

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE FERGANA VALLEY AND PROSPECTS FOR DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURIST SERVICES

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Abstract

The article analyzes the features and opportunities for diversification and development of regional tourism, especially in Andijan, Namangan and Fergana regions, and provides recommendations for the development of regional tourism services.

Keywords: tourism, region, socio-economic development, strategy, tour operators, dynamics, trend, domestic tourism, hotels, inbound tourism, tourism industry.

Introduction

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the world has had a profound negative impact on the sustainable development of the tourism sector, as well as all sectors of the economy. The number of foreign tourists visiting the industry decreased by 56% in 2020 compared to 2019, and the loss from tourism exports reached \$1.2 trillion, which is three times the damage caused by the global financial and economic crisis in 2009.^[1] According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "...10 percent of the planet's services market is in tourism,^[2]" which is projected to generate \$2 trillion in annual revenue by 2020. To mitigate this crisis in the international tourism market, an important process is the development of opportunities for the development and diversification of the industry.

The fact that there are many ancient cities in the Fergana Valley also proves that its history goes back a long way. Such ancient cities as Margilan, Kokand, Rishtan, Kuva can be included. The history of these cities dates back to 2500-3000 years. It is known from these cities that the Great Silk Road passed through it. These places are of interest to the people of the world. As a result, the Fergana Valley has great potential for the development of international tourism.

^[1] https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Tourists-arrivals-decrease-in-2020-by-world-regions-Source-World-Tourism-Organization_fig1_349308364

^[2] The author's calculations are based on data from the official website of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). UNWTO World Tourism Annual Report 2018.

Purpose of the research

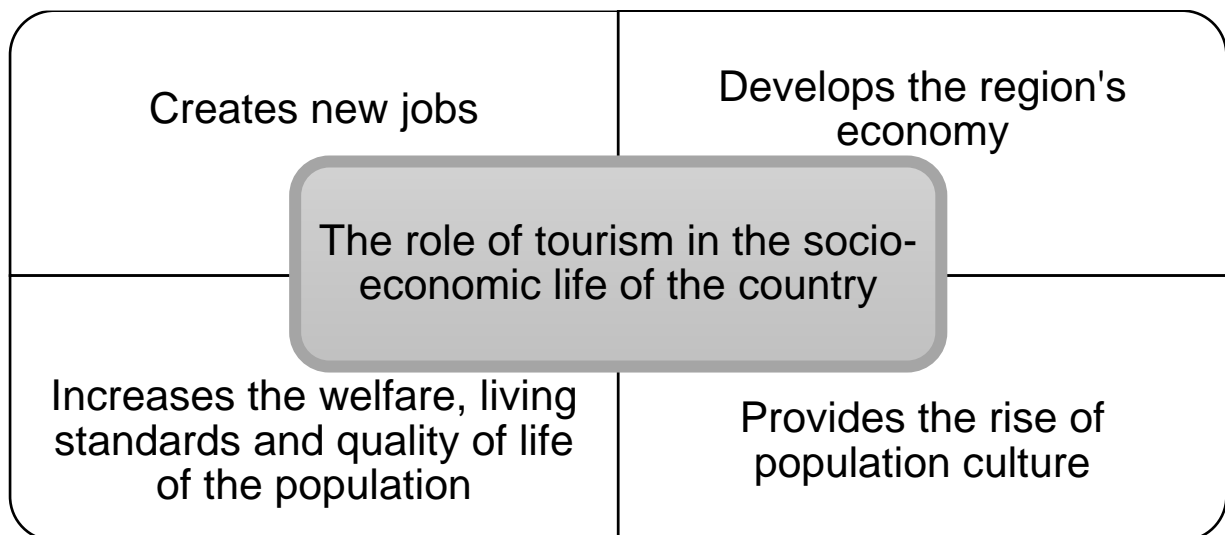
Based on the study of organizational and economic mechanisms for the development and diversification of tourism in the world, a number of scientific and practical results have been obtained. In particular, research is aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of tourism in the foreign and domestic markets, increasing the role and place of the industry in the economy, organizing safe tourism, identifying and developing existing internal capabilities for making optimal management decisions in the industry.

Tourism, as one of the most important sectors of the economy, serves to achieve these goals. Therefore, the need to further improve this area in all regions of the country, including the Fergana Valley, Namangan and Andijan, requires the effective use of existing opportunities.

It is known that in all regions of the Fergana Valley there are tourist attractions, such as museums, resorts, shrines, archeological monuments. And they are being used as tourist attractions. These tourist attractions include historical and cultural heritage sites of international importance. But the arrival of foreign tourists to them is not at the level of demand. Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to this area.

