

# Basics and Directions of Tourism Development in Uzbekistan

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## Abstract

**This article analyzes specific aspects of the tourism industry in detail. Also, on the basis of the state program, the fundamentals and directions of tourism development in Uzbekistan were studied. The mechanisms for the future natural, social and economic development of the tourism industry of Uzbekistan are presented.**

**Keywords: Tourism, industry, object, basics, directions, infrastructure, hotel, sustainable development, program.**

## Introduction

The specific development of production is specific in terms of time and space. This creates supply and demand among people for various things and areas. In terms of period, today, tourism is becoming a developing and demanding industry all over the world, including in Uzbekistan. In fact, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. Its comprehensive development is becoming a source of great income for many countries. Therefore, many countries of the world are taking all measures to further develop this industry, create appropriate infrastructure at the level of world standards and increase the flow of tourists [1]. From this point of view, despite the fact that our country has a place in the world tourism market, the level of creating favorable conditions for tourists, improving services, increasing the attractiveness of tourist attractions, and strengthening advertising is very low. Therefore, thinking about significant growth in this regard depends on the development of these factors.

According to the data of 2015, the ranking of competitive countries in tourism includes the 140 most attractive tourist destinations in the world (in terms of cultural reserves, cheap infrastructure, price of tourist products, level of security, international transparency). in the list, Kazakhstan is

on 85th place, Kyrgyzstan is on 116th place, Tajikistan is on 119th place, and Uzbekistan is on the last place among the countries of Central Asia and it is not included in this rating.

To some extent, this situation put the issue of tourism development in our Republic on the agenda. As a result, large-scale work is being done to develop tourism in our country. What should we do to further increase the flow of tourists, attract them to see and get to know the riches of our country? After all, Uzbekistan has a large historical and cultural heritage - more than 7300 ancient, architectural and archaeological monuments. Most of them are located in the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shahrisabz, Termiz, Kokan and Tashkent. More than 200 historical monuments and monuments in our country are included in the list of cultural heritage of UNESCO. What if we have so many historical and rich cultural heritages and cannot introduce them to the world? For this, we have enough valuable and commendable historical heritage. Every year 15 million tourists visit the Paris, France. But we do not go beyond counting the number of tourists every year, and if there is a slight increase from the previous year we think this is a great result. Is it possible that we cannot achieve the result of a single city while being a country with a large tourist potential?

If we pay attention to the preliminary data, 1 million 800 thousand tourists visited our country. If the main tourist season in our country begins in the middle of March and the end of the season lasts until the end of June, it is difficult to imagine that so many tourists will come and go during this period. Moreover, we do not have enough hotels, all of them are almost equal to the prices of hotels in European countries, and the price is increasing significantly every year. In this regard, if we turn to Paris again, the number of hotels in the city and hotels which located surrounding of the city are 4260. In our country, this indicator is 4 and a half times lower than the international level, there are only 750 hotels in our country. According to data, the share of tourism in the gross domestic product of the country is 2 percent. This is a very low rate. The number of enterprises and organizations carrying out tourism activities is 433 [2].

Consequence, meaningful measures are being developed in the economy of our Republic that will clarify our future. Indeed, today in the economy of our republic it is necessary to raise tourism to a strategic level, diversify domestic tourism services and sharply increase their volume, we need to create the necessary conditions for introducing citizens to the tourism potential of our country, improve its quality and we have to increase the volume of offered tourist services in order to increase their competitiveness in world markets. Government have to create additional opportunities for business entities operating in the field of tourism, with this step we can create the employment of the population and expand their source of income, the Tourism Committee has established a Tourism Support Fund done.

In this context, the potential of pilgrimage tourism is of particular importance. That is, the potential of Uzbekistan in pilgrimage tourism is huge - more than a million tourists have visited the country since the beginning of the year. According to the forecasts of the Ministry of Tourism, the number of tourists may reach 4.5 million by the end of the year. Why do tourists choose Uzbekistan? Someone is visiting the country for the first time, and someone is planning to spend another time to see the beauty of Uzbekistan and visitors interested in special types of tourism.

