

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TOURISM SECTOR IN DEVELOPING THE
ECONOMY OF UZBEKISTAN

Abdurashidov Rakhimjon

Teacher of Tourism Department Islomov Pirnazar and student of group Tourism and Hospitality

“Silk road” International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Annotation: Tourism is a crucial sector in the development of Uzbekistan’s economy, contributing significantly to GDP growth, employment generation, and local business expansion. This presentation examines how Uzbekistan’s rich cultural heritage, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites, plays a key role in attracting millions of tourists annually. The resulting increase in tourist arrivals boosts revenue in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and trade, while also driving infrastructure improvements. By highlighting the economic and social impact of tourism, this study emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices to ensure long-term growth, cultural preservation, and improved living standards for the Uzbek population.

Key words : Tourism, Uzbekistan ,UNESCO World heritage list, economic growth,statistics

This presentation focuses on the importance of the tourism sector in developing Uzbekistan’s economy and improving the living standards of its population. It explores how the country’s rich cultural heritage, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and growing tourist arrivals contribute to economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure development. The analysis highlights the positive impact of tourism on local businesses and emphasizes the need for sustainable tourism practices to ensure long-term benefits and cultural preservation. Through this study, the role of tourism as a key pillar of Uzbekistan’s economic and social progress is clearly demonstrated.

Introduction

Tourism refers to the activity of visitors who take a trip to a main destination outside of their usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose related to business, leisure, or other personal purposes, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited (IRTS, 2008).

Tourism is an industry that can actively influence the economy of a country or region. With the help of tourism, new jobs are being created, new regions are being developed and the national economy is being accelerated. Tourism can act as a mechanism for redistributing national income in favor of the state, which specializes in it. Tourism is also considered a multiplier of the growth of national income, ensuring the development of local infrastructure and employment, as well as increasing the standard of living of the local population. Tourism can be characterized by high efficiency and quick return on investment.(1)

Since the first days of our independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been rapidly continuing work on state support for the tourism industry, the creation of benefits for enterprises engaged in this industry, as well as the formation of infrastructure for the tourism industry.(2)

In an accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 5, 2019 "On additional measures to accelerate the development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Trade Concept for the development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019-2025 PF-5611". "In order to radically improve the transport communication system in the country to increase the number of passengers and investments, special attention was paid to further strengthening external relations" [1]. We all know that the development of tourism in our country has a great economic effect, since it allows you to import foreign currency without exporting resources (cotton, gas, oil). The analysis shows that in many developed countries, tourism income brings in much more foreign exchange earnings than in other sectors. For example, if Turkey exports \$4-5 billion worth of goods a year, it earns more than \$10 billion in tourism. We see the same high rates in Austria, England, Italy, France, Spain.(3)

Preservation cultural heritage

It should be noted that on October 4, 1993, Uzbekistan became the first Central Asian country to join the World Tourism Organization. This, in turn, gave a great positive impetus to the development of international tourism in Uzbekistan.(2)

Uzbekistan is home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, recognized for their outstanding cultural and natural significance. As of 2024, the country boasts seven such sites: five cultural and two natural.

Cultural Sites:

1. Itchan Kala (Khiva): Inscribed in 1990, Itchan Kala is the inner town of the ancient Khiva oasis, encircled by formidable brick walls. It served as a vital stop for caravans traversing the desert to Iran.
2. Historic Centre of Bukhara: Added in 1993, Bukhara is over 2,000 years old and stands as a prime example of a medieval Islamic city on the Silk Road. Its well-preserved architecture reflects the city's historical significance.
3. Historic Centre of Shakhrisayabz: Listed in 2000, Shakhrisayabz is renowned as the birthplace of Amir Timur (Tamerlane). The city houses remarkable monuments from the Timurid dynasty, including the Ak-Saray Palace.
4. Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures: Inscribed in 2001, Samarkand epitomizes the cultural exchanges of the Silk Road. Notable sites include the Registan Square, Shah-i-Zinda complex, and the Bibi-Khanym Mosque.
5. Western Tien-Shan: Recognized in 2016, this transnational site spans Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, the Chatkal Nature Reserve within the Tashkent region is part of this listing, known for its rich biodiversity.

Natural Sites:

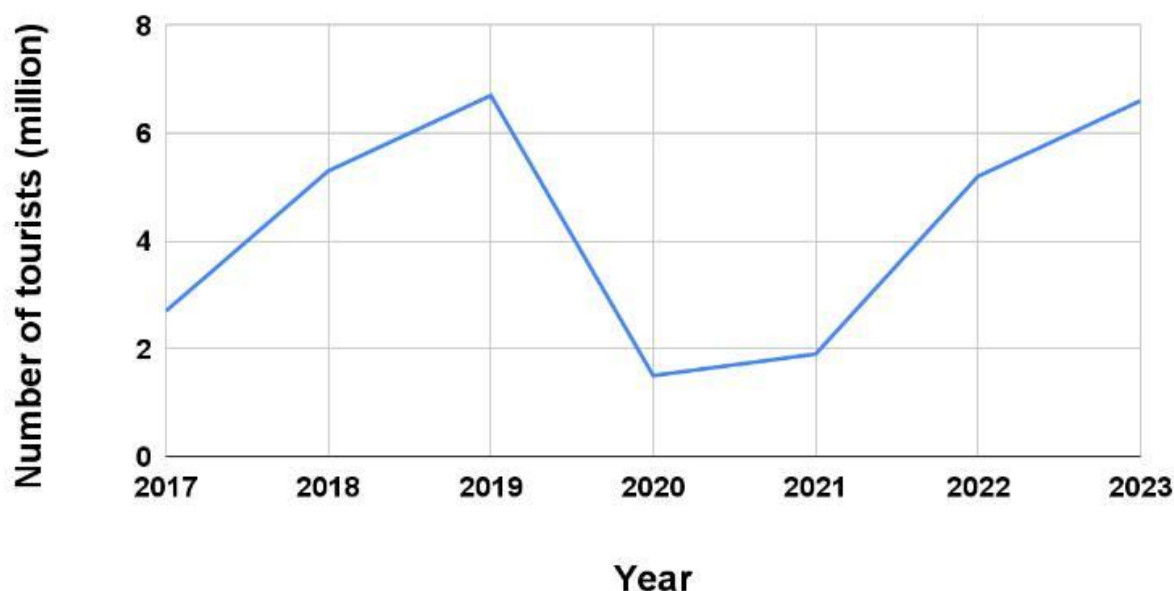
6. Tugay Forests of the Tigrovaya Balka Reserve: Inscribed in 2021, this site encompasses unique tugay ecosystems along the Amu Darya River, providing habitat for numerous endangered species.

