



Article

Current State of Agritourism Development in Bukhara Region and Analysis of the Regional Potential

Bobojonova Madina Jumaniyoz Qizi*¹

1. Asian International University, Lecturer, Department of Economics

* Correspondence: mbjmbj462@gmail.com

Abstract: *This article examines the current state of agritourism development in Bukhara region of Uzbekistan and evaluates the region's potential as a destination for rural and agricultural tourism. Drawing on statistical data, field observations, and relevant academic literature, the study analyzes the existing agritourism infrastructure, identifying both strengths and structural constraints. The findings reveal that Bukhara region possesses considerable natural, agricultural, and cultural assets that could underpin a dynamic agritourism sector; however, underdeveloped rural infrastructure, limited institutional support, and insufficient marketing capacity represent key barriers to growth. The article proposes a set of evidence-based strategic recommendations aimed at unlocking the region's agritourism potential and integrating it into broader regional development policy.*

Keywords: *agritourism, rural tourism, Bukhara region, regional potential, sustainable tourism, agricultural diversification, Uzbekistan.*

Citation: Bobojonova qizi, M. J. Current State of Agritourism Development in Bukhara Region and Analysis of the Regional Potential. American Journal of Economics and Business Management 2026, 9(5), 453-456.

Received: 07th Jan 2026

Revised: 24th Feb 2026

Accepted: 14th Mar 2026

Published: 18th May 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

1. Introduction

In recent decades, agritourism has emerged as a strategically significant form of sustainable tourism that integrates rural livelihoods, agricultural heritage, and visitor experience into a coherent model of regional development [1]. Globally, agritourism has demonstrated its capacity to diversify rural economies, generate supplementary income for farming households, and preserve traditional cultural and agricultural practices [2]. In the context of Uzbekistan's ongoing economic reforms and the state's emphasis on tourism diversification, the development of agritourism in resource-rich and historically significant regions such as Bukhara presents both a compelling opportunity and a critical policy challenge [3].

Bukhara region occupies a unique position in Central Asia: it is recognized as a world-class heritage tourism destination while simultaneously hosting a substantial agricultural

sector characterized by cotton cultivation, viticulture, sericulture, and livestock breeding [4]. Despite this dual identity, the potential synergies between agriculture and tourism remain largely unexploited. Agritourism infrastructure is nascent, regulatory frameworks are underdeveloped, and systematic academic study of the region's agritourism prospects has been limited [5].

The principal objective of this article is to assess the current state of agritourism development in Bukhara region and to conduct a structured analysis of the region's agritourism potential, encompassing natural endowments, agricultural assets, cultural resources, and institutional conditions. The study further aims to formulate evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice to accelerate the sector's development.

2. Methodology and Literature Review

The methodological framework of this study draws on a multi-method approach that combines descriptive analysis, systematic literature review, and secondary data analysis [6]. Primary data sources include regional agricultural and tourism statistics published by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Tourism Development and the Bukhara Regional Statistical Department. Secondary sources encompass peer-reviewed academic literature, reports by international organizations (UNWTO, FAO, UNDP), and policy documents issued by the Government of Uzbekistan.

Academically, agritourism is defined as a form of tourism that takes place on or near a farm, winery, or agricultural facility, enabling tourists to engage with agricultural activities, rural traditions, and natural landscapes [7]. The concept is embedded within the broader framework of rural tourism and sustainable development. Scholars such as Phillip, Hunter, and Blackstock [8] distinguish agritourism from general rural tourism by emphasizing active participation in farm-based activities as a defining characteristic. This participatory dimension is particularly relevant to the Bukhara context, given the region's rich traditions in sericulture, viticulture, and artisanal food production.

The theoretical foundations of this study are drawn from the sustainable livelihoods framework [9] and the destination competitiveness model [10], which collectively highlight the importance of natural resources, human capital, institutional capacity, and market access in determining a region's potential for tourism development. Furthermore, the concept of agricultural multifunctionality [11] provides a theoretical basis for examining how agricultural land and practices can simultaneously serve productive, environmental, and cultural-tourism functions.

