions on where to go, keeping the schedule for 2-3 hours. Another way to become an accredited tour guide in Toronto is to study at George Brown College, which offers a tour accreditation program.

In Canada, only Montreal and Quebec are two cities where guides must be accredited and receive a certificate. In addition, tour guides cover liability insurance and are also independent, self-employed, freelance contract workers. The guides also need to renew their permits in Canada annually, and membership fees for tourist guides are \$ 50 per year and must be paid and submitted with the membership application.

### *2.1 South Africa*

According to the Law on Tourism of 2014, anyone who has registered as a tourist guide and applied to the appropriate local registrar can become a guide in South Africa. However, in order to register as a guide, the applicant must be a South African citizen or have a valid work permit; get trained at an educational institution accredited by the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector, Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), have a valid certificate of first aid from an institution accepted by the Ministry of Labor, pay a registration fee and submit a completed and signed registration form and Code of Conduct and Ethics upon registration.

Accredited travel guides have identification cards issued by the local registrar after approving the registration application as a guide. Identification cards indicate the category of the guide, the territory where they can work. Currently, the training structure in South Africa has only two types of accreditation, licensed in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF): National Certificate in Tourism (NQF2) and National Certificate in Tourism (NQF4).

The training program for guide accreditation can also be compiled individually. For example, the duration of the offered course is three weeks, but the training material is remarkable in its depth and quality, as the education management system also licenses tourism educational services providers and the proposed training programs and materials. A prerequisite for successful licensing of an educational program is the preparation of a practical training component. The provincial tour guide programs focus on developing skills for practising tour guides.

In addition to what has been mentioned above, in South Africa, there is a specificity of educational standards for various areas of guide training. For example, FGASA (Field Guides Association of Southern Africa) provides educational programs in promoting the preservation and restoration of cultural and natural heritage, for which it collaborates with a professional association of highly qualified instructors in eco-tourism. In addition to accredited programs, CATHSSETA experts, who train tour guides and issue certificates, are also regularly certified.

Another form of accreditation and proof of qualification in South Africa is the RPL, the type of assessment used for those who have worked as unregistered guides in the past; it takes into account qualifications, work experience, skills, etc. These guides can simply pass an exam and confirm their own qualifications.

### *2.2 Germany*

Like some other states, has neither recognized qualifications nor special requirements for guides. However, since 1990, Germany has been working on the development of mechanisms for accrediting tour guides and in 2001, as a result of the private initiative of tour operators and tour guides, a curriculum for tour guide certification was developed. The main areas of study to confirm the qualifications of the guide included such areas as the geography of the country and some certain destination, legal issues, traffic legislation, etc.

An applicant for the tour guide certificate must be at least 18 years old, must have A-Levels / Abitur or equivalent qualifications and proof of practical tourist experience. However, so far in Germany, it is only a project, and at present, any person can deliver tours. Though when on a tour of a museum in Germany, it is impossible to tell a story "on behalf of the exhibits or the museum (art gallery, etc.), since there is a museum staff who can do this. Such condition of the tour services market is explained by its free regulation: unskilled guides will not be able to work well, and the market will squeeze them out.

Often, in an attempt to save their own resources, travel companies delegate the task of conducting tours to freelance guides. In modern conditions (since 2005), the European Union will no longer have such an opportunity, since a guided tour requires a qualified local guide or a person who has a license to conduct a tour in a certain territory (city) of the European Union. For example, in France, to work as a guide, you must have a guide-entertainer (guide-lecturer) card, which can be obtained after studying at one of the eight universities in France. The training must include courses in the history of art and the state of France, the methodology of excursions, communication, etc. Accreditation of the guide-entertainer makes it possible to conduct excursions with comments in the main national museums of France. In the absence of accreditation, the management of museums has the full right to cancel a guide. The Ministry of Tourism of France confirms the accreditation of the guide and issues the established documents.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The issues of guide accreditation have been urgent for the tourism industry of the Russian Federation for a long time. Currently, a draft law that regulates the certification procedure for guides has been developed. It will regulate the certification procedure, which is to be carried out by the subject state authorities of the Russian Federation where tours will be conducted. Guides will have to pass certification once every five years in that very destination where they will provide tourist services. If the certification is successful, the guide will be issued a certificate, as well as a chest identification card. As part of the supervision of compliance with legislation, the activities of guides in the region are monitored. The proposed draft law is a response to the requests of the professional community and takes into account the implementation of pilot projects for guide certification in the Russian Federation. While a single mandatory procedure for guide certification in the RF has not been adopted, many tourist-attractive territories (subjects) independently resolve topical issues of guide regulation.

