

Prospects For Tourist Development Uzbekistan's Potential

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Abstract:

The article examines the state and prospects for the development of tourism in Uzbekistan, and also identifies the main reasons that impede the acceleration of the development of the tourism sector and the effective use of tourism potential in the republic, and presents tasks for achieving the goals of state policy in the field of tourism.

Key words: tourism, global tourism industry, state tourism policy, international tourist arrivals and market.

Introduction

Currently, the development of tourism is influenced differently by a number of factors that take place within the framework of the global process of globalization. There is a deep geopolitical transformation of the world, requiring new approaches to ensuring stable and safe development not only in individual regions, but also in the global community as a whole. The process of globalization contributes not only to the expansion of integration opportunities, but also to the deepening differentiation of countries by income level, the emergence of threats that negatively affect the systems of international communications, including the development of international tourism.

The problem of tourist exchange is particularly relevant due to the fact that tourism is a type of activity that directly affects not only the internal components of the development of individual countries, their socio-economic, cultural, educational spheres of activity, but also the state of international economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian relations. Due to the fact that tourism covers a wide range of services and goes beyond the traditional concept of it as a phenomenon

associated exclusively with recreation, the effect of it should be considered from the point of view of its influence on various spheres of life of states, their regions, and individual categories population.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism ranks fourth in global exports of goods and services, and third in terms of profitability. Its share in world GDP is 10%¹.

“Taking into account the dynamic growth of tourism, its tangible multiplier impact on other sectors of the economy, the growth in the well-being of the population and the need to take measures to protect the environment, the tourism industry should become one of the powerful tools for increasing the sustainable development of the country,” notes the Concept for the Development of the Tourism Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the medium term².

Although Uzbekistan has made substantial efforts and launched numerous reforms to expand and improve its tourism industry as part of its program of economic growth, further actions are needed. The Uzbek government has addressed shortcomings inconveniences still connected with border procedures, transportation, and guest accommodations. Still, some support facilities and services require action by the government or private sector, especially given the role they play in attracting tourists or encouraging them to become repeat visitors.

The Uzbekistan International Visitor Economy Survey 2014 by the World Tourism Organization, showed respondents frequently noted inconveniences. These included problems with the payments system (especially lack of access to cash via ATM), Internet problems (little access to Wi-Fi and slow speed), limited English translation of signage and tourist information at tourist attractions, and electricity outages.xxvi Furthermore, as noted in an interview with a local tour guide conducted by Silk Road New Observation News Agency, concerns about the wholesomeness of food products, the availability and quality of medical services, and the lack of clean, modern public restrooms are frequently cited. Because of the often poor medical services in outlying areas, tourists who fall ill in these locales need to be moved swiftly to Tashkent’s international hospital. At the same time, the practice whereby a tour group will wait for the patient to recover and then depart the country all together can produce large costs and additional concerns for fellow tourists and their travel agency as they wait for the patient’s treatment to end.

Thus, from January 1, 2017, only tourism enterprises that provide the organization of tourism activities, tour operators, travel agencies, excursion organizations, and travel companies are subject to licensing for the right to carry out tourism activities.

In order to simplify visa procedures and create favorable conditions for foreign citizens to visit the Republic of Uzbekistan, from January 1, 2021, the visa regime for citizens of a number of countries is being significantly simplified.

Program of specific measures for the implementation of the Concept for the development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021. provides for the implementation of measures in the following areas: improving legal regulation in the field of tourism; diversification of the tourism product and creation of new tourist routes, motivation and incentives to attract tourists; development of logistics, transport and roadside infrastructure; development and support of the activities of accommodation facilities and other tourist infrastructure facilities; promotion of the national tourism product in the domestic and foreign markets; measures to develop domestic tourism; training, retraining and advanced training of personnel in the field of tourism.

¹ Gazeta.uz (2017)

² <http://uzbektourism.uz/eng/>

Building a bigger, more developed, more internationally competitive tourism market can help Uzbekistan’s economy grow, just as tourism has been an engine of growth in western European and other countries. It can also have domestic social, cultural, and education benefits in addition to boosting a country’s international reputation and identity. Uzbekistan has already made its national strategy, “Concept of the Development of the Tourism Industry — 2025,” a guide and framework. The government has approved its Action Plan for 2019 for implementing the Concept. The Action Plan contains 36 points, including improving the regulatory framework, further developing the tourism infrastructure, developing transportation networks, establishing a regular intercity bus service, and organizing protected zones. The infrastructure construction will lay a solid foundation for the tourism industry and thus provide better service for tourists from all over the world.

Banks will be asked to provide long-term loans (15–20 years) to business entities for the construction and modernization of hotels with flexible repayment terms. It is planned to significantly increase the number of ATMs and terminals working with international payment systems.

In general, the expected end results of the implementation of the Concept are the creation of an effective competitive tourism complex of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which will become a pivotal point for the development of regions and interregional relations, activating the development of small and medium-sized businesses around it (increased investment in fixed capital of the tourism industry, the increase will occur due to the introduction of new and reconstruction of existing accommodation facilities, creation of new travel companies).

The main results of tourism development in the country, expressed in target indicators for the period until 2021, are given in table. 1.

Table 2.

Expected results of tourism development in the Republic of Uzbekistan, expressed in target indicators³

Indicators	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Investments in fixed capital of the tourism industry, billion sums	48,7	51,6	56,8	65,3	75,8	82,4
Growth in the number of people entering the Republic of Uzbekistan. foreign visitors, thousand people	2048,3	2130,3	2236,8	2371,0	2525,1	2826,7
Number of hotels and other accommodation facilities, units.	680	744	819	917	1036	120,8
Number of tourism entities, tour operators	441	467	498	530	565	598
Export of tourism services, million US dollars	1510,2	1721,7	1979,9	2316,5	2721,9	3014,3

Tourism, in our opinion, is a good opportunity for social support for all segments of the population, especially if it actively develops in the regions and villages located in the most picturesque places of the republic. This will be facilitated by the above-mentioned special programs, important measures taken recently to improve the regulatory framework for the functioning of the tourism

³ <http://uzbektourism.uz/eng/>

industry, reform the tourism management system, improve the efficiency of tourism organizations, specific measures for the development of domestic and external tourism in regions and villages are included for each region, these projects take into account the internal capabilities and potential of each region; they will help ensure stable economic growth of the industry, expand the country's diversified ties with other states, and increase the international authority of Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to note that the following measures will help strengthen the modern highly efficient and competitive tourism complex, expand opportunities to meet the needs of tourists due to the high quality and diversity of the line of tourism products in the regions of Uzbekistan and intensify its promotion to foreign consumer markets:

- developing a tourism model based on the potential of the regions, combining the traditions of Uzbek hospitality and Western standards of service;
- comprehensive development of tourism based on supporting entrepreneurship and choosing optimal methods of state regulation of the industry in the regions;
- formation of the image of Uzbekistan as an attractive tourist country;
- ensuring the creation of new jobs in the regions, a sustainable influx of foreign currency into the country's economy, the development of related sectors of the economy, increasing the share of tourism in the country's GDP;
- increasing investment in human capital;
- conservation of natural and cultural resources of the regions for their use both now and in the future;
- solving the problems of targeted social tourism, its accessibility for low-income groups of the population;
- stimulation of inbound and domestic tourism;
- creation of an effective information network as a determining factor in the development of a common political line and strategy for the development of tourism in the regions;
- ensuring complementarity between the multiple elements of the tourism sector.

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