



DEVELOPMENT STATUS AND TRENDS OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: Tourism infrastructure sectors should develop in harmony with each other and take their own place in the complex development and formation of the economy of our republic. In the formation of the republic's economy, tourism, like other sectors, should be linked to a single model. In the article, the author explains the state and trends of development of tourism infrastructure sectors in Uzbekistan.

Key words: tourism, infrastructure, economy, digital, innovation, technology, national, historical, highway, family guest house, investment, tour operator, recreation, resource.

Annotatsiya: Turizm infratuzilmasi tarmoqlari bir-biri bilan muvofiq holda rivojlanishib, respublikamiz iqtisodiyotining kompleks rivojlanishi va shakllanishida o'ziga xos o'rin tutmog'i zarur. Respublika iqtisodiyotining shakllanishida boshqa tarmoqlar singari turizm ham yagona modelga bog'lanishi kerak. Maqolada muallif O'zbekistonda turizm infratuzilmasi tarmoqlarining rivojlanish holati va tendentsiyalarini tushuntirib bergan.

Kalit so'zlar: turizm, infratuzilma, iqtisodiyot, raqamli, innovatsiya, texnologiya, milliy, tarixiy, avtomagistral, oilaviy mehmon uyi, investitsiya, turoperator, rekreatsiya, resurs.

Аннотация: Отрасли туристической инфраструктуры должны развиваться гармонично друг с другом и занять особое место в комплексном развитии и формировании экономики нашей республики. При формировании экономики республики туризм, как и другие отрасли, должен быть увязан с единой моделью. В статье автор рассматривает состояние и тенденции развития отраслей туристической инфраструктуры в Узбекистане.

Ключевые слова: туризм, инфраструктура, экономика, цифровой, инновации, технологии, национальный, исторический, автомагистраль, семейный гостевой дом, инвестиции, тuroperator, отдых, ресурс.

Introduction. On January 5, 2019, our President adopted Decree No. PF-5611 "On additional measures for the accelerated development of tourism in the Republic of Uzbekistan".

This decree provides for the following areas:

- ⇒ development of tourism infrastructure and creation of an acceptable and convenient tourism environment;
- ⇒ diversification of tourism products and services aimed at various segments of the tourism market;
- ⇒ special attention is paid to improving the system of training, retraining and advanced training of personnel for the tourism industry, and tasks to be implemented are defined. At the same time, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further improve the activities of the State Committee for the Development of Tourism of the Republic of Uzbekistan" No. PQ-3510 dated February 6, 2018 defines the

powers of the Tourism Committee and the tasks to be implemented by it, as well as directions for the formation of tourist infrastructure.

Analysis and results. It is necessary that tourism infrastructure sectors develop in harmony with each other and take their own place in the complex development and formation of the economy of our republic. In the formation of the republic's economy, tourism, like other sectors, should be linked to a single model. In improving the tourism infrastructure in our republic, the following issues should be addressed first of all:

- ensuring a unified national economic policy in the field of tourism;
- improving organizational and legal decisions for the development of all types of tourism;
- achieving the effective use of recreational resources, preserving national and historical architectural monuments in their original form;
- attracting foreign investment in the construction of modern tourist complexes, adapting existing complexes to international requirements, and providing them with the necessary funds;
- organizing new forms of tourist services with large foreign companies;
- actively participating in the establishment and development of destinations that are in high demand in the world market;
- conducting marketing activities for tourism products and services abroad and achieving competitiveness with more than 200 countries;
- training highly qualified managers, marketers, businessmen and entrepreneurs, and introducing retraining of such personnel in higher educational institutions of our republic.

At the same time, it can be noted that the following factors that are of great importance in the development of tourism infrastructure are well developed in our country:

- ✓ the abundance of national, historical and ancient monuments;
- ✓ the hospitality of our people and the richness of national traditions;
- ✓ the diverse nature of the republic, the diversity of flora and fauna;
- ✓ a sufficiently developed infrastructure of highways and railways;
- ✓ the location of our republic on the strategic route at the crossroads of the European and Asian continents (in the center of the "Great Silk Road");
- the presence of a sufficiently developed network of international airlines;
- There are many holy sites in Uzbekistan that are of great importance to Muslims and followers of other religions.
- There are a number of factors that require a state approach to the development of tourism infrastructure in our republic, and without finding solutions to these factors, tourism infrastructure cannot be developed. These factors include:
 - the lack of joint activities of organizations that form the tourism infrastructure;
 - the high cost of air tickets for tourists traveling;
 - the relatively high cost of hotel services compared to international standards.

