

CREATION OF TOURISM PRODUCTS FOR THE FERGHANA REGION

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the tourism potential of the Ferghana region and examines the creation of new tourism products based on its historical, cultural, natural, and ethnographic resources. Furthermore, it presents proposals for developing the region's tourism opportunities by introducing services that meet tourists' needs and promoting modern forms of agrotourism, ethnotourism, and ecotourism.

Keywords: tourism potential, historical and cultural resources, natural resources, ethnographic resources, tourism opportunities, tourism services, agrotourism, ethnotourism, ecotourism.

The Ferghana region is one of Uzbekistan's richest territories in terms of historical, cultural, and natural heritage and possesses enormous potential for tourism development. The region's geographical location, the rich history of its ancient settlements, its strategic position in international relations, and the natural beauty harmoniously combined with national traditions make it an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists.

The development of tourism products for the Ferghana region not only contributes to enhancing the region's tourism potential but also promotes the socio-economic development of areas that remain relatively underrepresented in the international tourism market. Modern tourism is closely interconnected with economic development, innovation, and social progress. Moreover, by supporting local communities and integrating local products into tourism activities, it has become an important driver of social innovation.

Today, experience has become an integral component of the tourism economy, as the primary tourism product consists of the impressions and experiences gained throughout a journey. Tourists increasingly seek authentic and meaningful experiences that reflect the cultural values, local traditions, customs, and everyday lifestyles of the destinations they visit. Consequently, intangible cultural heritage has become an increasingly significant component of tourism development.

Intangible cultural heritage encompasses traditional customs, ceremonies, folklore, national handicrafts, and traditional ways of life. Unlike tangible cultural monuments, intangible heritage is closely connected with the daily life of

communities and therefore continuously evolves and develops. In this regard, the rich cultural traditions, handicraft heritage, and distinctive lifestyle of the Ferghana region constitute valuable resources for diversifying tourism products and providing tourists with unique and memorable experiences.

Examining the activities of tourism companies and organizations, it can be observed that in 2024, a total of 19 tourism companies and organizations operated in the Ferghana region. These organizations provided tourism services to 11.9 thousand customers and sold 12.0 thousand tour packages. Compared to 2023, the main indicators demonstrated a significant positive growth trend. In particular, the number of tourism companies and organizations increased by four (27%), while the number of customers using tourism services increased by 6.6 thousand people (123.9%). Likewise, the number of tour packages sold increased by 3.8 thousand, representing approximately a 1.4-fold increase¹.

As the number of visitors to the Ferghana region continues to grow, improving accommodation capacity has become essential to ensure comfortable travel experiences. According to the results of 2024, the region had 361 accommodation facilities, including 47 hotels, 37 hostels, and 277 family guest houses (guest houses and other family-based accommodation facilities). The average length of stay of visitors to the Ferghana region has reached 4-5 days. These statistical indicators demonstrate the steadily increasing demand for tourism in the region.

In addition to enjoying the breathtaking natural landscapes of Ferghana, tourists have the opportunity to explore numerous historical monuments that reflect the region's rich historical heritage. The region contains 111 archaeological monuments, 140 architectural monuments, 31 monumental art monuments, and 97 sites of cultural significance.

Among the most notable heritage sites are the Jahon Otin Uvaysiy Memorial, the Sufon Burial Sites dating back to the 1st century BC, Arktepa, Oqtepa, Chuntepa, the Karamqul Cemetery, and Katta Sufon. Architectural monuments include the Podshohpirim Mosque Complex dating from the 16th century, which consists of a gateway, mosque, auxiliary buildings, and a minaret; the Bibi Ubayda Pilgrimage Complex, comprising a mausoleum, prayer ground, pools, buildings, verandas, and a memorial site; as well as the Boyazid Bastomi Pilgrimage Complex, dating from the 15th century. Many other valuable historical monuments have also been preserved in the region. Those heritage sites requiring

¹ <http://farstat.uz>



restoration could be rehabilitated and successfully integrated into the tourism market.

However, the opportunities available to tourism companies remain limited. For example, the Khudoyorkhan Fortress, located in the upper reaches of the Sokh River in the Sokh District of the Ferghana region, at the foothills of the Turkestan Mountains along an ancient caravan route, represents an important historical and cultural resource. The fortress was originally constructed in the late eighteenth century and was last extensively restored during the reign of Khudoyorkhan, the ruler of the Kokand Khanate, from whom it derives its present name.

Despite its significant tourism potential, tourism companies are currently unable to organize tours to this destination due to the absence of adequate road infrastructure, insufficient safety measures, and other essential tourism facilities required for visitor access.

