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Prospects of Executing the Project of Compiling a Tourism City in Afshona Village Located in Bukhara Region

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Abstract: This study explores the prospects of developing a tourist town in the village of Afshona, located in the Peshku district of the Bukhara region, the birthplace of the renowned scientist Abu Ali ibn Sina. Despite its historical and cultural significance, the area remains underutilized as a tourist destination, presenting a knowledge gap in leveraging such heritage for tourism development. The research aims to propose scientifically grounded, practical, and organizational-economic measures to transform Afshona into a year-round tourist hub capable of attracting over 10 million domestic and international visitors annually. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the study identifies development stages and formulates actionable recommendations. The findings highlight the potential of this project to boost regional tourism, preserve cultural heritage, and stimulate economic growth, offering valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners in tourism development.

Keywords: Tourist zone, Destination, Tourism village, Domestic tourism, International inbound tourism, Regulation of the tourism industry

1. Introduction

Among our world-famous and great ancestors, the genius of Abu Ali Ibn Sina is recognized and respected as one of the most prominent representatives of Uzbekistan. On October 12, 2021, during a practical visit to Bukhara region, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed “turning the village of Afshona into a tourist town, where our great ancestor, the great scholar Abu Ali ibn Sina was born and raised” and noted the need to develop a plan of practical actions in this direction to increase the tourist attractiveness of the region. Afshona is an ancient village located 30 kilometers northeast of Bukhara in the Peshku district of the Bukhara region. In the very center of this village, recognized as the birthplace of the great scientist Ibn Sina, there is a magnificent and beautiful corner, which created a small complex, including a statue of the scientist in the center of a green avenue, a medical college and the Abu Ali ibn Sina Museum.

The scientific-practical and organizational-economic justification of the prospects for implementing the project of creating a tourist town in the village of Afshona, located in the Bukhara region, is one of the pressing issues of today and indicates the need to conduct this research. The problems of turning regions with tourist potential into attractive destinations were scientifically investigated by foreign scholars such as S. Formica [1], N. Leiper[2], S. Plog[3], and V. Althoff[4]. Uzbek scientists Kh.M. Mamatkulov [5], N.S.

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Ibragimov [6], and B.N. Navruz-zoda [7] have deeply researched issues of proper management, orientation, adaptation to renewable and dynamic demands against the backdrop of seasonal changes, increasing the share of service supply, and developing strategic plans, taking into account the characteristics inherent in the period of technological transformation, as an integral continuation of the ability to generate a tourist flow.

2. Materials and Methods

Research methods such as systematic analysis, conceptual approach, scientific abstraction, analysis and synthesis, and statistical analysis were used in the process of determining the prospects for implementing the project of creating a tourist town in the village of Afshona which located in the Bukhara region. Based on systematic analysis key advantages of Afshona as an attractive tourist destination, positive aspects of creating a tourist town in the village of Afshona and key stages for inclusion of Afshana in the UNWTO Best Tourist Villages list were developed.

3. Results and Discussion

The important advantages of the village of Afshona as an attractive tourist destination have been analyzed, and in our opinion, the location of this village in the Bukhara region is noted as one of the first important advantages (Fig. 1). Because the name of Bukhara itself shows the characteristics that can serve as an impressive and attractive advertisement without any additional comments, attracting foreigners, especially the population of the Muslim world. Therefore, this can also be noted as a natural feature that ensures the superiority of the travel destination, and this positive aspect is clearly visible in the market activity as a brand that combines both internal and external image.