It also plays an important role in coordinating the socio-economic development of the regions, creating new jobs and improving the cultural life of the region. This can also be seen in the following figure (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The role of tourism in the socio-economic life of the country



Results and discussion

In recent years, large-scale work has been carried out to develop the tourism industry, in particular, to increase the flow of foreign tourists to our country, to expand domestic tourism.

Due to the importance of tourism, it is a constant focus of the President and the Government of the country. In particular, Presidential Decree No. 6002 of 28 May 2020 provides targeted interest-free loans to accommodate accommodation and tour operators to keep their employees paid during a pandemic. As a result, the growth rate of tourism development in the Fergana Valley shows that this figure has grown sharply since 2016. This can be seen from the table below (Table 1).

Table 1 Dynamics of the number of tour operators in the Fergana Valley in 2016-2021^[3]

Йил-лар	Андижон вилояти		Наманган вилояти		Фарғона вилояти		Водий бўйича	
	Сони, бирлик-да	Ўсиш суръати, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Ўсиш суръати, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Ўсиш суръати, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Ўсиш суръати, %
2016	8	100,0	1	100,0	6	100,0	15	100,0
2017	12	150,0	2	200,0	9	150,0	23	153,3
2018	19	237,5	7	700,0	18	300,0	44	293,3
2019	39	487,5	23	2300,0	40	666,7	102	380,0
2020	31	387,5	25	2500,0	41	683,0	97	646,7
2021	31	387,5	40	4000,0	43	715,6	114	1015,7

The data from this table show that the number of tour operators in the Fergana Valley increased 6.5 times (646.7%) during the analyzed period 2016-2020. This is a sharp increase in Namangan region. In 2016, there was only 1 tour operator, but by 2020 it has reached 25, an increase of 25.0 times. If we look at this as of 2021, we can see that the number of tour operators has reached 40 and has increased by 40.0 times compared to 2016. It can be seen that despite the fact that the Namangan region has such a great tourism potential, tourism is practically not developed. The last three years have seen a sharp increase. In 2016-2021, the number of tour operators in the Ferghana region was almost the same as in Namangan, having increased by 6.8 times (683.0%). However, in the Andijan region, the growth is somewhat less. During the same period, the region grew 3.9 times (387.5%). This trend will continue in 2021.

In the process of analysis, it is possible to observe the growth. But changes in documentation are also important in making a clear diagnosis. At the same time, we believe that it is necessary to look at the changes in production in the Ferghana Valley of Tour Operators in 2016-2021. To do this, we clearly recommend the table (Table 2).

Table 2 Dynamics of the share of tour operators in the Fergana Valley in 2016-2021

Йил-лар	Андижон вилояти		Наманган вилояти		Фарғона вилояти		Республика бўйича	
	Сони, бирлик-да	Улуши, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Улуши, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Улуши, %	Сони, бирлик-да	Улуши, %
2016	8	53,3	1	6,7	6	40,0	15	100,0
2017	12	52,2	2	8,7	9	39,1	23	100,0
2018	19	43,2	7	15,9	18	40,9	44	100,0
2019	39	38,2	23	22,6	40	39,2	102	100,0
2020	31	32,0	25	25,8	41	42,2	97	100,0

^[3] Author's work based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ferghana, Andijan, Namangan Regions of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

2021	31	32,0	40	32,0	55	36,0	121	100,0
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According to this table, despite the rapid growth of the Namangan region, the number of tour operators in the Fergana Valley still stands at 25.8%. In 2021, the number of tour operators reached 40 and is growing. Of course, in 2016 this figure was only 6.7%. Structural changes in the Fergana region have also changed. In 2016, 40.0% were tour operators and by 2020, 42.2%. However, in 2017 (39.1%) and 2019 (39.2%) there was even a decrease. This situation worsened dramatically in 2021. However, due to the lack of growth in the number of tour operators in the Andijan region, there was a decrease in the structure. In 2016, the region covered 53.3% of the region's tour operators, but since then it has been systematically decreasing, and in 2020 its level will be only 32.0%. This situation will continue in 2021. It is also clear that the level of utilization of the existing tourism potential in the Fergana Valley is very low. In all three regions, the share of tourism in the gross regional product (GRP) is only about 1.0%.

To illustrate the information in the table above, it is useful to look at their diagram. This can be seen in the changes in the number of organizations (tour-operators) engaged in tourism in the Fergana Valley in 2016-2021 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Changes in the organizations (tour operators) engaged in tourism in the Fergana Valley in 2016-2021^[4]



It is also clear that, as noted above, there is still great potential for the development of tourism in the Fergana Valley. This requires the development of "road maps" and action plans for the development of tourism and its specific types in each region. This also requires a more in-depth analysis of the sector.

