

## THE "GOLDEN RING" CONCEPT IN FERGANA: STRATEGY FOR FORMING A NEW TOURISM GEM

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### Annotation

This article analyzes the essence of the "Golden Valley Tourism Ring" project being organized in the Fergana region, its 4-day route across different districts, existing and newly created infrastructure facilities, as well as the project's economic efficiency — the potential to attract an additional 500 thousand tourists and generate \$200 million in revenue — based on statistical data. The project's contribution to the development of domestic and international tourism is also assessed.

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As a result of the ongoing reforms in our country, Uzbekistan has become one of the leading countries in Central Asia in terms of tourism potential. Due to visa regime simplifications, infrastructure modernization, and cultural heritage restoration programs implemented in recent years, the flow of foreign tourists has significantly increased. The Fergana Valley holds a special place with its rich history, traditions of pottery and silk production, and unique natural landscapes.

On September 19, 2023, at a video selector meeting chaired by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on issues of increasing tourism potential, specific tasks were set to launch the "**Golden Valley Tourism Ring**" project, covering 5 districts and 3 cities in the Fergana region. This article analyzes the details, advantages, and expected economic outcomes of this project.

### 1. Geography and Route of the "Golden Ring"

The project unites 8 areas of the region: the cities of Kokand, Margilan, Fergana, and the districts of Rishtan, Altiariq, Dangara, Beshariq, Uchkoprik, Kuva, and Quvasoy. A 4-day intensive route has been developed for tourists, with each day thematically different from the others.

#### Day 1: Kokand – At the Threshold of History

- Historical sites: "Khudoyar Khan Palace", "Dahmai Shohon" mausoleum, "Norbotabek" madrasah.
- New infrastructure: In the Kokand Crafts Center, the "House of Craftsmen", an 80-bed hotel, a hypermarket, a restaurant, and a mosque complex are operational.
- **Statistical forecast:** This complex is capable of receiving an average of 550 visitors per day, 200,000 visitors per year.
- Additional experience: Hunting and safari tourism are offered in the Dangara and Beshariq districts.

**Day 2: Rishtan, Altiariq, Kuva, Uchkoprik – Craft and Nature**

- Rishtan: "International Potter's Center" and "Craftsmen Center" tourism complex.
- Altiariq: Agrotourism facilities.
- Seasonal natural attractions: Flower gardens and pomegranate orchards in Kuva, lavender fields in Uchkoprik (especially notable in May-June), fruit orchards in Quvasoy, raspberry plantations in the Fergana district.

**Day 3: Chimyon – Sanatorium and Ecotourism**

- Sanatorium zone in the village of Chimyon, Fergana district. **Fact:** The Fergana district alone has 10 operating sanatoriums.
- New facility: "Chimyon Shabbodasi" tourism and eco-recreation area.
- Gastronomic tour: Tasting of local dishes in the town of Vodil.
- Opportunity: The route can be extended to Shohimardon (the famous resort area of the Fergana Valley).

**Day 4: Fergana and Margilan – Wine, Silk, and Modern Service**

- Fergana city: "Wine Garden" viticulture and wine enterprise. A separate wine tasting cellar has been organized here.
- Margilan: Ethno and gastronomic tourism. The "Craftsmen Center" is currently one of the main tourist sites in the region.
- **\*\*Existing statistics:\*\*** The Margilan Craftsmen Center is visited by 55,000 tourists per year (150 per day).
- New project: The head of the center, Ibrahim Sultanov, is implementing a historical "Caravanserai" project. The goal is to keep tourists in the city longer.

**2. Statistical Analysis: 500 thousand tourists + \$200 million**

The project's main economic goal is clearly stated: **\*\*to attract at least an additional 500 thousand tourists per year and generate \$200 million in revenue from them.**

Indicator	Current (Margilan Craftsmen Center)	Forecast (Golden Ring)
Daily number of tourists	55,000 (single site)	1,000-1,500 (along entire route)
Daily number of tourists	150	1,000-1,500 (along entire route)
Potential revenue	not available	\$200 million

**Analysis:** Dividing \$200 million by 500 thousand tourists gives an average expenditure of \$400 per tourist. For a 4-day route, including costs for hotels, meals, transport, excursions, and souvenirs, this is a realistic figure. For comparison, the average expenditure of a foreign tourist arriving in Uzbekistan in 2023 (according to World Bank data) was around \$350-400. Therefore, the project's revenue forecast is very realistic.

### 3. Infrastructure and Service Quality: New Standards

The project is not just a geographical route. It envisions a fundamental renewal of tourism infrastructure:

- In the Kokand Craftsmen Complex, a modern 80-bed hotel, hypermarket, and restaurants have been opened.
- In addition to the existing 10 sanatoriums in the Fergana district, the "Chimyon Shabbodasi" eco-recreation area has been launched.
- The "International Potter's Center" in Rishtan is ready to receive hundreds of tourists daily.
- The tasting hall at the "Wine Garden" enterprise develops the gastronomic direction of tourism.

All these facilities must meet high service standards. As noted by the deputy regional governor Khurshidjon Ahmedov, "interesting destinations will be presented to tourists over the four days," meaning the route is structured to be meaningful and not tiring.

### 4. From Classical Tourism to Seasonal and Agrotourism

The strongest aspect of the "Golden Ring" is its adaptability to seasonality. In the region:

- Spring and summer: flower cultivation (Kuva), lavender fields (Uchkoprik), fruit orchards (Quvasoy, Fergana district).
- Autumn: Pomegranate orchards, raspberry plantations.
- Winter: Sanatoriums (Chimyon), gastronomic tours (Vodil, Margilan).

This allows the tourist season to be extended to 12 months. Moreover, the project combines modern directions such as **\*\*agrotourism, ecotourism, gastronomic tourism, and safari tourism\*\***. For example, hunting tourism in Dangara and Beshariq is not yet widespread in Uzbekistan and is effectively a "niche" type of tourism.

### 5. Comparative Analysis: Comparison with Other Tourism Rings

The "Golden Ring" concept is well-known in the world: Russia's "Golden Ring" (ancient cities around Moscow), Uzbekistan's "Silk Road" tourist route. The Fergana project differs from them in its **\*\*compactness\*\*** (all sites are within 150-200 km) and **\*\*seasonal diversity\*\***.

Currently, the main flow of foreign tourists to the Fergana region comes after the Tashkent – Samarkand – Bukhara route. The "Golden Ring" will serve to distribute tourism revenues more equitably across Uzbekistan by keeping these tourists in the valley for at least 3-4 days.

### Conclusion: Opportunity and Responsibility

The "Fergana Golden Ring" project could be a revolutionary change in the region's tourism. If:

- All planned facilities (Kokand Craftsmen Complex, "Caravanserai", "Chimyon Shabbodasi") are launched on time,
- Service quality is raised to international standards,
- The route is actively promoted by agencies,
- Income from tourism is fairly distributed among local communities,

then it is realistic for the region to receive 500 thousand new guests per year and generate \$200 million in revenue. This would not only be an economic indicator but would also lead to the Fergana Valley securing a strong position on the world tourism map.

The "Golden Valley Tourism Ring" is not just a tourist route; it is a strategic resource that increases the competitiveness of Uzbek tourism in domestic and foreign markets.

### References

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- [2] Official website of the Fergana Regional Administration (reports for 2024-2025).
- [3] Statistical data on the activities of the Margilan Craftsmen Center.
- [4] 2023 World Tourism Organization report on Uzbekistan (full report, author's analysis).