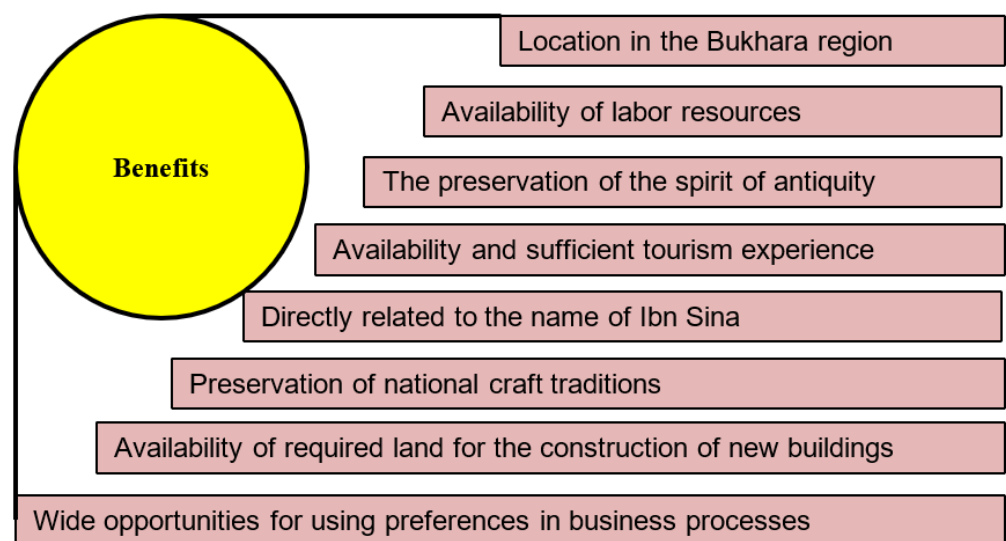


Figure 1. Key advantages of Afshona as an attractive tourist destination

According to an analysis of the demographic situation conducted to study labor force potential, as of April 1, 2024, 2,050.6 thousand people resided in the Bukhara region, of which 756.4 thousand (37%) were urban residents and 1,294.2 thousand (63%) were rural residents. In Peshku district, the total population is 131.4 thousand people, of which 16.7 thousand are urban residents and 114.7 thousand are rural residents. The percentage of the district's population living in urban areas is 13%, while the share of the rural population is 87%. Therefore, the share of the rural population in the Peshku district is significantly higher, and there is a need to implement specific measures for the socio-

economic development of the regions, particularly the village of Afshona, through the development of rural tourism.

As of January 1, 2024, 57.1% of the population of Peshku Raion was of working age, 12.3% were over working age, and 30.6% were under working age [8].

According to 2023 statistics, the number of people over 65 years of age in the district is 7,067 (5.3%). Based on Japan's experience in the formation and development of attractive tourist destinations, we believe it is necessary to create the most favorable conditions for the participation of people of all ages in tourism, taking into account their proposals and ideas not only as consumers of tourist services, but also in the issues of establishing tourist services [9]. We believe that one of the directions for demonstrating the spirit of authentic antiquity in the tourist village of Afshona is the proper and effective use of the knowledge and experience of elderly people living in the region, the appointment of representatives from among them as part of advisory councils, and the consideration of their opinions in the process of implementing tourist projects [10].

Based on data provided by the Statistics Committee, the total labor resources of the Peshku district were analyzed [11]. According to it, 8.9% of the total working-age population, or 4.8 thousand people, are unemployed according to 2022 data. Noting that the indicators have varied since 2014, the latest results can be negatively assessed [12]. Although Stat.uz did not publish data for 2023-2024, based on the available figures from 2014, we can conclude that the unemployment rate is at least 5.3 percent or more than 3,000 [13]. Thus, in our opinion, as a result of the implementation of the project of an attractive tourist destination in the village of Afshona, along with the achievement of a significant contribution to solving the current unemployment problem in the district, the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 72 of February 16, 2021 "On the Comprehensive Socio-Economic Development of the Peshku District of the Bukhara Region for 2021-2023." It also serves to implement the tasks provided for in the Roadmap for the creation of the "Afshona" tourist village for the development of tourism in the territory of the "Ibn Sino" neighborhood in the Peshku district of the Bukhara region in Appendix No. 6 to the Resolution "On Measures to Reduce Poverty." [14,15].

The development of tourism in remote areas is considered extremely beneficial for the state, in particular, thanks to the consistency of this process, the stability of the economy is ensured and its high level is achieved, social solidarity of the country is ensured, the scale of mutually beneficial international relations is expanded, cultural ties are strengthened, and the amount of currency receipts to the state budget is increased [16].

