
The Potential of Ecotourism in Uzbekistan

Dilfuza Mirzakasimovna

TSUE Lecturer of the Department of "Tourism and Service" Rakhimova

Abstract: When developing an effective mechanism for the development of ecotourism, Uzbekistan relies on the experience of other countries. We see how much importance is attached to the conservation of nature in the world today, especially in developed countries. Ecotourism today is one of the most dynamically developing areas not only of international tourism, but also of domestic tourism. The relevance of the development and management of ecological tourism is that it is a sustainable type of tourism, competitive in price and demand.

Key words: "green" technologies, management, animals "Jeyran", ecology, regulation, experience, Ugam-Chatkal State National Natural Park, sustainability, problems, policy, system, development, urbanization.

One of the tasks facing the social sphere of Uzbekistan is to improve the system of development of ecological tourism that meets the requirements of the time. Our country has everything to become a tourist hub of the region, to attract a large number of guests. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Uzbekistan is one of the centers of world civilization, which preserves many historical monuments of enormous importance for world science. All this opens up great opportunities for the tourism sector. It is important to use them correctly.

Considering the fact that in the modern world the tourism industry occupies a niche among the most dynamically developing and profitable sectors of the economy, and the number of tourist arrivals is growing rapidly every day, the depletion of tourist resources is increasing. The reason for the emergence of popular eco-tourism today was just the increasing demand for travel services. It is believed that the sphere of ecotourism is the most perfect in comparison with other directions and has the least negative impact on ecosystems. That is why the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines ecotourism as "a journey with responsibility to the environment in relation to undisturbed natural territories in order to explore and enjoy nature and cultural attractions, which promotes nature conservation, has a "soft" impact on the environment, ensures the active socio-economic participation of local residents and benefits from this activity."

Eco-tourism today is one of the most dynamically developing areas of international tourism. Over \$55 billion of goods and services are produced annually for the needs of eco-tourism. While the number of ecotourists has been increasing in recent years at an average annual rate of 10-12%. The reason for such a great interest in eco-tourism is the steady deterioration of the quality of the environment, as well as the environmental awareness of people that has increased significantly recently. Considering that in the foreseeable future the rates of urbanization and pollution of natural landscapes will increase, respectively, and interest in eco-tourism will increase.

With the development of eco-tourism, its transformation into a socially significant socio-economic phenomenon, the problems of its effective regulation become particularly relevant. Regulation of ecotourism development is understood as the creation of such tools that would ensure full and effective coordination of the activities of business entities and implemented activities at the territorial level.

Regulation of ecotourism development is a three-level system that includes: coordination and promotion of ecotourism development on a global (international) scale; consistency of ecotourism policy at the interstate level; consistency of ecotourism policy at the national and regional levels.

Coordination and promotion of ecotourism development on a global scale is carried out through international organizations and foundations. Despite the relative "youth", ecotourism has a clearly defined international organization. The largest international structures that have a wide range of environmental objectives and economically support the development of ecotourism as one of the activities contributing to the sustainable use of natural resources provide assistance to the development of ecotourism.¹

The United Nations plays an important role in uniting the efforts of the world community to protect the planet's natural resources. A number of UN commissions contribute to the promotion of eco-tourism ideas. UNESCO — the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (including its program "Man and the Biosphere"); UNEP — the United Nations Environment Program; UNDP — the United Nations Development Program; IUCN — the International Union for Conservation of Nature, etc. participate in the formation and implementation of the global ecotourism policy.

Matching the trends of the time: The seventh paragraph of the sixth chapter of the Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2019-2028, adopted by the relevant Presidential Decree on June 11, 2019, involves the development of ecological tourism. The document notes that this direction today is one of the rapidly developing and very promising in terms of profitability. In addition, in recent years, there has been a high demand among the population in recreational areas of natural parks, especially in the mountains and foothills near large cities. The use of these territories is growing rapidly, and significant recreational loads in places of traditional mass recreation of citizens have a significant impact on the structure of biodiversity. That is why the Strategy provides for the implementation of consistent measures to create an organized mechanism for the functioning of ecological tourism in the country. First of all, it is important to improve the regulatory framework of the sphere and to establish the training of appropriate personnel.