In order to eliminate the factors considered, the task before us remains to study what the main focus should be in developing tourism infrastructure and developing development directions.

From this perspective, if we analyze the development of tourism infrastructure sectors, we will consider the sectors that organize the provision of basic tourist services (entities

conducting tourist activities, hotels and accommodation facilities, transport, general catering), taking into account that this can take a very wide scope.

The goals and directions of specialization of the regions of our republic in the tourism and recreation sector are implemented in accordance with the unified state system of strategic management for the implementation of the goals of the strategy for innovative development of the economy of our country in the future. If we pay attention to the main indicators of the development of the tourism sector of our country, in the past period of 2024, more than 3.5 million foreign tourists visited our country from abroad, which is an increase of 13% compared to the same period of 2023. Within the framework of the "Travel around Uzbekistan!" program, 12 million 716 thousand residents traveled across the regions.

As part of social support, 8 thousand 763 people with disabilities and about 937 thousand young people were taken on trips. During the past period of 2024, tourism services worth \$1 billion 456 million were exported, an increase of 146% compared to the period of 2023. More than 26 thousand new jobs were created in tourism and related sectors. 68 new hotels (3,057 beds) and 113 hostels (3,791 beds) were launched in the regions, bringing the total number of accommodation facilities to 5,773, with a total of more than 151 thousand beds. 150 family guest houses (1,408 beds) were established, bringing their total number to 3,554 beds to 31,712.

As a result of the establishment of 427 new tourist organizations and travel agents providing services to tourists, their number has increased to 3,238. Today, 2,551 tour guides are operating throughout the Republic¹.

"In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 954 dated November 24, 2018 "On additional measures for the accelerated development of the hotel business in the Republic of Uzbekistan", in order to further increase the efficiency of using the tourism potential of the regions of the republic, ensure the accelerated development of modern tourism infrastructure in the regions, expand and improve the quality of hotel services, attract wide investment in the hotel sector, as well as eliminate existing shortcomings of accommodation facilities, a simplified procedure for organizing family guest houses was adopted in August 2019." Accordingly, certification was canceled and minimum requirements for creating guest houses were established. In addition, a preferential lending mechanism is in effect when 50.0% of the loan interest is covered based on the funds of the Tourism Development Fund.

Table 1

Dynamics of socio-economic indicators of the development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan²

No	Indicators	Years	Relativ
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		2020	2021	2022	2023	e change % 2023- 2020
1.	Total number of visitors, million people	4574 812	6238 852	12870 939	14731 388	3.3 times
2.	Inbound tourism, thousand people	1504 126	1881 345	5 232 781	6626 302	4.2 times
3.	Number of hotels and accommodation facilities, units	1 156	1 085	1 167	1 387	119,9
4.	Share of tourism in GDP, %	2,2	2,3	2,3	2,4	109,0
5.	Employment in tourism, thousand people	201,3	203,0	260,1	275,3	136,7
6.	Domestic tourism, thousand people	1069 165	2162 660	2474 981	3317 649	5.0 times

Tourism is a rapidly growing, highly profitable and stable sector that creates a multiplier effect in the economies of countries. This sector plays an important role in expanding economic, socio-political and cultural-educational ties. The number of main tourist resources in our republic will be 13,452 in 2023, compared to 12,634 in 2020. This indicator indicates a significant growth trend in our country by 2020 due to the increase in the number of museums, concert organizations and information and library resource centers (Table 2).

