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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN UZBEKISTAN

Abstract: The scientific article outlines the essence of the concept of sustainable economic development, the UN Sustainable Development Goals are defined, tourism development trends in Uzbekistan are briefly described, and recommendations for identifying factors that ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry in our country are proposed and given, with an analysis of the factors of sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: sustainable development, Sustainable Development Goals, tourism, economic factors, social factors, anthropological factors.

ФАКТОРЫ ВЛИЯЮЩИЕ НА УСТОЙЧИВОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ОТРАСЛИ УЗБЕКИСТАНА

Аннотация: В данной научной статье раскрывается сущность концепции устойчивого экономического развития, рассматриваются Цели устойчивого развития Организации Объединённых Наций, кратко анализируются современные тенденции развития туризма в Узбекистане. Кроме того, на основе анализа факторов устойчивого развития туризма предложены научно обоснованные рекомендации по выявлению и эффективному использованию факторов, обеспечивающих устойчивое развитие туристической отрасли страны.

Ключевые слова: устойчивое развитие, Цели устойчивого развития, туризм, экономические факторы, социальные факторы, антропологические факторы.

O'ZBEKISTONDA TURIZM SOHASINING BARQAROR RIVOJLANISHIGA TA'SIR ETUVCHI OMILLAR

Annotatsiya: Mazkur ilmiy maqolada barqaror iqtisodiy rivojlanish tushunchasining mazmun-mohiyati yoritilgan, Birlashgan Millatlar Tashkilotining Barqaror rivojlanish maqsadlari tavsiflangan hamda O'zbekistonda turizmni rivojlantirish tendensiyalari qisqacha tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, turizm sanoatining barqaror rivojlanishini ta'minlovchi omillar ilmiy jihatdan tahlil qilinib, mamlakatimizda

ushbu omillarni aniqlash va samarali qo'llash bo'yicha ilmiy asoslangan taklif va tavsiyalar ishlab chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: barqaror rivojlanish, Barqaror rivojlanish maqsadlari, turizm, iqtisodiy omillar, ijtimoiy omillar, antropologik omillar.

Introduction. Uzbekistan is a country with high tourism potential, and its cultural and natural resources make it an attractive destination for international tourists. Currently, the country boasts over 8,800 cultural heritage sites, 209 of which are included on the internationally recognized UNESCO World Heritage List. Furthermore, Uzbekistan's tourism infrastructure is constantly being modernized: new hotels are being built, new air routes are being opened, and international cooperation projects are being implemented.

The development of market relations has created favorable conditions for the development of the tourism sector in Uzbekistan, and the further integration of tourism into the country's economy is becoming increasingly important. The tourism sector serves to generate necessary foreign exchange revenue for the state treasury, create new jobs, and simultaneously improve the standard of living. Uzbekistan's geographic location is exceptionally favorable, with excellent natural climate conditions, rare historical architectural monuments, a diverse cuisine, and a hospitable people with wonderful national traditions and customs. All of this attracts the attention of foreign tourists. Furthermore, political stability

in Uzbekistan plays a vital role in the development of international tourism.

Stable development of the tourism sector is a necessary element of sustainable economic development. Economic development is impossible without ensuring stability in the tourism sector. Stability and its legal support serve as the foundation for economic growth.

If we pay attention to the concept of sustainable development of the country's economy and, in particular, tourism, what conditions it requires, what needs to be done to ensure it, why stability is a factor in economic growth, then issues such as the modern tourism industry require study and research.

Litreture review.

In recent decades, the concept of sustainable development has become one of the central paradigms in global socio-economic research. Increasing environmental challenges, climate change, depletion of natural resources, and growing social inequalities have encouraged scholars, policymakers, and international organizations to seek development models that balance economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection. As a result, the concept of sustainable development has evolved beyond environmental discourse and has become an integral component of

economic planning, public policy, and strategic management across various sectors, including tourism. Today, numerous researchers from developed countries as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have devoted considerable attention to investigating the theoretical foundations, practical applications, and long-term implications of sustainable development. Their studies have significantly contributed to understanding the mechanisms through which sustainability can enhance economic resilience, improve living standards, and ensure the well-being of future generations [9].

Within the tourism sector, sustainable development has become an increasingly important research area because tourism directly depends on the quality of natural, cultural, and social resources. Unlike many other industries, tourism simultaneously generates substantial economic benefits while exerting pressure on environmental and socio-cultural systems. Consequently, sustainable tourism has emerged as a strategic approach that seeks to maximize the positive economic impacts of tourism while minimizing its adverse environmental and social consequences. Contemporary studies increasingly focus on identifying sustainability indicators, evaluating tourism carrying capacity, promoting responsible resource management, and integrating environmental, economic, and social dimensions into

tourism planning and destination management.

