

## STRATEGY AND PROSPECTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

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**Annotation:** *Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural heritage, historical monuments, and beautiful nature, is one of the countries that places great emphasis on tourism development. The Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy aims to increase the number of tourists by creating favorable conditions for both domestic and international tourism.*

**Keywords:** *foreign tourists, projects, tourism industry*

In terms of the number of foreign tourists, Uzbekistan has reached 98% of the pre-pandemic level. In particular, 6.748 million people visited the country in 2019 foreign tourists, and by 2023 this number amounted to 6.626 million. This indicates the rapid recovery of the tourism industry in our country.

In order to attract more foreign tourists, Uzbekistan is carrying out practical measures to simplify the visa regime, develop new destinations, attract investment in projects related to this industry, and organize major events. For example, in 2023, 508 projects with a total value of 9.5 trillion soums were implemented, creating 9,492 new jobs. Additionally, 183 new hotels and 232 hostels were opened, bringing the total number of accommodation facilities to 5,526. In addition, 452 family guesthouses have been established, bringing the total number to 3,458. As a result of the opening of 810 new travel organizations and travel agencies, their total number increased to 2,649.

In general, the current state of Uzbekistan's tourism industry and its development trends demonstrate positive results. An analysis of the measures taken to further develop tourism and its future prospects confirms the strategic importance of this industry. Additionally, the tourism development objectives outlined in the "Uzbekistan 2030" strategy contribute to increasing the population's income, creating new job opportunities, and ensuring the well-being of the people.

Tourists visiting Uzbekistan have the opportunity to reach the country's attractions by rail. In addition to regular and high-speed trains, Afrosiab high-speed trains manufactured by the Spanish company Talgo run daily between Tashkent, Samarkand, and Karshi, significantly improving the quality of service and reducing travel time. In addition, in June 2016, the world witnessed another breakthrough in the development of Uzbekistan's tourism

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and transportation industry with the opening ceremony of the Angren-Pap electrified railway line, which connects the picturesque Fergana Valley with the rest of the country.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has been actively promoting new types of travel, including eco-tourism. The presence of nature reserves, national parks, nurseries, nature reserves, natural monuments, and a biosphere reserve in the country makes eco-tourism a highly promising sector.

In addition, geotourism, medical tourism, as well as mountaineering and rafting, have been developed in our country. Recreation areas and comfortable infrastructure facilities are being built in the regions. For example, the Chimgan, Beldersay, and Charkok sports and recreation centers, located in the Tashkent region, provide the necessary conditions for skiing and other winter sports. They feature various types of mountain trails ranging from 300 to 3,000 meters in length. Visitors can use a special lift to climb the cable car.

In Uzbekistan, gastronomic tourism is gaining popularity, and the development of this sector has made pilaf and other national dishes a recognizable brand of the country.

Natural and cultural sites were studied, as well as the possibilities for creating new routes. In parallel, the company held a series of meetings with government agencies to discuss visa regulations, branding, and institutional development of tourism. An important part of the work was a practical seminar for tourism professionals on modern marketing approaches, as well as consultations on licensing, training, and certification of tourism services.

Work continues with a focus on identifying promising areas for tourism development in the regions. Special attention is being paid to the Fergana Valley, the Khiva-Nukus tourist corridor, and other high-potential routes. Events are also planned to discuss the interim results of the strategy and present Morocco's experience in tourism reform, which has been adapted to the conditions of Uzbekistan. At the same time, recommendations are being prepared for branding and positioning the country in international markets.

One of the potential areas of the future strategy could be the development of auto and motor tourism. In particular, it envisages the creation of campsites based on individual projects in natural and mountainous locations, where tourists arrive by car or motor transport.

One of the main goals is to increase the number of foreign tourists who are willing to travel to our country for longer periods of time and spend more money. To achieve this, we have set goals to improve the infrastructure, including by attracting foreign businesses, liberalizing the visa regime, improving the quality of services, increasing the variety of tourism products, and creating attractive tourist routes.

Successful tourism development requires the activation of training qualified specialists. The Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage and its 10 professional technical schools cooperate with educational institutions in foreign countries and international organizations in the training and retraining of personnel in the field of

tourism, and the widespread application of international experience in these processes. To date, cooperation has been established with over 80 foreign educational institutions, including from the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, USA, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany, etc.

The network of air travel is expanding, including with the participation of budget air carriers (low-cost carriers) for foreign tourists both in the country and abroad. To date, the number of flights to Uzbekistan from different countries has increased to about 1,100 per year, involving more than 40 national and foreign airlines. These figures are several times higher than in previous years.

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