



Development of Desert Tourism in Uzbekistan

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Submitted: 27-Mar, 2026

Accepted: 19-Apr, 2026

Published: 12-May, 2026

Vol. 3, No. 2, 2026. Sociometrics.us

Journal of Community, Law and
Diplomacy Sciences

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Abstract

This article examines the characteristics and prospects for the development of desert tourism in Uzbekistan as a promising area of the tourism industry. It analyzes the natural resource potential of desert territories, the current state of infrastructure, statistical indicators of tourist flow, and factors influencing the development of this sector. Particular attention is paid to issues of sustainable development, environmental safety, and the investment attractiveness of desert regions. Based on the analysis, proposals for improving state policy in desert tourism are formulated.

Keywords: Desert Tourism, Ecotourism, Kyzylkum, Tourism Infrastructure, Sustainable Development, Safari, Ethnotourism, Investment

Introduction

Tourism is one of the strategically important sectors of the Uzbekistan economy. In recent years, the government has been actively implementing reforms aimed at diversifying the tourism product and developing new areas. One such area is desert tourism, which leverages the natural potential of the country's desert territories.[1]

A significant portion of Uzbekistan's territory is occupied by deserts, the largest of which is Kyzylkum. These territories boast unique natural landscapes, a distinct climate, rare flora and fauna, and a rich historical and cultural heritage. With the growing global interest in eco-tourism and adventure tourism, desert regions are becoming especially important.

The development of desert tourism not only contributes to increased tourist flow but also to the creation of new jobs, the development of small businesses, the investment attractiveness of the regions, and the

improvement of the socioeconomic status of the local population.[2]

Methodology

In preparing this article, we used methods such as scientific literature analysis, comparative analysis of international experience, statistical analysis of tourist flow data, and a systems approach to assessing the tourism potential of desert regions.[3]

An analysis of the regulatory framework allowed us to determine the role of the state in shaping the conditions for tourism development. A comparative method allowed us to identify successful desert tourism development practices in other countries and assess the potential for their application in Uzbekistan.[4][5]

Results

The desert regions of Uzbekistan possess significant tourism potential. The most promising area is the Kyzylkum Desert, located between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. Various tourism activities are developing here, including 4x4 safaris, camel rides, yurt camping, ethnographic tours, stargazing, and ecotourism.[6]

The Aydarkul Lake area is particularly popular, where tourists can combine water recreation with exploring the desert landscapes. Yurt camps offer traditional-style accommodations and an introduction to nomadic traditions, national cuisine, and crafts.[7][8]

Infrastructure development in desert regions is gradually expanding. New tourist routes are being created, transportation accessibility is improving, and the private service sector is developing. However, the potential of these areas is still not being fully utilized.[9][10]

Discussion

Statistics from recent years indicate a gradual increase in tourism in Uzbekistan. After declining during the pandemic, the industry is experiencing a steady recovery. Interest in domestic tourism and eco-tourism is growing.[11][12]

The number of tourists visiting desert regions is increasing annually. The network of yurt camps is expanding, and the number of organized tours in the Navoi and Bukhara regions is increasing. However, the share of desert tourism in the overall tourism sector remains relatively small, indicating significant potential for growth.[13]

Despite its high potential, the development of desert tourism faces a number of challenges. These include insufficient transportation infrastructure, limited service, a shortage of qualified guides, seasonality of tourist demand, and environmental risks.[14]

Another important issue is the insufficient international marketing strategy for promoting desert tourism as an independent brand. In some cases, a comprehensive approach to territorial development planning that takes into account sustainable development principles is lacking.[15]

Conclusion

Desert tourism in Uzbekistan represents a promising area for the development of the national economy. Unique natural resources and ethnocultural heritage create favorable conditions for the development of a competitive tourism product.

Comprehensive infrastructure development, investment attraction, improved service quality, and the

implementation of sustainable development principles will significantly increase the contribution of desert tourism to the country's economy.

To effectively develop desert tourism, it is proposed to: improve transport accessibility to desert regions; develop environmentally friendly infrastructure; organize training programs for qualified guides; intensify international promotion of the tourism brand; implement digital technologies in booking and marketing; and stimulate investment in the development of yurt camps and tourist complexes.

The implementation of these measures will ensure sustainable growth in tourist flow, enhance the competitiveness of the industry, and improve the socioeconomic situation of the regions.

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