The literature consistently identifies infrastructure quality, institutional support, community involvement, and marketing capacity as the principal determinants of successful agritourism development [12]. This study applies these determinants as an analytical lens through which the current state and potential of Bukhara region's agritourism sector are evaluated.

3. Results and Discussion

Current State of Agritourism in Bukhara Region

At present, agritourism in Bukhara region exists predominantly in an informal and fragmented state. While the region attracted over 1.5 million domestic and international tourists in 2023, the overwhelming majority of visits were concentrated in the historic urban center of Bukhara city, with minimal spillover into rural agricultural areas [13]. A small number of rural guesthouses (mahalla-type accommodations) and farm stays have emerged in districts such as Romitan, Gijduvan, and Shafirkan, yet these operate without standardized quality frameworks, formal certification, or dedicated marketing platforms.

The regulatory environment for agritourism remains underdeveloped. Although Uzbekistan's Law on Tourism (2019, amended 2022) [14] recognizes rural tourism as a priority category, specific legal provisions governing agritourism enterprises — including licensing, food safety standards for farm-to-table operations, and liability frameworks — have not yet been fully elaborated. This regulatory gap discourages formal investment and constrains the participation of small and medium agricultural enterprises in the tourism sector.

Infrastructure constitutes a further critical constraint. Road connectivity between

Bukhara city and rural agricultural districts, while improving, remains inadequate for comfortable tourist access. Accommodation capacity in rural areas is limited, and hospitality service standards are inconsistent [5]. Broadband internet access, essential for online booking and digital marketing, is available in only approximately 34% of rural settlements in the region as of 2023 [15].

Regional Agritourism Potential

Notwithstanding these constraints, Bukhara region possesses a distinctive and multi-dimensional agritourism potential. From a natural resource perspective, the region benefits from a dry continental climate with over 300 days of sunshine annually, fertile oasis landscapes irrigated by the Zerafshan River system, and semi-arid steppe zones that offer ecological interest [16]. These conditions sustain a diverse agricultural production base, including viticulture (the Gijduvan and Romitan districts are among the oldest wine-grape cultivation zones in Central Asia), cotton and silk production, melon and watermelon cultivation, and dryland wheat farming.

The region's silk-related heritage represents a particularly compelling agritourism asset. Bukhara has historically been one of the principal centers of silk production along the ancient Silk Road, and active sericulture enterprises continue to operate in rural districts [4]. Agritourism experiences centered on mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing, silk reeling, and artisanal weaving could attract both domestic and international cultural tourists seeking authentic experiential encounters.

Cultural and gastronomic resources further reinforce the region's agritourism appeal. Traditional Bukharan cuisine — notable for its use of locally grown ingredients, including specific varieties of rice, dried fruits, and native herbs — represents a significant culinary tourism asset. Seasonal agricultural festivals, including grape harvests and melon celebrations, already draw local visitors and could be systematically developed into internationally marketed agritourism events [17].

From an institutional standpoint, the Government of Uzbekistan has demonstrated increasing commitment to rural tourism development. The "New Uzbekistan" Development Strategy 2022–2026 [18] explicitly references agritourism as a tool for rural poverty reduction and agricultural income diversification. The Bukhara regional administration has, in turn, incorporated agritourism targets into its regional tourism development plan for 2023–2027, signaling growing political will that could facilitate the creation of a more enabling regulatory and financial environment.

Comparative Benchmarking and Strategic Implications

International experience from comparable regions provides instructive lessons for Bukhara's agritourism development. In Tuscany, Italy — a region similarly defined by the intersection of cultural heritage and agricultural tradition — the agriturismo system, supported by dedicated legislation since 1985, generated over EUR 1.4 billion in revenues by 2022 and contributed substantially to rural employment [19]. The Tuscan model demonstrates the transformative potential of combining favorable policy, certification standards, quality infrastructure, and coordinated destination marketing.

In the Central Asian context, Georgia's experience with wine tourism and rural hospitality development offers a more geographically proximate model [20]. Georgia's success in positioning its Kakheti wine region as an internationally recognized agritourism destination within a decade highlights the importance of product branding, institutional capacity-building, and integration with global distribution channels — elements that Bukhara region could strategically adapt to its own conditions.