If we look at the history of the valley, it is one of the most ancient. According to historians, sources, during the visit of the Chinese diplomat Zhang Xianyang to the valley in 128 BC, the area was called Davon. It had more than 70 settlements. The region is known for its fertile lands, developed economy, agriculture and handicrafts. Horticulture, viticulture, and wheat and rice cultivation are well established in the valley. Pedigree horses are bred

^[4] Data for 2021 Author's development based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan Fergana, Namangan region.

in cattle breeding. That's why alfalfa was created. History has it that the Davon-China War took place between 104 and 102 BC. diplomatic relations have been established between the two countries and peace has been achieved.

In our country, as well as in the Namangan region, in the strategic development of industry with the opening of travel agencies in various directions, the production of souvenirs, the creation of modern service farms, the establishment of world-class tourist services.

Our tourism organizations organize a number of exhibitions or regularly participate in international exhibitions in almost all major cities of the world, including Moscow, Beijing, Delhi, Madrid, Riga, Berlin, Paris, Tokyo, London, Istanbul. It is known that tourism organizations are repeating the seasonal nature of the industry and asking them to expand this route in line with modern requirements.

In order to ensure the fulfillment of these tasks, relevant programs have been developed in all regions of the country. There are local history museums in all regions to promote domestic tourism. It is especially useful for teaching general education, secondary special and higher education students. The revival of national traditions in the valleys, such as "Flower Festival", "Atlas Festival", "Sabantuy", "Honey Festival", "Osh Holiday", also serves as a basis for the development of tourism.

There are 41 tourist organizations in Fergana region, more than 30 in Andijan region and 25 in Namangan region. The task now is to dramatically increase and develop the tourism organizations, firms and companies involved in this field. The arrival of tourists does not happen by itself. In order to organize it, it is necessary to have the appropriate organizing entities.

In the valley regions, especially in Namangan region, tourist organizations are not enough to organize trips to historical cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, Shakhrisabz and make this sector a leading sector of the region's economy. Today, one of the main tasks of tourism companies is to achieve a sharp increase in exports of services.

The tourist enterprises located in the valley provide information about the ancient and rich history of Andijan, Fergana and Namangan regions, as well as beautiful resorts.

Currently, the activities of some tourist organizations are noteworthy. In particular, the travel agency "Kholis Sayohat" in Andijan region has established cooperation not only with our country, but also with travel agencies in the United Arab Emirates, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and provides them with extensive information about our tourist facilities. In addition to visiting these countries, the citizens of our country are engaged in bringing tourists from those countries and welcoming them, traveling not only throughout the region, but throughout Uzbekistan. In this way, it makes a worthy contribution to increasing the export of services.

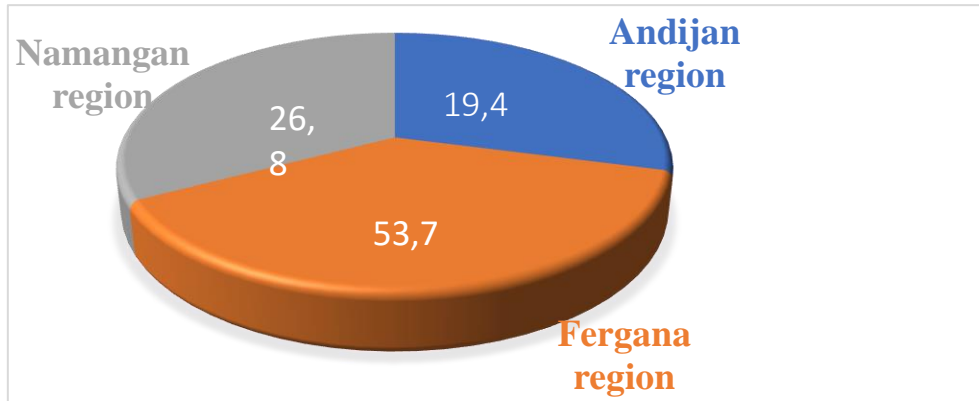
In 2021, the number of tourist facilities in Andijan and Namangan regions will be 301 in Namangan region alone. Of these, only more than 20 tourist facilities, or 6.6%, are used. This figure is 12.7% in Fergana and 14.3% in Namangan. Of course, these indicators also show that the valley still has great potential for tourism development.