Pilgrimage tourism (also called religious tourism) is a trip to places important for Muslim culture, for example, to memorial complexes and shrines. Organizers of this type of tourism create

comfortable conditions by providing accommodation in a hotel according to halal standards and providing halal food. What is Uzbekistan's potential in such tourism? In this regard, it is enough to cite a few numbers - 3.5 thousand tourist objects in the country are directly related to the religion of Islam. Most of them are located mainly in Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent. According to Crescent Rating, a group specializing in Muslim tourism, the segment of Muslim tourists is currently on the rise. By 2026, the number of tourists who believe in Islam will reach 230 million. Recently, Uzbekistan received two awards at the Halal in Travel Summit dedicated to the development of the Muslim tourism market held in Singapore. Jahangir Saidov, head of the tourism development department of the Ministry of Tourism, told Sputnik that due to many changes in the field, Uzbekistan was considered worthy of the awards. "This year, in order to develop the industry, we introduced a visa-free regime for citizens of 90 countries. "Citizens of 57 other countries had the opportunity to receive visas electronically," he said. "In the following years, in cooperation with the Islamic Academy, courses were organized to improve the qualifications of guides and translators working in the field of pilgrimage tourism," says Jahangir Saidov. Currently, the country offers more than ten pilgrimage programs that introduce tourists to the Islamic cultural heritage. Even the simplest analysis shows that these programs can provide the country with millions of tourists [3].

Who needs to develop pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan? Of course, first of all for neighboring countries. First, citizens of post-Soviet countries do not require a visa to visit Uzbekistan. Secondly, it is easy for them to reach the republic. That is why the indicators of the State Statistics Committee on the flow of tourists to Uzbekistan are as follows: in May, more Kazakhs visited the country (about 170 thousand Kazakhs out of 503 thousand tourists per month). Citizens of Kyrgyzstan (141,000 people) and Tajikistan (116,000 tourists) came in second place. Russians are also active among those visiting Uzbekistan, 47,500 Russians decided to spend the month of May in Uzbekistan. It is important that all the countries listed above have a large number of Muslims, that is, there is a potential audience for pilgrimage tourism. According to Sputnik Azerbaijan, by 2022, the number of people who believe in Islam in Kazakhstan will reach 13 million, in Kyrgyzstan - about 4.7 million, and in Tajikistan - 7.6 million. There are about 20 million Muslims who believe in Islam in Russia. That is why Uzbekistan is actively developing cooperation with Russia in the field of pilgrimage tourism. For example, Uzbekistan has provided opportunities for pilgrimage tourism in the cities of Makhachkala and Kazan. "Makkah is far, but Uzbekistan is close. There are enough holy places with thousand years of history in the country. And this will certainly arouse great interest in the peoples who are fraternal to the Uzbeks," said Sergey Ivanov, Chairman of the State Tourism Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan, during his official visit to Uzbekistan.

Nowadays, all directions of tourism, including sustainable tourism is rapidly developing in Uzbekistan. The main principle of sustainable tourism is to travel consciously for the benefit of nature and local communities. This concept is relevant for the whole world and is developing more and more in Uzbekistan. In particular, Uzbekistan is a member of the CATO (Central Asian Tourism Organization) project "Sustainable tourism model in Central Asia: capacity building, awareness raising, technology introduction". The project is aimed at increasing the tourism potential of the countries of the Central Asian region. It is being implemented as part of the

SWITCH-ASIA program under the initiative of the European Union. The strategic goal of the project is to increase environmental awareness and introduce practices and technologies relevant to the tourism business of Central Asian countries. The organization implementing the initiative is the Association of Private Tourist Organizations of Uzbekistan (APTO). The main goal of CATO is to promote a new and optimally structured model of sustainable tourism in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. This initiative serves to preserve and strengthen local cultural heritage and traditional values, and to protect the environment. Within the framework of the project, trainings, seminars, and roundtable discussions were organized to inform tourism business representatives in Khorezm, Bukhara, Samarkand regions and Tashkent city. More than 730 representatives of tourism enterprises participated in the seminars:

- "Training of hotel business representatives on sustainable tourism marketing";
- "Green technologies";
- "Determining the problems of sustainable planning and environmental protection in the field of tourism";
- "New horizons: expanding cooperation in the field of green technologies. Ecological certification.

