

**PROSPECTS OF THE TOURISM SECTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
KASHKADARYO REGION**

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Abstract: This article presents the tourism opportunities and potential of the Kashkadarya region, existing tourist destinations in the oasis, tourist villages, the development of gastronomic tourism and achievements in it, statistical data on the number of foreign tourists visiting our country and region over the past years, and priority tasks and proposals being implemented in the tourism sector in the region.

Keywords: "Abul-Muin an-Nasafiy", "Khoja Imkonagiy", "Darvesh Muhammad Vakhshivoriy", "Sultan Mirhaydar Ota" Ichan-Kala complex, exotic, UNESCO, "World Heritage Site" "Guzar tandoori meat", "Maydanak" observatory "Langar Ota", tourist villages, gastronomic tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural heritage, historical monuments and beautiful nature, is among the countries that pay great attention to the development of tourism. The "Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy sets an important task of increasing the number of tourists by creating broad conditions for the development of foreign and domestic tourism in Uzbekistan.

In terms of foreign tourist arrivals, Uzbekistan has reached 98% of the pre-pandemic level. In particular, in 2019, 6 million. 748 thousand foreign tourists visited Uzbekistan, and by 2023 it reached 6 million. 626 thousand. This indicates that the tourism sector in our country is rapidly recovering.

In order to further attract foreign tourists to Uzbekistan, practical work is being carried out, such as measures to simplify the visa regime, develop new routes, invest in projects related to the sector, and hold major events.

From the first years of independence to the present day, our state has developed new principles in the field of tourism, paying special attention to the modernization of this sector, improving the transport and hotel infrastructure in our regions, and improving the regulatory and legal framework in tourism. In particular, turning our southern region, Kashkadarya, into one of the world's tourist centers, introducing the name of the ancient cities and villages of the region to the whole world, ensuring employment, and creating new jobs have become and continue to be a priority task.

Kashkadarya is geographically located at the same latitude as Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and the central parts of the USA, and the northeastern and southeastern parts of the region are surrounded by mountains. Due to the continental (in some places even subtropical) climate at the foot of the Pamir-Alay mountains, this region can charm travelers with its pristine natural landscapes, beautiful flora and fauna. There are several famous reserves in the region, such as Kitab, Hissar and Kyzyl-Soy. It is in these foothills that valuable fruits of nature are grown - pomegranates, quince, peaches, pears, cherries, lemons, as well as many types of vegetables, and dried fruits - almonds, pistachios and walnuts. Green pastures in vast meadows and fields serve as pasture for livestock. All these riches are located under the hot sun, in the bosom of vast fields. Along with clean air and beautiful nature, the region is also rich in ancient cities and architectural ruins.

Our region is home to more than 17% of the total number of historical monuments in our republic, of which 1,468 cultural heritage sites are registered, of which 1,189 are archaeological, 208 are architectural, 43 are monumental monuments, and 34 are places of interest. In accordance with paragraph 9 of the Decree No. Pf-6165 dated February 9, 2021 “On measures to further develop domestic and pilgrimage tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan”, a lot of practical work has been carried out in the Kashkadarya region to develop tourism and improve infrastructure. In particular, signposts and information signs were installed at the shrines of “Abul-Muin an-Nasafi”, “Khoja Imkonagi”, “Darvesh Muhammad Vakhshivori”, “Sultan Mirhaydar Ota” and adjacent areas, book and handicraft trade was established, and catering establishments and family guest houses that meet the requirements of halal tourism were established. Historical monuments are present in every district of our region, most of them are located mainly in the ancient cities of Shakhrisabz, Karshi and Kitab district.

Our oasis has a long past, a number of historical monuments and a variety of scientific innovations. There are many resorts and healing springs in our region, which are mainly located in the foothills and mountainous areas. These include the town of Miraqi, the Kitab National Nature Reserve, the Hissar State Reserve, the villages of Kul, Varganza, Khazora, and Gilan. These areas provide favorable conditions for foreigners and local tourists to restore their health and have a fun vacation. Miraqi is a resort town in the Shahrisabz district, located at an altitude of 980 meters above sea level, and received the status of a town in 1986. There are sanatoriums, local production, trade complexes, industrial enterprises, and camps on the territory of the town.