Table 2

Dynamics of the number of main tourist resources in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2020-2023 (in units)³

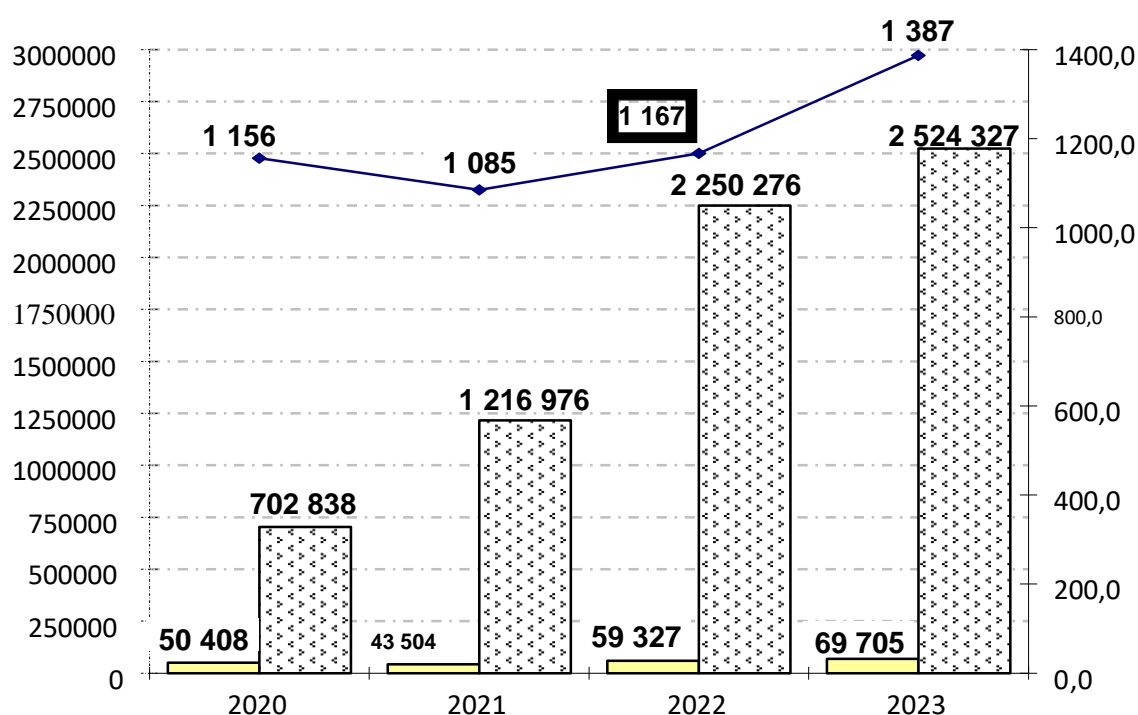
№	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change in 2022- 2018, (+;-)
1	Main tourist resources, unit	818	781	12904	13452	12634
	Including:					
1.1.	Museums	105	127	134	140	35
1.2.	Theaters	49	50	50	48	-1
1.3.	Concert organizations	72	69	70	81	9
1.4.	Circuses	1	1	1	1	0
1.5.	Cultural parks	188	129	126	129	-59
1.6.	Zoos	3	3	5	7	4
1.7.	Information libraries and resource centers	400	402	12 518 ¹⁾	13046 ¹⁾	12646

Including information libraries of ministries and departments (and organizations under their jurisdiction).

The main reason for this is that in accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 7, 2019 No. PQ-4354 "On further improving the provision

of information and library services to the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan", all information and resource centers operating under general education schools and secondary specialized, vocational educational institutions, as well as district (city) information and library centers, were liquidated, and district (city) information and library centers were re-established in order to further improve the provision of information and library services to the population and develop the activities of information and library institutions. In this regard, the increase in the number of main tourist resources requires modernization based on IT (information technologies).

Figure 1 shows hotels and accommodation facilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the results of the analysis of which showed that in 2023 the number of hotels and accommodation facilities amounted to 1387, which increased by 231 compared to 2020. Visitors staying in hotels and similar accommodation facilities will increase 3.5 times by 2023 compared to 2020.



- Number of places in hotels and similar accommodation facilities, units
- Visitors, persons accommodated in hotels and similar accommodation facilities.
- Mehmonxona va shunga o'xshash joylashtirish vositalari obyektlari soni, birlik.