A review of the existing scientific literature demonstrates that researchers have approached sustainable tourism from different theoretical and methodological perspectives. By analyzing and synthesizing the findings of prominent scholars, it becomes possible to identify the major determinants of sustainable tourism development and establish a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the long-term competitiveness of the tourism industry.

Among the notable contributions to tourism innovation research, V.S. Novikov, in his textbook *Innovations in Tourism*, comprehensively examines the role of innovation processes and innovation management within the tourism industry. His research emphasizes that technological innovation, digital transformation, and effective management practices represent key prerequisites for improving the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism enterprises. Furthermore, Novikov analyzes the fundamental principles of sustainable tourism development, methods for evaluating tourism efficiency, and the influence of scientific and technological progress on the modernization of tourism services. His work highlights that innovation not only enhances service quality and operational efficiency but also contributes

significantly to the sustainable utilization of tourism resources and the creation of competitive tourism products [7].

A substantial contribution to the theoretical understanding of sustainable tourism has also been made by I.Yu. Ponomareva, who investigated the limitations of the contemporary mass tourism model and its adverse impacts on environmental, socio-cultural, and economic systems. Her research identifies excessive tourist concentration, environmental degradation, cultural commodification, and unequal distribution of tourism benefits as major challenges associated with conventional tourism development. Ponomareva proposes the concept of sustainable tourism as an alternative development model capable of balancing economic interests with environmental conservation and social responsibility. She further explores the conditions necessary for transforming traditional tourism into a sustainable system and examines the influence of sustainable tourism on broader social processes, including social mobility, community participation, and improvements in the quality of life [10].

The scientific contributions of Uzbek scholars have also played an important role in expanding the theoretical and practical understanding of sustainable tourism development within the national context. Considering Uzbekistan's unique natural, historical, and cultural resources, domestic

researchers have increasingly focused on identifying effective mechanisms for improving tourism competitiveness while ensuring sustainable resource utilization.

In particular, A.A. Eshtaev investigated the application of innovative marketing strategies in tourism management under conditions of globalization. His research demonstrates that the integration of digital marketing technologies, destination branding, customer-oriented marketing strategies, and modern promotional tools significantly enhances the competitiveness of tourism destinations. Eshtaev argues that sustainable tourism development requires not only improvements in tourism infrastructure but also effective marketing mechanisms capable of increasing destination attractiveness, strengthening international market positioning, and promoting long-term tourism demand [13].

Similarly, O.Kh. Khamidov conducted comprehensive research on the strategic development of ecotourism in Uzbekistan. His study substantiates that improving the management mechanism of ecotourism represents one of the priority directions for achieving sustainable development of the national tourism industry. Khamidov developed strategic approaches for environmental protection, ecological safety management, and monitoring systems designed to regulate ecotourism activities. In addition, he

proposed a methodological framework for evaluating tourism resource potential and measuring the effectiveness of ecotourism management. His research also presents practical recommendations for integrating ecotourism into the national economy through efficient resource utilization, institutional improvements, and sustainable destination management [14].

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that although significant progress has been achieved in investigating sustainable tourism development, many studies primarily concentrate on individual aspects such as innovation, marketing, ecotourism, environmental management, or socio-economic impacts. Relatively limited attention has been devoted to developing an integrated analytical framework capable of simultaneously evaluating the economic, environmental, institutional, technological, and socio-cultural factors influencing the sustainable development of the tourism industry. Therefore, further empirical research is required to identify the key determinants of sustainable tourism development, assess their interrelationships, and formulate scientifically grounded recommendations for strengthening the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of Uzbekistan's tourism industry.

Research methodology. The study utilizes a methodology that takes

into account expected innovative changes in the coming years and examines sustainable tourism development as a unified system when determining the sustainable development of the tourism sector. Expert opinions on this issue are examined using methods such as observation, comparison, empirical research, systematic and comparative analysis, and expert assessment. A method for identifying development directions for tourism sector components is proposed.

Result and discussion.

Sustainable development envisions development that takes into account the needs of current generations to the greatest possible extent, while also ensuring that such consideration does not endanger the needs of future generations. This concept is central to the UN's definition of sustainability. This fundamental principle is to not endanger the needs and living conditions of future generations. From this perspective, sustainable development combines two important aspects:

- a) the principle of needs, including primary needs (the vital needs of the poorest sections of the population);
- b) the principle of prohibitions (establishing control and monitoring at the international level of all decisions that threaten the vital needs of the present and future generations).