Currently, there are about 20 healing springs in our region, of which the following springs are important in the national economy: Zevardi, Maymanak, Karlik, Orta Bulak, Mubarak, Khojakhairon. The springs contain chemical elements important for human health, such as sodium bicarbonate, bromine, iodine, bromine oxide, sodium sulfate, hydrogen sulfide. There are dozens of tourist villages in the region, among which the villages of Varganza, Bashir, Kul and Gilan are especially recognized. The village of Varganza, located 120 kilometers from the city of Karshi, is the first agrotourism village in Uzbekistan. The villagers have been engaged in pomegranate cultivation since ancient times, and the main source of livelihood is mainly pomegranate cultivation. Men and women, young and old, are busy with pomegranate care all four seasons. On farms and private plots, pomegranate varieties such as Karashirin, Quail, Achirdona, Ulfi, Kai, Tuyatish are grown. Varganza farmers harvest 5, 6 thousand tons of the crop from more than a thousand hectares of land every year and export it to neighboring countries.

The village of “Hazrati Bashir” in the Kitab district is located on the banks of the Kashkadarya River, where the “Hazrati Bashir” shrine is also located. The name of the shrine is associated with the name of the saint Hazrati Sultan Said Ahmad Bashir (1368-1464), who lived in this place. Pilgrimage tourism, ecotourism and agrotourism are developed in the village. Many family guest houses operate. According to statistical sources, more than 400,000 local and foreign tourists visited the “Hazrati Bashir” shrine in 2022, and in 2023 their number reached 700 thousand.

In the high-mountainous regions of the Shahrsabz district, there is a village called Kul. The village is located 84 km from the district center, and the road leading to the village passes through rocks and deep gorges. The village has a population of about 1,500, most of whom are engaged in farming, animal husbandry, and tourism. The village receives a lot of precipitation, and winters are very cold and summers are relatively cool. The sun shines only 4 months a year, and the rest of the time it rains and snows. There are ethnographic and ecotourism facilities in the village.

The village of Gilan is located in the foothills of the Hissar Mountains. The local population is engaged in animal husbandry and agriculture. There are several ecotourism facilities, recreational healing waters in the village, and tourist services are provided, and there are many family hotels. Due to the relatively long winter in the village, tourism is seasonal.

The region has unlimited opportunities and potential for introducing and developing gastronomic tourism. Guzar tandoori and Chiroqchi yakhna meat dishes are well known not only in Kashkadarya, but also throughout Uzbekistan. "Gijduvan shashlik", "Zomin tandoori meat", "Margilan adrasi", "Kokand knives" and "Guzar tandoori meat" were state-registered and patented by the Ministry of Justice as geographical indications. An increase in the number of geographical indications will contribute to the increase in tourist flows in the regions, the development of "gastronomic tourism" and the increase in the tourist attractiveness of our regions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statistical, grouping and comparative research methods were used in the analysis process.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS ON THE TOPIC

Materials on the topic were used from the Address of our President Sh.M.Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and his speech at the Youth Forum of Uzbekistan, Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 198 "On measures for the effective use of the tourism potential of the Kashkadarya region" and Resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 376 "On measures for the provision of modern services and the creation of tourism facilities in the mountainous recreational areas of the Kashkadarya region", as well as from Wikipedia, yuz.uz, uzbekistan travel.uz, stat.uz, qashstat.uz, kun.uz president.uz.uz.sites and enriched with the necessary information.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

According to the Statistics Agency, the number of local and foreign tourists visiting the southern regions of our republic (2022) No. Regions Number of local tourists (millions) Number of foreign tourists (thousands) Ratio to total foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan (in%)
1 Kashkadarya 1,000,000 50,000 0.96
2 Surkhandarya 1,100,000 150,000 2.8
3 Bukhara 2,700,000 550,000 10.5
In January-December 2022, 5.2 million foreign citizens visited our country for tourist purposes. The analysis shows that in 2022, 50,000 foreign and 1 million local tourists visited the region. In the neighboring Surkhandarya, where the climatic conditions and daily lifestyle are almost the same, 150 thousand foreign and 1 million 100 thousand local tourists visited this year. Although our region has the potential to attract tourists in all four seasons of the year, this is currently limited to the city of Shahrisabz and the mountainous districts (Shakhrisabz, Kitab, Yakkabog). For this, it is necessary to quickly implement the "From Desert to Glacier" tourism highway, which will cover all districts and cities of our oasis.