Figure 1. Indicators of hotels and similar accommodation facilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan⁴

Currently, tourism is rapidly growing in the world economy and is taking its place as a service export sector. The Manila Declaration on International Tourism states that "Tourism as an activity plays an important role in the lives of peoples, having a direct impact on the social, cultural, educational and economic spheres of countries and their international relations."

This situation can be understood by the fact that tourism occupies a special place in the social life of national states and is deeply penetrating, and that it is gaining a high position as a

promising sector, based on the study of its various functions inherent in tourism and recreation. The economic function of the development of the tourism sector is formed through the demand and needs of tourists for tourist services⁵.

The number of hotels in our republic, as well as the number of rooms in them, do not meet the demand in the process of rapid development of tourism. In order to adapt the infrastructure to the growing demand, it was determined that starting from 2019, in order to develop the hotel industry in our republic, part of the costs of investors for the construction of hotels will be covered by the state budget. Based on this, if a hotel with a room fund of at least 50 rooms for a 3-star category and at least 100 rooms for a 4-star category is put into operation by January 1, 2022, after the hotel category is approved, part of the costs of investors for the construction and equipment of a new hotel will be covered by the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In this case, the amount of financing of part of the investors' expenses from the State budget will be 40 million soums for each room in 3-star hotels and 65 million soums for each room in 4-star hotels, with annual indexation of this amount during the approval of the parameters of the State budget for the next year until the number of additional rooms reaches 50 thousand.

This will look like this: the first 50 3-star hotels - at the equivalent of 200 US dollars per year for each hotel room; the first 30 4-star hotels - at the equivalent of 400 US dollars per year for each hotel room.

In this case, the total amount of financing for organizations will be no more than 10 million US dollars.

Another key tool of tourism infrastructure is the transport network. As of January 1, 2020, about 15,360 enterprises and organizations of various forms of ownership were operating in the transport sector in our republic, which compared to the same period last year, their number increased by 2,030, an increase of 15.2%⁶.

The transport network is considered the lifeblood of the state. Based on the project put forward by the Chinese government to restore the "Great Silk Road", Uzbekistan is located in the center of the shortest transport corridor of the land part of this road from Europe to Asia. This, in turn, opens up the possibility of implementing safe transport links connecting the East and West of the Eurasian continent, since it is located at the crossroads of the West and the West of the Eurasian continent.

Uzbekistan currently has all modern modes of transport, except for sea transport, to serve tourists. Our republic has a sufficient infrastructure of railways and highways, international airports.

It was determined that in order to assess the capabilities of the infrastructure, it is necessary to compile a rating of the provision of transport services to tourists in our republic through comparative observation. Based on the data (Table 3), a 10-point rating system was determined for each indicator. Based on the comparative data, railways have a high score of 8 points for traffic safety, and airplanes have a high score of 7 points, respectively, for speed, passenger cars have a score of 8 points, airplanes have a score of 10 points, for mass use by tourists, passenger cars have a score of 8 points, airplanes have a score of 9 points, for parking

on the roads at the request of tourists, passenger cars have a score of 10 points, buses have a score of 8 points, for capacity, railways have a score of 9 points, airplanes have a score of 10 points, for comfort, railways have a score of 8 points, airplanes have a score of 9 points.

According to the results of the above analysis, among the most convenient and popular means of transport for tourists in Uzbekistan, airplanes scored 54 points, cars scored 41 points, railways scored 40 points, and buses scored 38 points. This shows that air transport has a priority in providing services to tourists.

Table 3

Comparative rating of vehicles ⁷ (The evaluation criteria is 10 points for each indicator.)

Evaluation criteria	Types of vehicles			
	Railway vehicles	Buses	Passenger cars	Airplane s
Traffic safety	8	4	3	7
Travel cost	2	3	4	8
Speed	6	6	8	10
Popularity	6	7	8	9
Ability to stop along the way at the tourist's request	1	8	10	1
Capacity	9	4	1	10
Comfort level	8	6	7	9
Total points by indicator	40	38	41	54

Therefore, we should pay special attention to the development of air transport. Today, one of the largest sectors of the transport infrastructure of our republic is "Uzbekistan Airways". "Uzbekistan Airways" regularly operates flights to more than 40 cities around the world, to European and Asian countries, to America and Japan.