The comparative analysis confirms that Bukhara's agritourism potential is real and substantial, but its realization requires deliberate and coordinated action across regulatory, infrastructural, human capital, and marketing dimensions.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Bukhara region possesses a rich and multi-layered agritourism potential grounded in its natural landscapes, agricultural heritage, silk-road cultural legacy, and culinary traditions. However, the sector currently operates in a fragmented, informal, and undercapitalized state, constrained by regulatory gaps, infrastructural deficiencies, limited institutional coordination, and insufficient market

linkages.

To unlock the region's agritourism potential, a set of integrated policy measures is recommended. First, the development of a dedicated agritourism legal and regulatory framework — including clear definitions, licensing procedures, quality standards, and tax incentives for farm-stay operators — is essential. Second, targeted public investment in rural road connectivity, digital infrastructure, and accommodation quality improvement is required to raise the region's competitiveness as an agritourism destination. Third, the establishment of a regional agritourism cluster or network — linking farmers, hospitality providers, cultural organizations, and tourism agencies — would facilitate product development, joint marketing, and quality management. Fourth, integration of Bukhara's agritourism offer into national and international tourism promotion platforms, with particular emphasis on silk-heritage and gastronomy experiences, could significantly expand market reach.

By strategically harnessing its agricultural and cultural assets within a supportive institutional framework, Bukhara region has the capacity to develop agritourism as a meaningful pillar of its rural economy — generating income, employment, and sustainable development outcomes for rural communities while enriching the visitor experience and reinforcing the region's global identity as a living cultural landscape.

REFERENCES

1. Roberts, L., And D. Hall. *Rural Tourism And Recreation: Principles To Practice*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing, 2001.
2. Rural Development Council. *Agritourism And Farm Diversification In Rural Economies*. London: RDC, 2020.
3. State Committee Of Uzbekistan On Tourism Development. *National Tourism Strategy Of Uzbekistan 2025*. Tashkent, 2021.
4. Bukhara Regional Statistical Department. *Socioeconomic Indicators Of Bukhara Region 2023*. Bukhara, 2023.
5. UNDP. *Rural Development And Tourism Potential In Uzbekistan's Regions*. Tashkent: UNDP Uzbekistan, 2022.
6. Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, And Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014.
7. Throop, W., T. Doering, And J. Clancy. "Toward A Definition Of Agritourism." *Journal Of Sustainable Tourism* 8, No. 1 (2000): 23–37.
8. Phillip, S., C. Hunter, And K. Blackstock. "A Typology For Defining Agritourism." *Tourism Management* 31, No. 6 (2010): 754–758.
9. Chambers, R., And G. Conway. *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts For The 21st Century*. Brighton: IDS, 1992.
10. Ritchie, J.R.B., And G. Crouch. *The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. Wallingford: CABI, 2003.
11. Van Huylenbroeck, G., Et Al. "Multifunctionality Of Agriculture: A Review Of Definitions, Evidence And Instruments." *Living Reviews In Landscape Research* 1, No. 3 (2007).
12. Sharpley, R., And D. Telfer. *Tourism And Development In The Developing World*. London: Routledge, 2015.
13. State Committee Of Uzbekistan On Tourism Development. *Tourism Statistics Annual Report 2023*. Tashkent, 2024.
14. Republic Of Uzbekistan. *Law On Tourism (2019, Amended 2022)*. Tashkent: Oliy Majlis, 2022.
15. Ministry Of Digital Technologies Of Uzbekistan. *Digital Infrastructure Development Report 2023*. Tashkent, 2023.
16. National University Of Uzbekistan. *Natural Resources And Agricultural Geography Of Bukhara Region*. Tashkent, 2020.
17. WTO. *Global Report On Food Tourism*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 2020.
18. President Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan. *Development Strategy "New Uzbekistan" 2022–2026*. Decree No. UP-60, January 28, 2022.
19. Confagricoltura. *Italian Agritourism Statistics 2022*. Rome: Confagricoltura, 2023.
20. GNTA. *Georgia Wine Tourism Development Report*. Tbilisi: Georgian National Tourism Administration, 2022.