In our opinion, the implementation of the Afshona tourist village project will have a positive impact on the lives of the local population [17]. For example, the creation of permanent jobs, the increase in the income of the region's population, the improvement of the quality of life of the local population, the acceleration of urbanization processes, the development of infrastructure opportunities, the preservation of folk art, traditions, customs, the restoration and protection of cultural monuments, and the enhancement of the region's attractiveness are among them [18].

Along with the construction of a new tourist town on the territory of the village, it is planned to create the following amenities and new types of services:

1. the creation of a complex of ethnic houses of the 10th century, reflecting the time of Ibn Sina;
2. creation of an eco-park around the "ethnic center" and increasing the number of green areas;
3. the establishment of 10th-century folk medicine houses;
4. organization of plantations of medicinal herbs;
5. creation of a national teahouse of the 10th century;
6. the establishment of a 10th-century bathhouse;
7. revival and development of handicraft types and traditions, which are disappearing from year to year;

8. creation of a miniature center;
9. creation of a center for the preparation of medicinal tinctures;
10. organization of comfortable guest houses for visitors in all respects;
11. production of medicinal soap from cottonseed oil [19].

Craftsmanship is a historically established activity of our people, based on special knowledge, skills, secrets, methods known only to representatives of a certain dynasty, using manual labor, tools and small mechanization, based on traditional and modern requirements, it is considered a creative or professional level activity for the production, service and preparation of household, artistic products [20]. Subjects engaged in craft activities, that is, skilled artisans and their numerous students, continuing our centuries-old traditions and creating unique examples of manual labor, provide services to foreign and local tourists by presenting unique items that "speak" about the history of the region [21].

In addition to the above, we propose to establish the activities of the following additional services and types of crafts in the rural area: confectionery; embroidery; livestock farm; cooking; tailoring; restoring the weaving of zandanicha fabric; establishing the activities of the House of Scientists; handicrafts; establishing the method of ancient carpet weaving; carpentry; establishing the sewing of chapan and ichikcha; bakery; restoring the ancient stone mill; basket making; tandoor making; preparing medicinal The symbolic house of Abu Ali ibn Sina; the house of the healer; pottery; calligraphy; ancient bathhouse; green garden area; parking lot [22].

In our opinion, the creation of a tourist town based on the village of Afshona will, firstly, contribute to increasing the country's overall tourism supply system, creating broad opportunities for the introduction of new types of services, and secondly, contribute to solving the problems of tourism and traffic congestion observed in the main tourist centers of the Bukhara region, which will be extremely important and useful in the formation of destination centers directed towards managing tourist flows. Accordingly, the positive aspects of organizing a tourist town in the village of Afshona were studied, and Figure 2 was formed.