Uzbekistan has already been recognized as the center of zierat tourism, and the country's potential in the field of ecotourism should not be underestimated. Ecotourism today is a complex, interdisciplinary area of support for the local economy. Uzbekistan has unique nature attractive to visiting guests, diverse landscapes (steppes, deserts, mountains, plateaus), various areas of flora, rare geological deposits, numerous architectural monuments that preserve the centuries-old history of our region. In addition, tourists already have the opportunity to take a trip to the once large Aral Sea. The President of the Republic declared the Aral Sea region a zone of investment and innovative technologies. The changes planned in the region also imply an increase in its attractiveness for foreign guests.

When developing an effective mechanism for the development of ecotourism, Uzbekistan relies on the experience of other countries. We see how much importance is attached to the conservation of nature in the world today, especially in developed countries. Being a supporter of "green" technologies is even fashionable. Therefore, ecotourist routes are in increasing demand among the population, allowing them to see the richness of nature. We should also introduce similar experience and educate citizens in the desire to learn new information about their native land.

The tourism industry is rightfully considered one of the most profitable and in-demand in the world, accounting for 30 percent of global exports of services. In the XXI century, it has already become a dynamically developing form of international trade.

¹ . "Tourism in Uzbekistan, 2018" Information and analytical collection, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development, Tashkent, 2019.

Tourism is aimed at performing various functions: it serves as a source of financial income, provides employment for the population, promotes economic diversification, increases the prestige and status of the state on the world stage.

The high tourism potential of the republic can also attract solid investments, thus the infrastructure will also develop. The advantages of the sphere of tourist services are obvious.²

Speaking about the strengths of the industry as a whole, it is important to focus on its individual areas. It is worth saying that ecotourism in our region today is also at the stage of development. Its distinctive features are that it stimulates and satisfies people's desire to communicate with nature, promotes environmental protection. Ecotourism is an important component of sustainable development in the modern world.

The main focus of the above-mentioned international programs is the environmental protection function and the organization of monitoring of biological diversity, the creation of a system of effective management of natural resources, the integration of ecological and historical and cultural potential in the socio-economic development of the region.

A significant contribution to the implementation of international agreements and programs for the development of eco-tourism is made by international financial organizations: the World Bank - the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the World Wildlife Fund; the Global Environmental Fund.

For the purpose of long-term financing of specially protected natural areas (protected areas) in developing countries, environmental trust funds are created and operate, providing financial assistance to national parks and types of environmental activities, etc.

There are a number of specialized ecotourist organizations created to promote the development of ecotourism in the world: The Ecotourism Society, the Annual International Symposium "Annual World Congress on Adventure Travel & Ecotourism", Public organizations of Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, etc.

A lot of work to promote the ideas of eco-tourism in the world was carried out by the WTO in 2017-2020. — during the preparation and holding of the International Year of Ecological Tourism. On May 19-22, 2020, the World Eco-Tourism Summit was held in Quebec (Canada) under the auspices of UNEP and WTO with the participation of over 1100 representatives from 132 countries. The summit participants developed a number of recommendations to governments, representatives of private business, intergovernmental and public organizations, research institutes, international financial institutions, local communities for the development of ecotourism in the context of its sustainable development.

The consistency of ecotourism policy at the interstate level is achieved through the activities of regional tourism organizations and special bodies of interstate associations.

Public administration and regulation in the field of ecotourism varies slightly in different countries: it mainly provides for legislative support for environmental protection, the creation of a stimulating taxation system and the choice of optimal management mechanisms for both the development of ecotourism as a whole and the use of the resource potential of protected areas.

At the same time, the national characteristics of countries related to the history of their development, geographical location, the mentality of the population and the peculiarities of its socio-cultural development determine significant differences in the system of management and regulation of ecotourism. In this regard, building a policy in the field of ecotourism development, Uzbekistan should not copy other people's schemes, but develop its own policy, taking into account, of course, international experience.