However, at the same time, sustainable development aims to meet the material needs and aspirations of

each person without compromising the needs and aspirations of future generations today and in the future.

At the 2012 Rio+20 conference held by the United Nations on sustainable development, world leaders agreed to develop the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). Following extensive global discussions, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were identified, along with 169 associated targets, to be achieved by 2030. They were formally adopted at the United Nations summit in September 2015.



Figure 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals¹

In Uzbekistan, sustainable development principles are included among the factors of social protection and economic development in public policy. The Action Strategy for Five Priority Development Areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, approved by the President of Uzbekistan on February 7, 2017, serves as our country's national roadmap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, in September 2015, Uzbekistan adopted at the national level the terms for implementing the Sustainable

Development Goals announced at the UN Summit.

In this regard, in order to ensure sustainable development of the economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in particular the tourism sector, on February 16, 2026, Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-22 "On reform programs in priority areas and the State program for the implementation of the Strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" in the "Year of Development of the Mahalla and the Whole Society" was adopted and on October 20, 2018, the

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On measures to implement national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development until 2030" was adopted [4]. To implement this decision, several goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development were defined.

Currently, judging by Uzbekistan's tourism indicators, we are witnessing the sustainable development of the country's tourism sector. The number of foreign citizens visiting our country has been growing rapidly in recent years. According to statistical data analysis, 2.027 million people visited the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2016, and 2.69 million in 2017, representing a 32.7% increase compared to 2016. In turn, 5.346 million people visited the country in 2018, a 99% increase compared to the

previous year, and 6.748 million people in 2019, a 26.2% increase compared to the previous year. These tourists primarily come to our country for medical, educational, professional, pilgrimage, and other purposes.

However, in the context of the global pandemic, we see that the number of tourist visits in 2020 was 1.504 million, which is 77% less than in 2019, and in 2021 it was 1.881 million, which is 72% less, but 25% more than in 2020. According to experts, tourism is one of the hardest-hit sectors in the world during the pandemic.

A look at the statistics for 2022-2025 reveals a steady increase in tourist arrivals. In 2022, the number of tourists reached 5.232 million, in 2023 it exceeded 6.6 million, in 2024 it reached 10.28 million, and in 2025 it reached 11.7 million.

Inbound tourism indexes

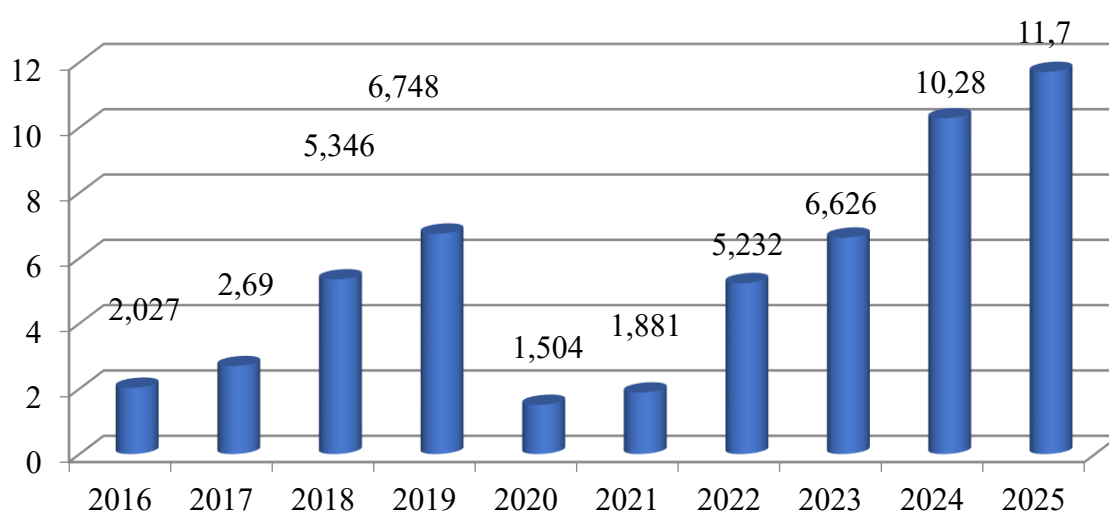


Figure 2. Number of foreign citizens visiting the Republic of Uzbekistan (million people)²

One of the main reasons for this is the introduction of a visa-free regime for citizens of more than 90 countries and the creation of broad opportunities for the development of domestic and pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan[4], which serves as the basis for the sustainable development of tourism in our country.

There are also several different perspectives on what constitutes sustainable development in tourism. If we define them, firstly, it is viewed as the process of ensuring the peaceful, stable, and moderate development of tourism itself, free from various internal and external crises, ranging from simple to complex. Secondly, sustainable growth in tourism essentially implies stability within the tourism system, stability of tourism services, and so on.