The number of foreign tourists visiting some regions of our republic. (2023) No. Regions Number of foreign tourists (millions) Ratio to the total number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan (in%)
1 Kashkadarya 180,000 2.7
2 Samarkand 2,150,000 32.5
3 Bukhara 1,350,000 20.4
According to statistics, 6.6 million foreign tourists visited our country in 2023, of which 180,000 visited Kashkadarya, and 3.5 million foreigners visited the neighboring Samarkand and Bukhara regions. If we compare this indicator with the previous year 2022, in the case of our region, an increase of only 1.74% was achieved

On October 24, 2023, during the visit of our head of state Sh.M. Mirziyoyev to our region, he pointed out the growth points of our oasis in tourism. In particular, it was noted that a master plan for 3 tourism neighborhoods was prepared in the Shahrisabz district with German partners, and an additional investment of \$ 450 million and the creation of infrastructure that will attract 1 million tourists per year will be provided. As a result, an additional 500 billion soums of

revenue and 5 thousand new permanent jobs will be created in Shahrisabz itself. Civil aviation will be launched at the Shahrisabz airport, which has not been used for many years.

Starting from January 1, 2024, local flights will be launched from Shakhrisabz to Samarkand, Bukhara, Khorezm and Fergana Valley regions. Flights on the Tashkent-Karshi route will be increased from 2 to 7 times a week. A 30-kilometer road connecting Samarkand and Shakhrisabz and a 100-kilometer section of the Guzar-Bukhara road will be repaired. A tourist village will be implemented in the villages of "Miraki", "Suvtushar", "Kul", "Gelon" in the Shakhrisabz district, "Bashir", "Qaynar" and "Varganza" in the Kitab district, "Tatar" in the Yakkabog district and "Jeynov" in the Mirishkor district, and tourist projects that meet modern requirements in this area. For these purposes, 60 billion soums will be allocated from the budget for the construction of road infrastructure and the laying of a high-speed Internet network.

The village of Khoja Ilgor in Yakkabag district, where the great Amir Temur was born, will be improved to attract tourists. The "Halol Tourism Center" will be established to serve tourists visiting historical monuments and holy places and pilgrimage sites in our region, and propaganda forums, religious competitions and pilgrimage festivals will be organized in the areas of pilgrimage sites. 214 home hotels and 9 hostels will be established. Agrotourism activities will be established in the villages of Varganza and Hazrati Bashir. The Pomegranate Festival will be held as part of this direction. Extreme tourism activities will be organized in the villages of Tatar, Zarmast and Vari, and 5 guest houses, 5 campsites and 10 huts will be built in these villages. In the Kamashi district, the "Maydanak" observatory, one of the few and unique in the world, and the 14th-century "Langar Ota" mosque will be renovated, and 38 kilometers of roads leading to these facilities will be renovated, and home hotels and restaurants will be established, in order to attract tourists from all over the world.

New tourism development projects will be implemented in the area of the latitude station, located 15 kilometers from this location. For this, 40 billion soums will be allocated from the republican budget for the complete repair of roads leading to this area. An ethno-village - a military training camp for the warriors of Amir Temur will be established. Also, ecological tourism will be established in the villages of Sarchashma and Suvtushar, and 755 astronomical tourism routes will be established in the area of the Kitab latitude station. As a result, the number of local tourists will reach 1 million 250 thousand, the number of foreign tourists will reach 200 thousand, the number of hotels will reach 50, and the number of tour operators and travel agents will reach 20.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, I can say that these and a number of other promising projects implemented in the tourism sector in our region will further promote Kashkadarya as a region capable of receiving tourists in all four seasons, expand the flow of tourists visiting the oasis, as well as increase the number of citizens employed in the sector and improve their well-being. As a child of this oasis, I recommend the following; First, that the planned projects are reflected in practice, not on paper, and that representatives of the relevant departments (mainly local government bodies) strictly monitor this; Second, that we do not damage the original wonders of nature while developing tourism as a whole; Third, that every hotel and family guest house, as well as catering establishments in our region be built and decorated in accordance with the rules of Uzbek national architecture.

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