The Bobur Park, which has become the beauty of Andijan, plays an important role in the development of domestic tourism. Extensive landscaping work has been carried out here: the symbolic mausoleum "Bobur", the museum "Bobur and world culture". These tourist attractions're making a great impression on visitors and tourists. The "Royal Palace - Horde" of Kokand khan Khudoyorkhan, built in 1871 in Kokand, the only city in the Fergana region, is one of the largest exhibitions of oriental architectural traditions. The palace covers an area of 4 hectares, has 7 courtyards and 112 rooms. According to historical sources, 16,000 people and 80 craftsmen took part in the construction of the palace. At present, the palace has 2 courtyards and 19 rooms.

"Norbotabek" madrasah in Kokand built in the 18th century, Shakhon Dakhmasi built by Umar Khan in the 19th century, Madarikhona mausoleum, Kamol qazi madrasah, Jome mosque built in that period, Margilan silk tradition, Pir Siddiq complex, Kho The Magiz Mausoleum is one of the major facilities for the development of domestic and inbound (international) tourism, as well as the pottery dynasty that has been providing pottery in Rishtan district.

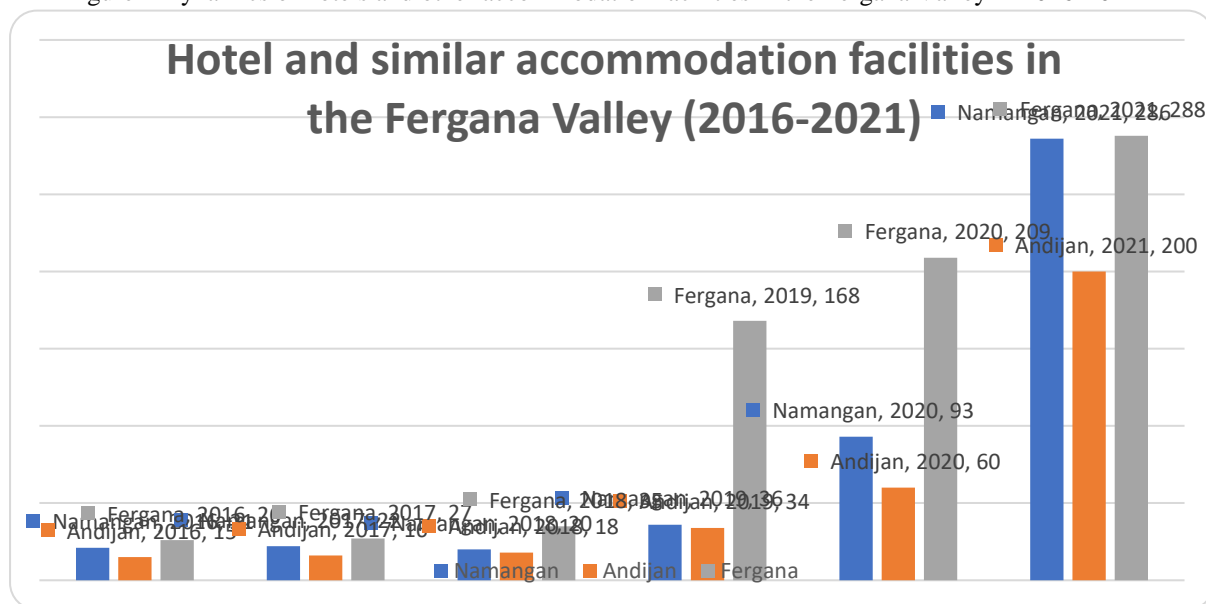
Tourist facilities are being reconstructed in the Fergana Valley. The quality of services is improving in 23 hotels in Andijan region, 38 in Namangan region and 59 in Fergana region. The structure of these is shown in the following figure (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The share of hotels in the Fergana Valley as of 2020^[5]



As can be seen, 53.7% of hotels in the valley are in Fergana region, 26.8% in Namangan region and 19.4% in Andijan region. This means that the potential for receiving tourists varies in the valley regions. Tourism infrastructure is being developed on the basis of recently adopted programs. This condition can be observed over the years (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Dynamics of hotels and other accommodation facilities in the Fergana Valley in 2016-2021^[6]



From the data of this diagram, it can be seen that when analyzing the Fergana Valley, the number of hotels and similar facilities in the Fergana region increased by 11.0 times in 2016-2021. In Namangan, this indicator increased by 11.9 times, and in Andijan - by 13.3 times. This shows that the diversification of tourist accommodation services is a sharp development trend. In the Andijan region, the growth rate is lower. Namangan

^[5] Data for 2021 Author's development based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan Fergana, Andijan, Namangan region.