7. Zaamin National Park: Added in 2023, Zaamin National Park is Uzbekistan's oldest nature reserve, featuring diverse flora and fauna within the Turkestan mountain range.

In addition to these inscribed sites, Uzbekistan maintains a tentative list of 35 properties under consideration for future UNESCO recognition, reflecting the nation's rich cultural and natural heritage.

Statistics

Number of tourists to Uzbekistan



Source: TourCentralAsia.com

In 2023, Uzbekistan's tourism sector experienced significant growth, welcoming approximately 6.6 million foreign visitors—a 26.9% increase compared to the previous year. This figure nearly matched the pre-pandemic peak of 6.7 million tourists in 2019.

Visitor Origins:

- Neighboring Countries: A substantial portion of tourists originated from neighboring nations:
- Tajikistan: 1.88 million visitors
- Kyrgyzstan: 1.87 million visitors
- Kazakhstan: 1.27 million visitors

Purpose of Visits:

- 5.6 million visitors traveled to Uzbekistan to visit relatives.
- Over 773,000 tourists visited for vacation purposes.
- Approximately 143,500 individuals arrived for work-related reasons.
- Around 61,300 people sought medical treatment in Uzbekistan.



Tourism Revenue:

While specific revenue figures for 2023 are not provided in the available sources, the substantial increase in tourist arrivals suggests a positive impact on Uzbekistan's economy. The influx of visitors likely contributed to growth in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and local businesses.

Hotel and Accommodation Statistics:

Detailed statistics on hotel occupancy rates and the number of accommodation facilities in 2023 are not available in the provided sources. However, the surge in tourist numbers indicates a heightened demand for lodging, prompting potential investments in the hospitality sector.

Uzbekistan's tourism industry demonstrated remarkable resilience and growth in 2023, nearing pre-pandemic levels of international arrivals. The majority of visitors came from neighboring

countries, primarily to visit relatives, while others traveled for leisure, work, or medical purposes. This upward trend underscores Uzbekistan's growing appeal as a travel destination and highlights the sector's contribution to the national economy.

Conclusion

The tourism sector is a powerful engine for Uzbekistan's economic growth and social development. By attracting millions of visitors annually, it creates jobs, stimulates local businesses, and enhances infrastructure. The country's rich cultural heritage, including its UNESCO World Heritage Sites, not only boosts tourism revenue but also strengthens national identity. To ensure long-term benefits, Uzbekistan must continue to promote sustainable tourism that balances economic growth with the preservation of its historical and cultural landmarks. A thriving tourism industry will further improve the quality of life for citizens and contribute to the country's overall prosperity.

Sustainable tourism should ensure the safety of both visitors and their host cities, prevent pollution and congestion. Fair distribution of tourist flows is also important for sustainability. This is equally important for both developed and developing countries. In conclusion, we will present the following suggestions and recommendations developed as a result of studying foreign experience, theoretical knowledge gained and analysis of a number of regulatory documents:

1. Development and approval of a separate document on the order of movement of tourists traveling on the territory of the country, conditions and benefits created for them in order to develop local tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
2. . Development and implementation of a special project aimed at improving the skills of guides working in the field of tourism, creating a special software system for assessing their skills and knowledge, with minimal human factor participation in the exam and training guides;
3. Development of a regulatory framework for the activities of individuals engaged in the activities of independent guides, and the creation of special training centers for the training of guides-interpreters, as well as the broad involvement of non-governmental organizations in this process;
4. The accuracy and reliability of information provided by guides about historical monuments, historical figures, the territorial and administrative structure of the state, as well as the customs and traditions of tourists in the country, should be clearly defined in the tourist legislation and type. strengthening of punishment in the Code of Responsibility;
5. In order to further encourage the introduction of foreign currency by tourist organizations in Uzbekistan, provide them with tax benefits, i.e. exempt from tax a certain part of their income in foreign currency. This will encourage entrepreneurs to invest more in the industry.
6. . Revision and further simplification of the procedure for licensing tourism activities in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
7. Creation of regulatory legal acts regulating and developing inter-sectoral relations for the further development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Uzbekistan. At the same time, to create a legal basis for expanding the participation of the non-governmental sector in the development of the sector;



8. Creation of a Tourism Development Bank with the aim of further increasing the volume of investments in the tourism sector and expanding the possibilities of lending to entrepreneurs engaged in this activity;
9. Development of a special project on the introduction of new information and communication technologies in the field of tourism in Uzbekistan and organization of international conferences on this topic;
10. Effective use of smart tourism tools.(3)

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