Uzbekistan as a major Central Asian Silk Road tourism destination has a great opportunity of deployment in the sector of hospitality and tourism. On this basis, country's potential touristic

² Pravda Vostoka February 21, 2022

resources, like greenhouses, reservoirs and relevant ones could be one of the vital sources in the way of sustainable development that has faced exponential growth globally. This article presents the author's attempt to form the theoretical basis of domestic tourism, as it is vital both in theoretical and practical ways. Analysis of the current state of the conceptual apparatus of the tourism industry, based on which the conclusions and proposals formulated by the creation of categorical apparatus of tourism.³

The dynamic development of the tourism industry has been noted in Uzbekistan in recent years. This is due to the expansion and strengthening of interethnic ties, the integration of the country into the international tourism market, increasing the level of professionalism in promoting the cultural, historical and spiritual heritage of Uzbekistan, improving the quality of tourist services. According to the Uzbektourism NC, the share of tourism in the country's GDP has more than doubled in the six months of this year and amounted to 1.8 percent.

The potential of tourism development in Uzbekistan, in addition to historical, architectural and cultural monuments of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, is also associated with the presence of unique natural objects.

In this regard, much attention is paid to the development of eco-tourism, which is aimed at active recreation in nature, knowledge of its objects and phenomena, and most importantly - the restoration of ecosystems. The latter is due to the fact that eco-tourism is one of the effective tools for environmental protection and an important element of sustainable development, actively contributing to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, improving the well-being of the local population.

One of the objects of natural tourism development in Uzbekistan is the Republican Scientific and Production Center for Breeding rare species of animals "Jeyran", where on September 3 it turned into a center for discussing the prospects for the development of ecological tourism for one day. Representatives of the State Committee for Nature, the State Biological Control, specialists and partners of the Ecocenter, tour operators, journalists, as well as representatives of the Mikhail Zukkov Foundation, the GEF Small Grants Program in Uzbekistan gathered here.

Established in May 1977 as the Bukhara specialized nursery for the cultivation of gazelles, now the Ecocenter is a world-famous nursery for breeding rare species of animals with the unique biodiversity of the Kyzylkum desert, its director Yuldashev Erkin noted in his presentation. The Center breeds gazelles (a vulnerable dwindling subspecies), kulans (a species that has disappeared in Uzbekistan), Przhivalsky horses (a species that has disappeared in nature); Bukhara mountain sheep (a vulnerable species); screw-horned goats (markhurov) (a threatened species), etc.

More than 250 species of plants live on the territory of the Ecocenter. There are more than 700 species of invertebrates, 2 species of amphibians, 20 species of reptiles, 257 species of birds and 35 species of mammals.

Along with breeding rare animal species and studying their biology, preserving the structure of desert biocenoses, rational use of natural resources, environmental education, one of the tasks of the center is the development of ecological tourism.

In this regard, the plan for the further development of the center includes such tasks as: sustainable use of natural resources through the development of eco-tourism in the new territory of the center,

- creation of a scientific and educational field base for conducting scientific practices and environmental camps,
- creation of an information and environmental-educational visit center,

³ Abidova D. I., Rahimova D. M. Rates of touristic fairs and its significance in the development of domestic tourism sector. case of Uzbekistan //ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal. – 2015. – T. 5. – №. 11. – C. 142-157.

- development of a rare species breeding program by increasing the number of species,
- preservation of the biodiversity of the Ecocenter by creating conditions for the sustainable existence of semi-free populations of bred ungulates and increasing the effectiveness of protection.⁴

Ecological tourism has a more pronounced socio-economic orientation in comparison with other types of tourism. Properly organized activities for the development of this type of tourism can give both protected areas and the local population of the region specializing in ecotourism new economic opportunities and thereby take a significant place in the regional economy.

The main objectives of the development of ecological tourism are:

- increasing the level of environmental education and general culture of the population; providing socio-economic alternatives to deplorable forms of environmental management;
- changing the attitude of local residents to protected areas as areas of aesthetic and economic value, involving them in cooperation in the development of ecological tourism;
- improvement of social and economic conditions in local communities, including through the creation of new jobs for local residents;
- creation of additional sources of financial support for protected areas;
- strengthening ties with international natural reserves, integration into the system of the world ecotourism market.

In order to achieve the formulated objectives of the development of ecological tourism and overcome the main problems of its functioning, a program of activities for the development of ecological tourism in the region has been developed, including the following areas:

- expert analysis and planning of ecotourism development in the region;
- preparation of ecotourism routes and infrastructure for the development of ecotourism; work with the local population and training of personnel for the development of ecotourism in the region;
- organization and management of ecological tourism in the region;
- organization of marketing activities to promote ecological tourism in the region.