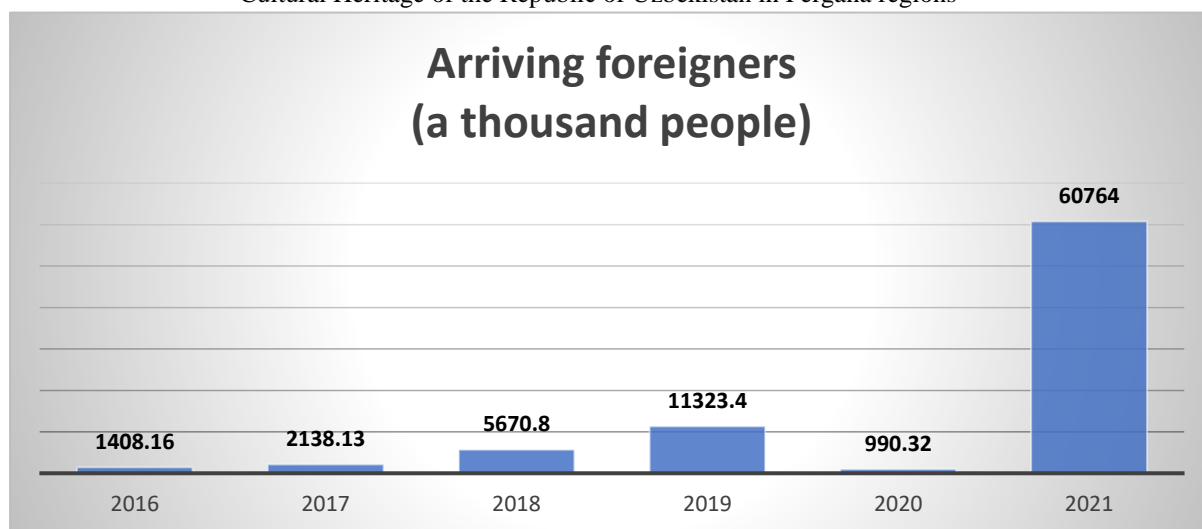
^[6] Data for 2021 Author's development based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan Fergana, Andijan, Namangan region.

and Ferghana regions saw sharp growth in 2021 and were almost equal. In these regions, the accommodation of tourists also requires the development of programs that contribute to the diversification of services.

Visits by foreign citizens to tourist sites in the Ferghana Valley, in particular in the Fergana region, in 2016-2019 showed a sharp growth trend. However, in 2020, during the pandemic, it dropped sharply. By 2021, the number of foreigners visiting tourist sites can be seen in the dynamics of rapid growth (Figure 5).

Number of foreigners visiting Fergana region (2016-2021)

Figure 5. Based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Fergana regions ^[7]



In 2016, 1408.16 thousand foreigners visited Fergana region, which is 8 times more than in 2019 (11323.40 thousand people), and 1.4 times less than in 2021 (2137,4 thousand people) compared to 2021, because from March 16, 2021 In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the rate has decreased due to the pandemic. Along with the cultural heritage sites of the Fergana Valley with a history of several thousand years, each corner has a beautiful and picturesque nature that captivates everyone. All of these, along with the development of domestic tourism, are also popular destinations for foreign tourists. There is a lot of work to be done in these places to further improve the service system for the development of tourism, to create a modern tourist infrastructure.

Conclusion

There are many opportunities for tourism development in the valley regions.

First of all, our research shows that tourism organizations located in the Namangan region alone are not enough to organize trips to historical cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, Shakhrisabz, and turn this sector into the leading branch of the region's economy. Today, one of the main tasks of travel companies is a sharp increase in the export of services.

Secondly, in the strategic development of the tourism industry in our country, especially in the Namangan region, along with the opening of travel agencies of various directions, the production of souvenirs, the creation of modern

^[7] Author's work based on data from the Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ferghana Region of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage.

hotel complexes, the provision of world-class services to tourists, it is also advisable. The potential for this is sufficient, but it requires its effective use.

Thirdly, to ensure the fulfillment of these tasks, it is necessary to develop appropriate programs in all regions of the country. In all regions there are local history museums that contribute to the development of domestic tourism. This is especially useful for teaching students of general education, secondary specialized and higher educational institutions. The revival of national traditions in the valleys, such as the Festival of Flowers, the Festival of Atlas, Sabantuy, the Festival of Honey, the Festival of Soup, also serves as a basis for the development of tourism. It is desirable to further enrich this experience.

If our recommendations are implemented, we will be able to successfully complete the tasks set out in the New Development Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 to develop tourism in our country, especially in the valleys.^[8]

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