

DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

Ecotourism has become a major tool for the rising environmental awareness of locals and visitors ensuring long-term sustainability. The tourists are becoming increasingly sophisticated in having meaningful travel experiences including communication with local people, learning their culture, observation of unique ecosystems, flora and fauna of the untouched areas. Uzbekistan's diverse ecology from mountains to deserts, from deserts to plains can support the country with the great ecotourism potential. Such opportunities can provide social, environmental and economic benefits to the country when it is comprehensively modified and meets international standards

Keywords: Ecotourism, nature, environmental impact, sustainability, conservation awareness, reserves, fauna, flora, the Aral sea, Global warming

Introduction

Tourism has become an important sector in the structure of the international services market, which has taken first place in the world in terms of economic efficiency and left behind such significant industries as oil production and the automotive industry. However, tourism is not only a strong tool for economic development. It is also an effective factor in creating the image of a particular territory, the achievements of the future and the promotion of its history. Of course, tourism has the greatest impact on the development of the country's economy. The tourism and recreational potential of certain states is a very complex concept for unambiguous interpretation and assessment. This fact largely depends on the fact that the basis of tourism potential is the cultural,

natural, and historical heritage of each specific country, which is different in origin and essence. At the same time, external factors of a political, economic, legal, cultural, social and psychological nature have a significant impact on the final indicators of the level of attractiveness of a tourist destination

Tourism is a huge income to the treasury of each state and the development of the industry will allow our countries to improve their economic performance.

Nowadays, the world is increasing abruptly and a lot of changes are happening day by day. One of the most viral types of tourism is Ecotourism. Currently Uzbekistan is paying attention to Ecotourism more seriously compared to last year. Moreover, our government is bending over backwards to own more facilities and the opportunities to enhance Ecotourism in our country. The main goal is not only about increasing the financial position but also helping nature to survive. Therefore, we have to try hard as much as we can to save our rare and remarkable worlds of Fauna and Flora. Because nowadays they are disappearing day by day due to several factors. One of them is pollution. The fact that seas, oceans, lakes are drying due to the pollution and harmful toxins. That's why different types of sea animals are dying. In that moment our duty is looking for several ways of protecting them.

Data and Methods

In the process of research, theoretical methods of induction, deduction, generalization and comparison were used. The necessary materials are investigated on the basis of the methods of typological analysis, the synthesis of statistical data

Main results

Today, the role of tourism throughout the world has invariably increased and this is due to the increase in its impact on people's lives and the economies of countries as a whole. Most of the services in this field of activity are sold with minimal losses; tourism is increasingly influencing the global economy, which is becoming its distinctive feature, because it allows us to achieve the highest value added. Travel companies in modern conditions of a market economy are increasingly aware of the importance and need to develop new services and products.

This region is famous for its high mountains, green meadows, amazing flora and fauna. It is nature that attracts tourists here all year round . Thus, from

year to year the ranks of guests who love to contemplate the picturesque landscapes and have a great, useful rest are expanding.

Based on the Presidential Decree “On measures for the accelerated development of tourism by introducing a special management procedure in the Bostanlyk region” dated August 27, 2020, government resolutions “On the accelerated development of tourism in the Tashkent region for 2019-2021” dated December 31, 2019 and “On measures to create favorable conditions for the development and rehabilitation of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan” dated July 10, 2020, determined measures for the development of Bostanlyk , Akhangaran , Parkent , Bukinsky , Chinaz , Zangiata districts and the city of Angren based on the “Golden Ring” tourism concept. It is also planned to create a tourist village in Kumushkon . Currently there are 50 guest houses, a hotel and a health center operating here. In turn, in order to attract Kumushkon residents and foreign investors to entrepreneurship, a land area of 34,371 hectares was allocated.

Also, in accordance with Government Decree No. 433 dated July 10, 2020 “On measures to create favorable conditions for the restoration and development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” 144 hostels (for 4,652 beds) have been operating throughout the republic this year, and today their total number reached 301 (for 10,230 places).

This resolution also approved the Regulations on the procedure for granting gatherings of mahalla citizens the status of “tourist mahalla”, “tourist village” and “tourist village”.

In recent years, tremendous work has been done to improve infrastructure, expand tourist destinations, and create world-class conditions for meaningful cultural recreation for tourists. If we compare them with the indicators of 2017, then the number of hotels, hostels and guest houses has increased from 152 to 1007, currently 97 hotels, 765 guest houses, 30 hostels, 30 children’s health camps, 59 recreation areas of the ministries and departments, 26 sanatoriums and other health facilities. The number of tourists is also growing rapidly . If in 2017 the region was visited by 128,300 local and 14,600 foreign guests, then in 2021 services were provided to 2 million 21 thousand local and 65 thousand foreign tourists.

A lot of work is being done to increase the tourist flow tenfold. It is planned to build 50 hotels, 1,000 guest houses, 60 hostels, 60 recreation areas, 10 sanatoriums and other recreational facilities.