Thus, sustainability in tourism is a procedure for organizing, conducting and developing tourism activities, organizing various types of services and economic relations taking into account the needs of tourists and ensuring growth, reproduction and sustainable increase in income from year to year.

Sustainable development of the tourism sector is the creation of a system of economic relations oriented toward the long-term. This process respects the integrity of the economic,

social, environmental, and cultural goals of tourism. The long-term interests of all participants in the tourism process (visitors, hosts, local residents, countries, and partners) are taken into account, based on these goals. Sustainability in tourism is the process of ensuring that existing tourism resources and protected areas are used by future generations.

Sustainable tourism is a system that realizes the potential for fulfilling society's desire to travel, serving the intangible needs of society, utilizing existing systems and ensuring their availability for future generations. The main motto of modern tourism from this perspective—that is, from the perspective of its sustainability—is to become a guardian of peace, to protect the state of peace, and to work for world peace.

Thus, to ensure economic stability in the tourism sector in Uzbekistan, special programs are being developed, decrees and resolutions are being adopted, and support and assistance from the legal system—a kind of "open door" policy—is being provided. Consequently, the real development of stability in the tourism sector now depends on the human factor working in and managing this sector. In this context, it should be noted that during times of economic crisis, "top-down" management methods prove very

² Developed by the author base on Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan statistical information.

useful and allow for the rapid resolution of existing crises and crisis situations. At the same time, during periods of calm and peaceful development, "top-down management" is more effective than "bottom-up management," allowing for the identification of the most important and pressing issues in this sector and their resolution.

From the point of view of economic stability of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan, we considered it appropriate to divide the factors that ensure stability into purely economic, social and anthropological factors.

1. Economic factors that ensure economic stability of the tourism sector include:

- ensure the unconditional fulfillment of the tasks set by state policy at the local level, deeply understand that every step taken is aimed at the development of the population and the country;

- a creative, inventive and critical approach to the issue of economic development and stability of the industry, as well as ensuring economic efficiency;

- ensure the process of economic growth in this area and the growth of GDP per capita;

- to increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in the country's economy and create a favorable investment environment;

- creation of new jobs in this area and ensuring their long-term and full employment;

- ensure price stability for services in the tourism sector, guarantee that prices do not depend on political and social processes;

2. Social factors that ensure economic stability of the tourism sector include the following:

- strengthen legislation for the protection of all national tourism sites, historical heritage, spiritual and educational heritage, scientific resources, as well as develop and adopt legal documents and allocate funds for their preservation and protection;

- the essence of state policy in the field of tourism, its role in ensuring economic stability, views on the possibility of tourism as a locomotive of the economy, conducting propaganda and agitation activities in all media, Internet sites, the Internet space and social networks, its activation and revitalization;

- organizing promotional events for children in areas where tourism is well-developed, with the aim of instilling in them an understanding that their country is a tourist center and teaching them to be proud of this, as well as ensuring the proper maintenance of these areas.

3. We included the following anthropological factors in the list of factors that ensure the economic stability of the tourism sector:

- to create an image of Uzbekistan as a modern tourist destination, to establish its promotion and advancement on a global scale, and to

instill in citizens a sense of pride in the tourist potential of our country;

- to train, retrain and improve the qualifications of personnel that meet international requirements, as well as to improve their skills, implement systems for certification of knowledge and competencies and ensure their practical application;

- to regularly ensure an influx of young, morally and educationally mature specialists who have received an education in the field of tourism, who strive to become masters of their craft and enjoy their work;

Conclusions and suggestions

To summarize, stable development of a country's national economy leads to sustainable tourism development. Therefore, it is recommended to include the following factors that contribute to sustainable economic and, in turn, tourism development:

- modernization of production, technical renewal and diversification;

- rapid development of industries capable of competing equally in the global market and becoming the engine of economic growth, further

modernization and diversification of the economy;

- deepening the localization of production and expanding inter-industry industrial cooperation, economic growth and structural changes in the economy;

- implementation of important strategic projects through an active investment policy;

- continue measures to stimulate the development of small businesses, private entrepreneurship and the service sector and, as a result, further increase their share in GDP;

- as an important factor in sustainable economic development, ensuring growth in employment and, in general, stimulating a continuous improvement in the quality of life of the population and consumer demand.

The results of the study showed that sustainable tourism development depends not only on the development of the industry, but also on a number of factors, such as the development of other sectors of the economy, the growth of household incomes, and the development of economic cooperation with foreign countries

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