So, within the framework of the state program "Tourism Development in the Primorsky Krai" for 2013-2020, the Primorsky Krai introduced voluntary accreditation of tour guides, which was carried out on the initiative of the Department of Tourism and the Public Expert Council on Tourism in the Primorsky Krai. It was caused by the increasing tourist flow every year, and the need to form and maintain a positive and reliable image of the destination (Semenova et al., 2018).

The administration of Nizhny Novgorod, along with the professional community, took the same path and decided to settle the field of tour services and set up the guide accreditation of guides who only work with tourist groups in the Novgorod Kremlin. According to the decision of the administration, the guide accreditation should be annual and sufficiently flexible: the requirements for the accreditation of highly professional guides who constantly work with tourists will be soft, and they will be accredited once every several years. According to the administration of the Nizhny Novgorod region, a large number of tour companies in the region (more than 50) are ready to accredit their employees, as this procedure will protect professional guides from nonprofessionals seeking short-term income (Smith & Riley, 2011).

The administration of the Vladimir region establishes accreditation of guides who can conduct tours in the Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve. To this end, an internal regulatory document was issued (order of the Director-General of the Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve) on the regulation of guides' activities on the territory of the Museum, in which the guide must take an exam including several stages: an interview, and the exam itself, where the applicant must demonstrate skills to independently conduct a tour of the Museum-Reserve and present an excursion or a part of it (first without reference to the territory, then showing it on the route); in addition, it is necessary to take a test of general knowledge of the Vladimir region culture and history. In case the tests are successfully completed, the guide receives a badge and concludes an agreement for a certain type of tours due to the guide's category. Information on guides accredited at the Museum-Reserve is available on the website. The museum also has a control function: it controls the work of an accredited guide and can cancel the accreditation (because of the tourists' complaints, for transferring the accreditation to another guide, for inappropriate behaviour or negative public reviews of the Museum) (Yu et al., 2002).

The Tourism Agency of the Irkutsk Region, together with the Baikal Tourism Association (SBAT), as well as the Irkutsk Tourist Information Service, under a tripartite agreement, cooperate in the field of voluntary accreditation of guides and guides-interpreters in the region, which will be evaluated by a special expert and methodological commission. The main motive of this procedure is to bring about a positive image of the Irkutsk region as the one which provides good tour services and has conditions for voluntary accreditation of tour guides, as well as a legal the market for tour services in the region. Based on the results of accreditation in the region, a single register of accredited tour guides is formed (Van Dyk et al., 2019).

In the Smolensk region, a regional law on voluntary accreditation of guides and guide-interpreters in the Smolensk region was adopted. In order to create conditions for the development of incoming, domestic, social tourism in the Smolensk region and to ensure the necessary quality level of services provided by the guides and guides-interpreters, providing tourists with reliable information about tourist resources, the voluntary accreditation of guides is legislatively fixed. The Department of the Smolensk region for culture and tourism is authorized to carry out voluntary accreditation of guides. The normative act reads the requirements for the level of education (higher, secondary vocational education), professional qualification requirements (knowledge of regional tourist resources, geography, history, culture, art and architecture, politics, religion and sociology of Smolensk region, terminology); the guide must be able to analyze tourist documentation, know the special needs of tourist groups or individual tourists, be able to plan a route and use the "guide portfolio" in his story, and also be able to provide first aid, etc.

The term for which the guide is accredited is three years, and it is conducted twice a year (in May and November) (Weiler & Davis, 1993).

In May 2018, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Information of the Astrakhan Region had been accrediting guides, translators and guides who conduct excursions in the region in order to create a favourable tourist climate and provide reliable information about the cultural heritage. Based on the results of accreditation, and the Ministry creates an attestation commission, which considers applications and also conducts the accreditation itself (Weiler & Ham, 2001). Accreditation of guides, interpreters and guide-instructors is carried out on the same principle in the Mari El Republic (Weiler et al., 1997), it consists of several stages: professional testing of an interactive tour conducted in real conditions.

