

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE OF UZBEKISTAN: STATUS, PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

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Abstract: This article analyzes the current state of tourism infrastructure in the Republic of Uzbekistan, existing problems, measures taken by the state, based on foreign experience. Along with the achievements of recent years, systemic problems are also indicated and practical proposals are made to eliminate them. The article may be useful for those conducting scientific research in the field of tourism, students and those interested in the field

Keywords: Tourism, infrastructure, transport, hotel, service, investment, digital services, state policy, sustainable development, tourism cluster.

Introduction.

Uzbekistan has the potential to turn tourism into one of the main sectors of the economy with its rich historical heritage, natural resources, cultural diversity, unique architectural monuments, Islamic pilgrimage sites and hospitable people. It is not without reason that in recent years the tourism sector has been considered a national priority in the country. The strategies, laws and programs adopted by the state are aimed precisely at improving the tourism infrastructure, attracting investments, and increasing service services.

Today, Uzbekistan has introduced a visa-free regime for citizens of more than 90 countries, and modern airports, railway routes, hotels, and road networks are expanding. However, despite this progress, there are still problems and obstacles that need to be solved: transport logistics, interregional imbalances, service quality, environmental balance, personnel issues, and insufficient introduction of digital technologies.

1. Theoretical foundations of tourism infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure is understood as a set of basic material, technical, and service capabilities necessary for tourists. Among them, the following occupy an important place:

Transport infrastructure: airports, railways, highways, bus stations, public transport in the city. Accommodation facilities: hotels, hostels, family guest houses, recreation areas. Services: restaurants and cafes, shops, medical services, information centers, banks and currency exchange offices. Information technologies: mobile applications, interactive maps, online booking systems, QR-code guide systems. The development of tourism infrastructure not only creates convenience for tourists, but also contributes to the country's economic growth, job creation, and international image. Therefore, countries with developed tourism infrastructure allocate a significant part of their annual budgets to this area.

2. Formation and stages of tourism infrastructure in Uzbekistan

Although the tourism sector began to develop slowly during the years of independence, since 2016 this process has reached a new level. Based on the decisions and decrees adopted by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, important reforms in tourism were implemented:

Cities along the Silk Road were modernized;

The Silk Road Samarkand complex was launched in Samarkand;

Tax and customs privileges were provided to attract foreign investors to the tourism sector;

Digital services (e-visa.uz, Uzbekistan.travel) were launched;

Projects for new directions (agrotourism, pilgrimage tourism, gastronomic tourism) were developed.

These stages served as the main basis for the formation of the tourism infrastructure of Uzbekistan.

3. Analysis of the main infrastructure networks

a) Transport system.

Cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench are equipped with international airports. Major tourist centers are interconnected by high-speed trains "Afrosiyob". However, mountainous regions (Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, Namangan) are still limited in terms of transport.b) Hotels and accommodation

More than 2,500 accommodation facilities operate. Of these, more than 150 operate under 4- and 5-star foreign brands. Family guest houses, "hostels" play an important role in domestic tourism.

c) Digital technologies

QR-guide systems, online booking, virtual travel applications, digital maps are available. However, in remote areas, internet speed, mobile communication and digital literacy remain low.

d) Ecological infrastructure

The necessary infrastructure for ecotourism and sustainable tourism (biotoilets, waste recycling, green energy) has not yet been fully formed. Currently, many pilot projects are being implemented in this direction

Conclusion

Uzbekistan's tourism infrastructure has been developing rapidly in recent years. However, this sector is still not fully formed. The weak digital infrastructure, the quality of service, the low level of human resources and the lack of due consideration for the ecological balance are hindering the broad development of this sector. However, taking into account the existing achievements and developing markets, Uzbekistan can become a tourism leader in Central Asia in the coming years. This is, first of

all, closely related to the formation of a modern, convenient, sustainable and safe tourism infrastructure.

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