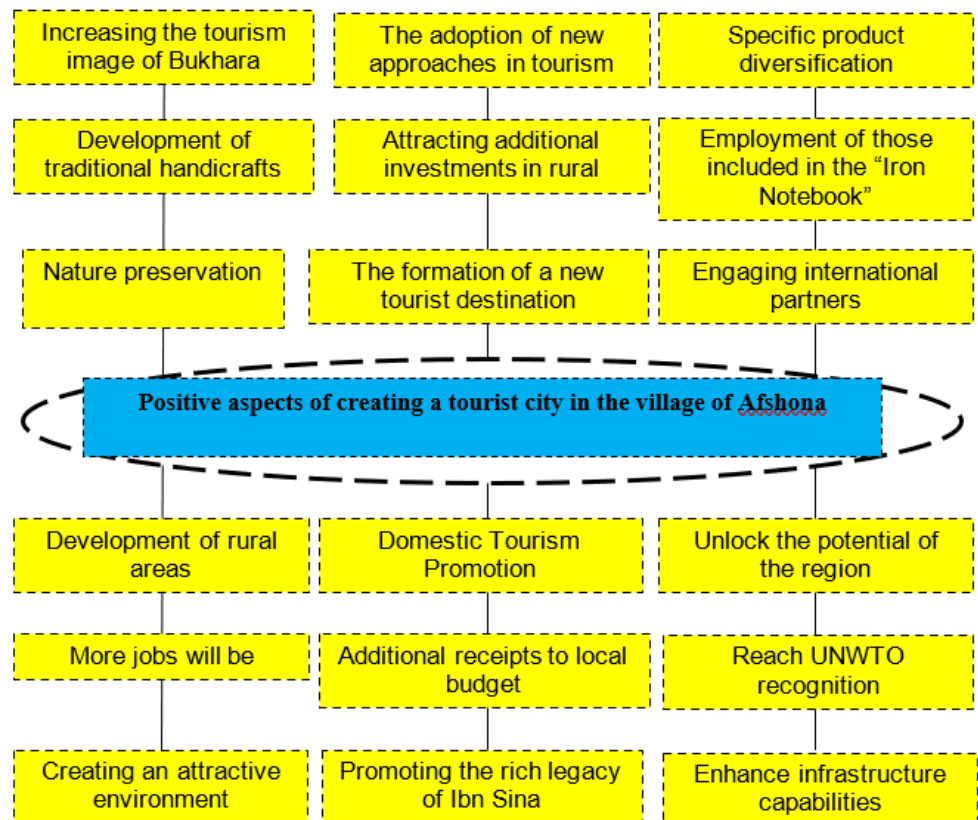


Figure 2. Positive aspects of creating a tourist town in the village of Afshona

Today's global tourism market environment requires countries and destination management companies, as well as industry management bodies, to conduct a long-term policy aimed at increasing the popularity of the tourist destination, to act in accordance with modern requirements and methods of market promotion, and to use mechanisms that influence and motivate tourist centers with high tourist demand and the formation of large flows [23]. The World Tourism Organization's strategy for the development of the tourism industry in rural areas, in our view, should be taken into account in the strategic development of the Afshana tourist village, taking into account the possibility of publishing a list of the best tourist villages in order to provide the possibility of promoting tourist villages using its own name, taking into account the development of relatively remote areas under highly competitive conditions. Given that this "best" rating will serve as the basis for a multi-fold increase in the number of tourist visits to the region, the main stages for including Afshana in the UNWTO list of the best tourist villages have been developed (Fig. 3).

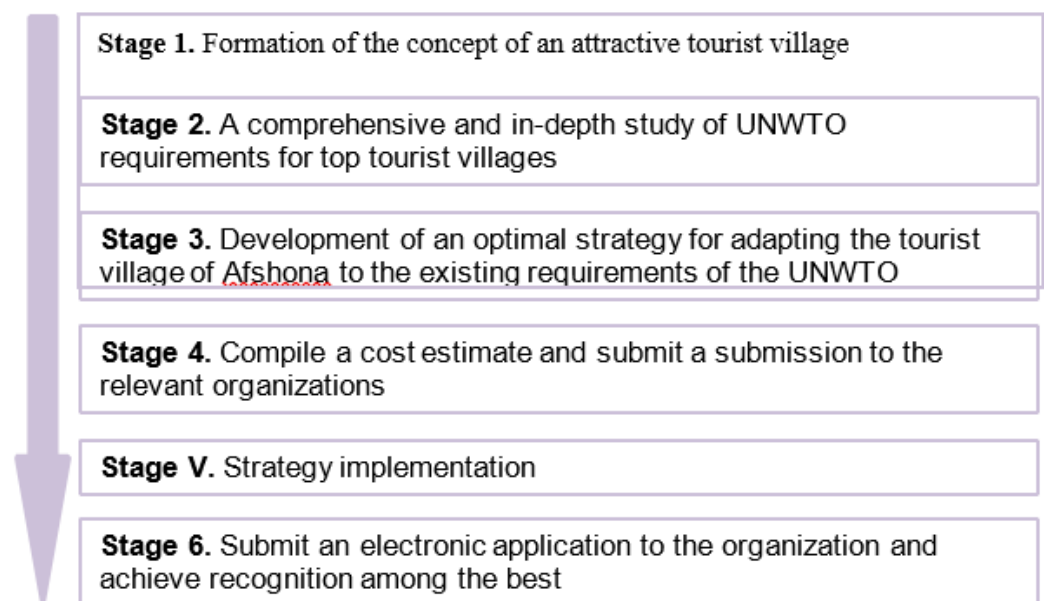


Figure 3. Key stages for inclusion of Afshana in the UNWTO Best Tourist Villages list