In our republic, 11 airports (in the cities of Tashkent, Nukus, Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench, Termez, Karshi, Namangan, Andijan, Fergana and Navoi) are being modernized in accordance with international standards. Currently, almost 100% of foreign tourists visit our country by airplane. Therefore, in order to create comfortable conditions for tourists and provide quality service, our aircraft fleet has been replenished with modern aircraft such as "Boeing-757-200", "Boeing-767", "Boeing 767-300 ER", "Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner", "Airbus-A310", "Airbus-A320-200". However, despite this, today the air transport infrastructure of our republic cannot meet the demand of passengers and tourists.

In order to eliminate such problems, in recent years, our government has been implementing a number of reforms to develop air transport. In our republic, work has begun on the introduction of the "Open Skies" regime based on international experience since 2019. As a first result of this, starting from March 11, 2019, the United Arab Emirates' "Flydubai" airline began flights to Uzbekistan seven times a week on a low-cost basis. Similarly, a new Tashkent-Tbilisi-Tashkent flight was launched on July 16, 2019. It became possible to purchase air tickets through the "E-ticet" system and book them online through a mobile application.

Starting from October 1, 2019, the "Open Skies" regime was introduced at 4 international airports in our republic: Nukus, Bukhara, Karshi and Termez. Starting from October 3, 2019, the "IrAero" airline launched flights on the "St. Petersburg-Karshi-St. Petersburg" route. Similarly, the Moscow-Andijan-Moscow flight was launched on December 22, 2019⁸. The number of flights on previous flights is also being steadily increased.

Another popular form of transport for tourists is car rental. These services ("Rent-a-car") are one of the most profitable types of activities related to the tourist business in the world. Their essence is that any citizen of a certain age can contact a car rental company and get a car with or without a driver for temporary use.

A regulatory and legal framework is currently being developed to implement this experience in the Republic of Uzbekistan. This has been put into practice on a trial basis since April 1, 2018. The car rental business is a rather complex service system. It includes fleet maintenance and technical maintenance, electronic car reservation systems, road navigation information systems, insurance services, bonus programs, etc. Currently, work is underway to fully launch the "Rent-a-car" system in our republic.

Since 2018, in order to create convenience for tourists and passengers, the number of intercity and international bus services has increased several times, and an electronic system for purchasing, booking and ordering tickets has been launched. With the involvement of business entities in this area, regular trains were established according to the approved schedule on the routes "Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Khiva-Nukus", "Tashkent-Guliston-Jizzakh-Samarkand-Karshi-Termez", "Kokand-Fergana-Andijan-Namangan".

Conclusion. Work is underway to introduce a mechanism for expedited border control at borders with neighboring countries for tourism groups crossing the border in tourist buses (before introducing this mechanism, a separate lane for tourist buses to pass through border control is to be established at the request of tourism entities).

Work is also underway to coordinate transport services. In Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, it is planned to provide special buses (shuttle buses) connecting international airports with railway stations and bus stations, as well as large hotels, on the basis of a public-private partnership, taking into account the connection with the flight schedule.

In order to improve the provision of quality transport services to tourists, 48 tourist buses and 85 minibuses were imported from abroad in 2023 alone.

At the same time, the railway also plays a special role in providing transport services to tourists in our republic. In line with the development of tourism in the last three to four years, investment projects are being implemented, construction and reconstruction of railways are being carried out in order to develop the railway transport network. The total length of railways in our country is 6.2 thousand kilometers.

Our republic occupies a leading position in Central Asia in terms of railway density. In order to create convenience for tourists and passengers coming to Uzbekistan, the Tashkent-Samarkand-Tashkent route of the "Afrosiyob" high-speed train was put into operation on October 8, 2011. This route is being regularly expanded. Currently, several "Afrosiyob" high-speed trains are being used on the Tashkent-Bukhara-Tashkent and Tashkent-Karshi-Tashkent routes.

At the same time, with the commissioning of the railway tunnel opened in the Kamchik pass, which connects our republic with the valley regions, several high-speed trains were launched on the Tashkent-Andijan, Andijan-Bukhara, and Andijan-Urgench routes.

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