According to the analysis, the average annual growth in tourist flows to Uzbekistan after the coronavirus pandemic amounted to more than 20%. In 2023, 6 million 134 thousand foreign tourists arrived in the country . This number is projected to reach 7 million by the end of the year. Over the 11 months of this year, the export of tourism services amounted to \$2 billion. The average expenses of one tourist during his stay in the country amounted to \$326 (\$224 in 2021). In 2024, measures will be taken to increase tourism exports to \$2.5 billion

Special attention in Uzbekistan was paid to pilgrimage tourism. In 2023, the following events were held in the republic with the aim of scientifically substantiating the potential of pilgrimage tourism in the country: the Naqshbandi festival , International Pilgrimage Week, international conferences “500th anniversary of the Mir-Arab madrasah” and “Imam Bukhari , Dorimi and Termiziy”.

In general, in the tourism industry in 2023, 520 projects were implemented with a total value of 9.5 trillion soums (\$ 840 million) . Since the beginning of the year, 70 thousand new jobs have been created in tourism and related industries. Uzbekistan intends to increase the number of foreign tourists to 15 million by 2030. About this at the opening of the 25th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Samarkand said the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev .

The President noted that in Uzbekistan’s “open door” policy, priority is given to the tourism industry. Thanks to this, over the course of two years, despite the restrictions associated with the pandemic, more than 800 infrastructure projects were implemented.

In these years Uzbekistan has attended several ceremonies which are organized by well-developed countries. An executive director for technical cooperation and services of the World Tourism Organization Shanchzhong Zhu has become an honorable guest of the forum.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, he said that Uzbekistan is one of the most dynamically developing countries and an important partner of the UNWTO. In recent years, eco-tourism has become a segment of tourism and a new area in the tourism industry. The resolutions of the UN General Assembly from 2012 and 2014 recognize the importance of the development of eco-tourism in order to preserve natural resources and international cooperation in

this field. It is emphasized that the holding of this conference is very timely, and considered questions are relevant not only for Uzbekistan but also for the whole world, especially in light of the fact that the United Nations has proclaimed 2017th year as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

As known, our country has great prospects for the development of ecotourism, establishing a unique and sustainable network of ecotourism routes with the further integration of the republic into the international market such services which are attractive for all categories of tourists. Today Uzbekistan is one of the leading places in Central Asia by popular ecotourism destinations. It should be emphasized that this kind of tourism is gaining more and more popularity – according to the forecasts of the World Tourism Organization, this type is among the five main strategic directions of tourism development until 2020 and it is estimated that the share of eco-tourism in the total volume of the global tourism industry has reached more than 10 % in recent years, and its growth rate is 2-3 times higher than the corresponding rates in the entire tourism industry. Nowadays the most controversial issues are global warming and drying the Aral sea. Why am I taking into consideration the Aral sea, because it's the source of water and water is a main element and the chain of life. When it disappears the life in that area will be dead and Fauna and Flora as well. It has a big affect on people who are living around there. It causes a lot of dangerous and incurable illnesses. The weather is very polluted because of the high level of salt. Ecotourism helps to figure out the proper solutions for those issues. Currently in Uzbekistan a lot of infrastructures are being built by the government. In Uzbekistan there are a lot of reserves that play a crucial role while saving nature. It helps to boost the position of nature and rare animals. Even tourists will come to see the animal atmosphere. Then we have to create specific plays that foreigners can easily admire. For that our government has to support us financially. In order to save the world we have to collaborate with other countries and exchange our knowledge and experience about Ecotourism. We have created exchange programs for students to gain some more experience and compare all countries in order to boost its own competitiveness. The main tourist centers of the country – Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shakhrisabz, are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. As a member of the UNWTO since 1994, Uzbekistan has conducted a number of important international events dedicated to the development of tourism. Among them – the first meeting of the countries of the Great Silk Road (Samarkand, 1994), a seminar on the preservation of cultural heritage (Bukhara, 1996), the third seminar on the

development of tourism on the Silk Road (Bukhara, 2002) and others. In 2004, the UNWTO office was opened in Samarkand.

Conferences like this contribute to the further development and promotion of the tourist potential of the Silk Road, and, of course, it cannot but be gladden.

We don't have enough opportunities to raise the level of Ecotourism. We have to create new technologies like electric cars that don't use fuel which can harm nature. For that, we should be strong financially. The development of ecotourism, in turn, provides comprehensive support for environmental protection systems, biodiversity and unique natural areas, the maintenance of local incomes, and it is a promising market for investment projects.

Advantageous geographical location of Uzbekistan at the intersection of routes from east to west and from the south to the northern countries, climatic features, a unique network of protected natural areas and a rich variety of landscapes offer great opportunities for the promotion of eco-tourism routes. Currently, the system of protected areas includes 8 reserves, 2 natural national and one national park, 1 biosphere reserve, 12 nature reserves, 7 natural monuments, which have been presented at the international conference. Currently our government is creating Activities for enhancing Ecotourism. Such as:

- Travel to nature destinations (think flora, fauna, and natural resources)
- Learning about local cultural heritage.
- Sustainable wilderness adventures.
- Viewing or volunteering with wildlife.
- Trips dedicated to activities that promote the planet's well-being, like beach cleanups.

Ecotourism also fosters eco-friendly development by allocating resources for preservation initiatives that enhance the welfare of both humans and animals. For instance, ecotourism can supply funds for the safeguarding of threatened species or create awareness programs about the significance of conserving natural resources.

All in all, we should be very attentive all the time for ecology, because nature and tourism complement each other. In addition to that those are the main sources of high income for the government.

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