Furthermore, on March 27, 2023, an international conference on the topic "Development of a sustainable tourism model - the way to increase tourism potential" was held in Tashkent. The conference was attended by more than 160 experts, in particular, international experts, CATO project partners - Heraklion Development Agency (Crete, Greece), European Profiles S.A. (Greece), APINTECH (Cyprus), Latvian Rural Tourism Association, final beneficiaries participated. In addition, the European Union grant-Uzbekistan Association of Private Tourist Organizations, the Eurasian Tourist Association (Kazakhstan), the Association of Tourist Organizations of Tajikistan, as well as representatives of the tourism industry, local and foreign media also participated.

On March 29, 2023 in the city of Samarkand, a meeting with representatives of the Project partner organizations was organized as part of the activities dedicated to the International Conference at the "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage. The meeting was attended by the chairperson of the Association of Private Tourist Organizations of Uzbekistan, Gulchehra Israilova, the general secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of Greece, Papayanidis Dimitris, as well as representatives of partner organizations of CATO project countries such as Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The parties discussed the development of a sustainable tourism model, the introduction of "green" technologies in the field of tourism [5]. The basis and directions of the development of tourism in Uzbekistan today were detailed in the speech of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the 25th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (October 16, 2023 - Samarkand).

In the international framework, the following can be indicated as the foundations of tourism development in Uzbekistan:

- The ongoing "open door" policy. The system of visa-free entry to Uzbekistan is used for citizens of about a hundred countries. Introduction of a simplified electronic visa procedure for citizens of another 55 countries;
- Providing tax and customs benefits, strengthening credit and financial support;

- Subsidies are allocated to build new hotels and attract international brands, increase the flow of tourists;

- The establishment of the tourism police to ensure the safety of tourists;

- "Amirsoy" winter resort, "Valley of Legends", "Zomin" and "Chorvok" zones have become international tourism destinations attracting the attention of many foreign tourists;

- Establishment of tourism villages with traditional lifestyle and unique crafts;

- In order to create comfortable conditions for tourists, the number of hotel beds has been increased to 140 thousand, 70 new tourist routes have been opened, 6 private airlines have started working;

- Great attention is paid to the training of professional personnel in the field of tourism, qualified specialists are being trained on the basis of international standards in 35 higher education institutions in Uzbekistan;

-The fact that students from 19 countries study at the "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Samarkand.

According to estimates, a total of 7 million tourists visited our country in 2023. It is planned to increase this figure to 15 million by 2030, and the flow of domestic tourism to 25 million.

As a main direction in this regard:

- Creation of modern tourism and transport infrastructure is given priority. 6 more high-speed trains will be brought for "Tashkent-Samarkand" and "Navoi-Bukhara" routes, 600 kilometers of additional railways will be built in our country. "Tashkent-Khiva" high-speed train service will be launched from 2025, and from 2026, this route will be extended to the city of Nukus. Also, toll highways will be built on the basis of private partnership in the directions "Tashkent-Samarkand" and "Tashkent-Andijan";

- By 2030, we will bring 56 more modern airliners and increase the number of aircraft in our fleet to 100. In addition, the number of flights will be increased 4 times. The "open sky" mode will be introduced at all airports, 6 major airports in the regions will be renovated on the basis of private partnership;

-Additionally, 30 large tourism clusters will be established in big cities and tourist destinations [5].

**In conclusion**, it should be said that the most urgent problem of global tourism is to ensure a guaranteed safety system for tourists, to adopt an international program of actions for the development of "green" tourism in the era of increasingly intense climate changes, to create favorable conditions for tourists with disabilities. further strengthening and development of **inclusive tourism** infrastructure (declaring 2025 as the "World Inclusive Tourism Year" and adopting a special declaration), creating a Council of Historic Cities for Tourism under the World Tourism Organization, training experts in the field of tourism in Samarkand and improving their qualifications for the opening of the International Tourism Academy of the World Tourism Organization, which has no parallel in the world, for supporting the initiative to hold the World Youth Tourism Summit in Tashkent, for its contribution to the development of the "Silk Road" brand (MOST- Central Asian Tourism Organization) to establish a special international award, etc.

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