The presence of permanent and short-term power outages in the district, as well as problems related to the supply of natural gas in industrial zones, negatively affects not only the industrial and service sectors of the region, but also the overall economic and social outcomes [24]. In recent years, due to climate change and the lack of a systematic system for targeted consumption and expenditure, there has been a problem of water scarcity in land irrigation, which is considered a very important factor in agricultural production. In addition, the fact that the level of salinity of land plots is much higher than the normative indicators creates serious problems in the cultivation of crops and leads to an increase in food prices.

However, we can also positively assess the practical efforts to solve the aforementioned problems. In particular, Acwa Power is currently building a wind farm with a capacity of 500 MW in the district, and as a result of its commissioning, it is expected that the problems of energy shortages will be solved and interruptions will be significantly reduced. According to the project we propose, it is planned to use solar panels and water heating devices in the tourist village of Afshona, the panels will be installed in such a way that the processes of their use and the points of their location do not violate the traditional spirit of the region's design, and guests will not notice it if they are not interested in it. That

is, the issues of energy supply of the village will be resolved on the spot, as much as possible, and additionally equipped with electricity harvesting equipment, which means that if necessary, the tourist destination will also have the opportunity to sell excess energy by supplying it to adjacent regions, and as a result, the list of sources of income will increase by one more.

It is known that the topic of environmental sustainability and environmental protection, which is gaining increasing global importance today in the development of tourist destinations and the evaluation of business processes, is recognized at the forefront of the agenda, and practical efforts in this direction are positively evaluated and supported by international organizations, as well as from the point of view of the country's governing bodies and policies. In particular, in recent years, our country has been consistently implementing comprehensive measures to ensure environmental safety, improve the environmental situation, prevent the harmful impact of waste on human health, rational and efficient use of natural resources, and create favorable conditions for improving the quality of sanitary and environmental conditions [25].

According to the project proposed by the author for implementation in the village of Afshona, it is required to allocate 2 hectares of land from the rural area, taking into account the harmony of the traditional form of the territory and having a convenient location along the road. Along with this, modern parking lots will be built on the route connecting the town with the main road (Fig. 4), separate parking lots for people with disabilities, and later a small charging station for electric vehicles will be put into operation.



Figure 4. Overview of the tourist town established on the basis of the tourist village of Afshona

In order to decorate the doors and columns with traditional wood carving samples, to use the construction technologies inherited from our ancestors, to correctly use the "colors" of antiquity, embodying the methodology of national identity, in the points where it is necessary to give a simpler appearance, the most experienced builders-masters of the Bukhara region, continuing the traditions of master-disciple, are involved in the creative processes. On the site of the garden, which is planned to be built on the side of the complex, trees and seedlings suitable for the local climate will be planted, drip irrigation technologies will be used, and it is planned that this technology will cover the entire complex.

Another noteworthy aspect is the organization of entertainment events with tourists to plant seedlings on vacant land plots near Afshana (Fig. 5), familiarizing tourists with their care projects over the years, and after a certain period of time, developing

motivational programs to visit the plants planted by themselves, as a result of which the ground for repeated tourist visits will be prepared.



Figure 5. Overview of the tourist town established on the basis of the tourist village of Afshona

As a result of the implementation of the project, 200 new jobs will be created, which will contribute to the provision of unemployed citizens with permanent jobs, and primarily coverage will be focused on the selection of personnel from families in need of social support. It is important that, if necessary, conditions will be created here to improve their qualifications, for which cooperation will be established with the Faculty of Economics and Tourism of Bukhara State University. The establishment of close ties with the higher educational institution will create an opportunity to improve the qualifications of future personnel studying in the field of tourism in the region, to provide referrals to the tourist destination of Afshana for internships, and young people with an interest in tourism entrepreneurship, based on the experience of Afshana, to establish tourism management or marketing activities in their regions.