Due to its geopolitical exclave position and proximity to developed tourist destinations, the Kaliningrad region must follow the challenges and realities of the tourism market. Accreditation of tour guides has been carried out in the region for several years at the initiative and with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kaliningrad region. So, annually a competition for conducting professional training courses for tour guides is announced, and it is won by I.Kant Baltic Federal University. The program includes 320 hours of lectures and practical classes and ends with a practical module when each of the students must confirm their qualifications and conduct an interactive tour. In accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region of 05.07.2012 No. 488 "On Accreditation of Guides and Interpreters-Guides", the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kaliningrad Region is responsible for the accreditation of guides and conducts it on a competitive, voluntary and free basis. It is legally determined that for persons not participating in accreditation, no restrictions are imposed on professional activities.

The legislation defines different groups of guides depending on the length of service and professional education:

- 1) A III category guide, who has been working from 1 to 3 years, has higher professional education and additional professional education in tourism, received at specialized courses of guides and guide-interpreters, as well as qualification confirmation from an expert commission;
- 2) A II category guide, who has been working from 3 to 7 years and has a higher professional education, additional professional education in tourism, received no less than 560 hours of specialized courses for guides and guide-interpreters, with the qualification of a "guide", as well as qualification confirmation from an expert commission;
- 3) A I guide category which has been working in the industry for more than seven years, with higher professional education and additional professional education in tourism, received no less than 560 hours of specialized courses for guides and guide-interpreters, with the qualification of a "guide", as well as qualification confirmation from an expert commission (Weiler & Davis, 1993).

#### **4. Summary**

The accreditation certificate validity term also varies depending on the category of the guide: for a guide of category III it is one year, for a guide of category II it expires after three years, and for a I category guide and the unlimited certificate is issued. Accreditation certificate of the guide and badge proves the guide's accreditation. Lists of guides and guide-interpreters who have received a certificate are added to the electronic database of the Agency and are posted on the website of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kaliningrad Region. The accreditation can be legally cancelled if the accredited guide, translator guide has transferred the certificate and badge to another person, as well as after two or more complaints about the accredited guide from tourists, representatives of tourist organizations, museums and other places if the expert commission finds it reasonable to cancel the accreditation.

In St. Petersburg, with the accreditation of guides, three categories are distinguished, and here the most important criterion for moving to the next category is the work experience. The lowest is category III, in which the guide is considered an intern and whose validity period is one year; to move to category II, the guide must work in the industry for at least two years and the validity period of accreditation is three years; for the transition to category I, the guide must work for at least seven years, and the certificate is issued indefinitely (<http://www.wftga.org>).

In Moscow, accreditation issues are within the responsibility of the Expert Council under the Committee on Tourism and Hospitality of the city of Moscow. Initially, the guide can receive accreditation for a period of three years, for which he needs to confirm the level of professional education, as well as the necessary training for an independent tour on the topic "Moscow is the capital of Russia." When this three-year period expires, accreditation must be renewed, for which you need to attend continuing education courses (76 hours or more), as well as provide a letter of recommendation that confirms the qualifications of the applicant with a list of tours. An accreditation card is issued



for a period of 5 years, and after the expiration of the period can be extended for another five years on the same conditions (<http://www.visit-russia.ru>).

Recently, many sights in the capital of the Russian Federation independently settle accreditation issues. For example, the Moscow Metro in the autumn of 2018 accredited 135 guides for conducting tours of the metro stations. For accreditation, guides must confirm the history knowledge of the metro system and the features of its work, the work organization of stations and passenger traffic (<https://pravda-nn.ru>).

Today, culture and tourism potential are becoming an important asset for many tourist territories within the frameworks of international tourism and a means of strengthening their national identity. This work investigated accreditation of tour guides. The world experience and the implementation in the Russian hospitality industry have been considered. Guides are professionals who are at the forefront, working closely with tourists, while protecting the interests of the territory. Guides are responsible for attracting tourists, ensuring the safety of the group and much more. In addition, guides are the interpreters of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in the destination, and they are responsible for the sustainability of the historical and cultural legacy of the territory.

## 5. Conclusion

The success of the guide depends on the level of professionalism, cultural perception, etc. The professionalism of the guide can be confirmed by professional exams and accreditation, which are specific for each country and are usually determined by the national or local administration. The analysis showed that a single approach to this issue does not exist, and if in some state's accreditation is mandatory, while in others, it is voluntary. In general, the accreditation procedure allows us to ensure a high level of tour services in the tourist area and is an instrument of regulation and control of the tourist market.

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