Today, the Ferghana region resembles a destination that is only beginning to reveal its tourism potential. The region still possesses numerous untapped opportunities. Although Ferghana has a history spanning several millennia and has witnessed the rise and fall of many dynasties and outstanding historical figures, it never served as the capital of a major state. Consequently, unlike cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, Ferghana has comparatively fewer monumental architectural landmarks. Nevertheless, the region possesses unique tourism resources capable of leaving profound and unforgettable impressions on visitors, creating memories that remain vivid long after their journey has ended.

It has long been recognized that tourists are attracted not only by historical monuments but also by authentic cultural experiences. A vivid example is the world-renowned pottery tradition of the Rishtan District, where twelve generations of master craftsmen have preserved and developed the ancient art of ceramics. These handicraft products successfully combine elements of cultural and ethnographic tourism and have earned international recognition, significantly contributing to the global reputation of the region.

The primary objective of developing a tourism product is to generate profit and ensure its long-term sustainability. In practice, increasing the productivity of tourism service providers is closely associated with introducing technological innovations into service delivery processes. It is therefore essential to develop tourism products and services that not only satisfy tourists' current needs but can also be continuously improved in response to changing market demands. A tourism product can maintain its competitiveness only when it is offered to the

right target market, at the right place, at the right time, at an appropriate price, and in the required quantity.

Tourism development should not be limited solely to the utilization of existing tourism resources. Based on this approach, the Ferghana region possesses considerable potential for developing various forms of tourism, including ecotourism, agrotourism, adventure tourism, gastronomic tourism, cultural tourism, ethnographic tourism, and family tourism. However, tourism products developed for the Ferghana region should comprehensively reflect the region's historical heritage, cultural traditions, geographical characteristics, ethnographic values, and the perception of Ferghana as a peaceful destination distinguished by its natural beauty and authentic atmosphere.

This is particularly important because every tourism product has its own life cycle, the duration of which largely depends on the continuously evolving needs and expectations of tourists. Therefore, tourism products should focus not only on providing services but also on creating memorable and emotionally engaging experiences.

A practical example of this approach can be observed in the Oltiariq District, one of the important components of the Ferghana tourism destination. For many years, the district has been well known for cultivating high-quality grapes, which are currently promoted as a regional tourism product. Nevertheless, the existing potential could be utilized much more effectively. Rather than merely introducing visitors to the taste and appearance of local grapes, it is possible to create unforgettable tourism experiences centered around viticulture.

For this purpose, a specialized “Grape Village” or “Grape Tourism Town” could be established in the foothill areas or in locations adjacent to vineyards. Such a tourism destination would combine vineyards with accommodation facilities, local gastronomy, recreational activities, cultural performances, handicraft exhibitions, agricultural experiences, and wine- and grape-related festivals. This integrated tourism product would enable visitors not only to observe grape cultivation but also to actively participate in harvesting activities, traditional food preparation, local cultural events, and rural lifestyle experiences, thereby creating lasting memories and increasing the attractiveness of the destination.

At present, particular attention is also being devoted to the rapid development of domestic tourism in Uzbekistan, creating broader opportunities for citizens to discover the country's unique tourism destinations. While carefully preserving its distinctive cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, the

Ferghana region is steadily progressing toward becoming one of the most attractive tourism destinations in Central Asia. Every visitor has the opportunity to experience the unique atmosphere, hospitality, and cultural richness that distinguish this remarkable region from other destinations.

Conclusion and Recommendations. The analysis indicates that the full potential of ecotourism and agrotourism in the Ferghana region has not yet been realized due to the limited organization of information tours (info tours) and insufficient destination promotion. The publication of high-quality photographs and aerial drone videos on social media platforms could significantly increase tourists' awareness and attract greater interest in the region's tourism resources.

Furthermore, transportation services and road infrastructure remain underdeveloped in several tourism destinations within the region. These shortcomings reduce the accessibility of tourism sites and consequently limit tourist arrivals.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Establish agrotourism clusters that integrate family guesthouses, ecological interpretation centers, and practical workshops on agricultural activities and traditional farming techniques.
2. Provide government subsidies and financial incentives to farmers willing to develop agrotourism businesses and diversify their agricultural activities through tourism.
3. Improve infrastructure at ecotourism destinations, including transportation networks, visitor facilities, safety measures, and environmental management systems.
4. Organize specialized training programs for local communities to enhance their knowledge and skills in tourism services, hospitality management, and sustainable tourism practices.
5. Develop seasonal and thematic ecotourism events, including agricultural festivals, harvest celebrations, nature-based recreational activities, and cultural events that showcase local traditions.
6. Strengthen environmental protection measures to preserve natural landscapes and biodiversity while ensuring the sustainable development of tourism resources.

The implementation of these recommendations would contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the Ferghana region as a tourism destination,

diversifying its tourism products, improving visitor experiences, and supporting sustainable socio-economic development through tourism.

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