The total number of places in the accommodation facilities at the resort is planned to be 200, for which 20 guest houses will be built. According to estimates, more than 50,000 guests are expected to visit the region annually. The annual income is expected to be 15 billion Uzbek soums, and the necessary funds for the implementation of the project will amount to 10 billion Uzbek soums. Therefore, once the destination is fully operational, the project will be able to fully cover itself in 2 years. Over the past period of this year (the period until June 2024 is envisaged), 455.2 thousand foreign tourists visited the region, and tourism exports reached 113.8 million US dollars through the provision of services. It should be noted that this indicator is 34.6% higher compared to the corresponding period last year.

The number of local tourists arriving in Bukhara is also increasing year after year. If in 2022 their number was 2 million 961.1 thousand, by 2023 this figure reached 3 million 490 thousand. So far this year, 1,439.5 thousand of our compatriots have traveled to Bukhara. Based on statistical data from 2023, the amount of funds spent on transportation, catering services, guide services, visits to the Ibn Sina Museum, accommodation facilities, and other additional services from 1 to 4 percent of the total number of tourists visiting the Bukhara region was estimated to be between \$10 and \$50, and income forecasts were made.

Based on the fact that the total number of tourists visiting the Bukhara region for tourism purposes in 2023 exceeded 4.9 million, the amount of income from the visit of tourists to the tourist destination Afshona was projected to be 1-4 percent of this amount. According to the results, if a tourist flow of one percent of the total number of tourists who visited the village of Afshona in the region in 2023 is achieved, 49 thousand tourists visit the tourist destination annually, and if they spend an average of 10 dollars in the region, they will receive an income of 490 thousand US dollars or 6,186,250,000 Uzbek soums. Considering that the project costs 10 billion Uzbek soums, the destination will receive a revenue of 12,372,500,000 Uzbek soums in 2 years and fully cover the expenses incurred.

4. Conclusion

Thus, in our opinion, as a result of implementing the project to create a tourist town in the village of Afshona, the following socio-economic changes will be observed and practical results will be achieved:

1. 200 able-bodied unemployed citizens living in the Peshku district will be provided with permanent and income-generating jobs, as a result of which additional income will be provided to 200 households. However, this is only a preliminary stage, and it is expected that these indicators will be increased at least twice in the future due to new projects of the Afshona tourist village, which will be built in adjacent areas.
2. Due to the use of renewable energy sources in the tourist town, the region will be able to cover its main energy needs through its own sources, and excess energy will be sold to nearby businesses and farms at affordable prices. These practical efforts fully meet the requirements of the UN and UNWTO for environmental sustainability, increasing the attractiveness and prestige of the tourist destination.
3. The economic efficiency of the project lies in the fact that within 2 years, it is projected that the funds spent will be fully reimbursed and the annual income will exceed 15 billion Uzbek soums.
4. In accordance with the aspirations of building an inclusive society on a global scale, creating and developing wider opportunities for people with disabilities to access tourism services, the territory of a tourist village is provided with fully inclusive conditions, and the experience of the most developed countries of the world is used.
5. The village of Afshona will be included in the UNWTO ranking of the best tourist villages and become one of the first recognized tourist villages in the region. It should be noted that there are currently only 2 such villages in Central Asia.
6. The investment attractiveness of the region will increase due to the provision of preferences to business entities by the state, as a result of which investors will want to invest not only in tourism, but also in other sectors of the economy, and as a result of the project's effectiveness, a strong direct incentive will be formed. The business environment will develop, gradually changes will be observed not only in rural areas, but also in the entire district, and most importantly, people's satisfaction will be ensured, and the well-being of society will increase.

In conclusion, it can be said that by turning the village of Afshona of the Peshku district into an attractive tourist destination, it will be possible to develop rural tourism, medical tourism in the future, effectively use the attractiveness of the region, more widely promote the possibilities of the great scientist Abu Ali ibn Sina's medicine on a global scale, significantly increase the flow of tourists by attracting representatives of the global medical field to this tourist destination, steadily increase the income from the industry, restore medical knowledge during the time of Ibn Sina.

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