Ecotourism is an entrepreneurial activity, therefore, if it is not profitable, it will not be able to become an economic boon for the protected area and, first of all, provide jobs for the local population and thereby increase their income and well-being, but will only complicate the existing problems. In each particular region, the development of ecotourism requires a realistic view of the possibilities of its implementation, its profitability and competitiveness, and it is also necessary to specifically assess the optimal level of tourism for a given territory and then develop a strategy leading to achieving this level.⁵

The scientist Gusanov A.A. in the research work for the candidate's degree, a methodology for the formation of a strategy for the development of ecological tourism in the region was proposed.

The stages of the methodology are designed in such a way that:

- a) natural complexes were not affected,
- b) mechanisms were created to increase the employment of local residents,

⁴ Babkin A.V. "Special types of tourism". Moscow: Phoenix, 2008. - 251 p

⁵ "Tourism in Uzbekistan, 2017" Information and analytical collection, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development, Tashkent, 2018.

- c) there was an opportunity for income growth, both environmental structures and local settlements,
- d) environmental education was developed.

With such a development strategy, local regional governments and protected areas will be able to minimize the "costs" of ecotourism and maximize its benefits.

The tasks of ecotourism management include the prevention of negative impacts even before they occur, therefore, as one of the main components of the ecotourism development strategy in the region, a system of continuous monitoring and control of the environmental and social impact of tourist activities, as well as their management (their modification and improvement, if necessary) has been identified.

Environmental tourism management should be based on taking into account the characteristics of various target groups of tourists and other interested persons, as well as the components of tourism activities. Methodological recommendations on the use of various methods of ecotourism management in the region have been developed and proposed:

- zoning of the territory;
- managing the flow of visitors;
- implementation of personnel training programs;
- regulation of the private sector;
- establishment of partnerships between organizations specializing in ecological tourism; use of self-financing mechanisms for protected areas.⁶

If you turn to Internet search engines for information about the most famous natural attractions of our country, then among the first you will find the Ecocenter "Jeyran", which is located in the vicinity of Bukhara.

It is planned that upon completion of all works, the "Jeyran" nursery will be able to receive about 20,000 tourists a year.

Ugam-Chatkal State National Natural Park, located in the Tashkent region, is considered another natural heritage of our region. Many summer camps, boarding houses and holiday homes are located right here, as this picturesque place seems to be simply created for a comfortable pastime. Since 2017, the park has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, and its protected part is closed to the public.

The center has the status of a nature conservation area. For several decades, viable populations of rare artiodactyls have been created here. In addition to gazelles, other species of animals and plants live in the reserve, including those listed in the Red Book of Uzbekistan and the International Red Book. And in the near future, in order to attract tourists, it is planned to create several viewing platforms and a special route along them on the territory of the nursery. This will allow you to watch the animals from morning to evening. To promote the reserve as a tourist zone, a special website will also appear, where virtual and 3D tours will be organized.

In conclusion, it can be noted that over time, the acquired experience and knowledge make us rethink many issues and reveal some mistakes in planning and using eco-tourism. Therefore, the management procedure should imply the possibility of constant adjustments and changes depending on changes in the conditions of the external and internal situation at the regional level of consumption.

⁶ Information Service of the State Committee of Nature of Uzbekistan, - 2014

List of used literature

1. "Tourism in Uzbekistan, 2018" Information and analytical collection, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development, Tashkent, 2019.
2. "Tourism in Uzbekistan, 2017" Information and analytical collection, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development, Tashkent, 2018.
3. Babkin A.V. "Special types of tourism". Moscow: Phoenix, 2008. - 251 p.
4. Baker Christopher P. et al. "Encyclopedia of the surrounding world: around the world", -M., "White City", 1998. 342 p.
5. Information Service of the State Committee of Nature of Uzbekistan, - 2014
6. Mozgovaya Olga Stepanovna - Journal of International Law and International Relations 2005 - No. 4, "Modern motivations for the development of ecological tourism and mechanisms of its regulation", Belarus, 55 p.
7. Gusanov A.A. "Ecological tourism as a means of sustainable development", abstract, 2010, 10 p.
8. Abidova D. I., Rahimova D. M. Rates of touristic fairs and its significance in the development of domestic tourism sector. case of Uzbekistan //ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal. – 2015. – T. 5. – №. 11. – C. 142-157.
9. Pravda Vostoka February 21, 2022