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CLUSTER - AS A MAIN FACTOR OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the importance of tourism in the development of the economy and explains the use of cluster mechanism in tourism. Own features and benefits of cluster mechanism is presented. Also, the stages of formation of tourist clusters and the activities carried out at these stages are provided. The directions of formation of innovative tourism clusters are represented to ensure further development of the tourism industry.

KEY WORDS: *tourism, cluster, tourism cluster, competitiveness, innovation, tourism services, infrastructure, innovation cluster, tourism potential.*

DISCUSSION

Today the tourism sector is a profitable and fastest growing strategic sector of the economy. That is why many countries around the world are trying to further develop the industry and bring the relevant infrastructure to the requirements of the world. Uzbekistan has all the necessary resources for the development of modern tourism industry. The fact that our country is located on the Great Silk Road, has favorable natural-climatic conditions and rich historical and cultural heritage, and the state support for the development of tourism provides great opportunities for the development of both domestic and international tourism.

"During 2010-2017, exports of tourism services doubled, reaching \$ 546.9 million in 2017 and \$ 1,041 million in 2018. By 2016, the number of foreign visitors grew at an average annual rate of 8%, and in 2017 - 7%, to over 2.69 million respectively. At the end of 2018, 5.3 million foreign tourists visited the country. As a result of measures taken to support and protect the private sector, in 2015, the number of tourism organizations totaling 398 grew up to 950 at the end of 2018, and the number of hotels changed from 661 to 900" [2].

In the message of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis also suggests that tourism can be a strategic

priority, accelerated development of pilgrimage and medical tourism, development of pilgrimage and traditional tourism. It is necessary to identify measures to increase the number of objects on the routes to 800, to expedite the inclusion of new facilities in Uzbekistan into the UNESCO World Heritage and Intangible Heritage List and other important tasks [1].

The Strategy of Actions for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 sets priorities for "accelerated development of the tourism industry, increasing its role and share in the economy, diversification and quality of tourism services, expansion of tourism infrastructure" [3].

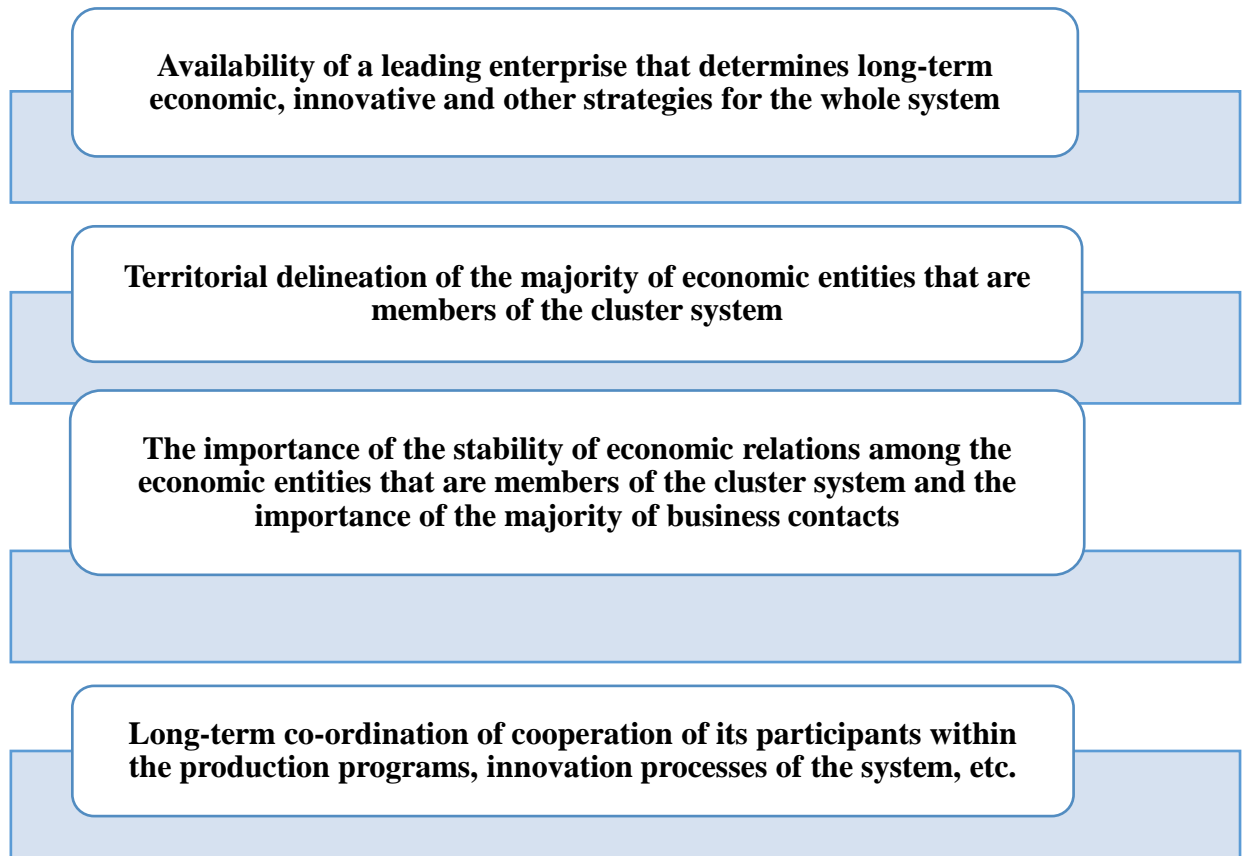
In the context of the increasing role of innovation in economic development, it is necessary to effectively create clusters, which are "modern innovation and quality factor of economic growth" in the development of tourism. Because today's traditional methods of economic development do not provide sufficient efficiency and competitiveness, the transition to innovative development requires the introduction of new economic clusters.

Today, it is becoming increasingly clear that the cluster is one of the most effective forms of innovation. The integration of enterprises into a cluster does not create a "spontaneous" concentration of various innovations, but is a well-balanced system for



the dissemination and transfer of innovation, technology and new knowledge.

Unlike conventional forms of interaction in a business, cluster systems are characterized by the following features:



Picture 1. Features of the cluster system¹

¹Author's work by summarizing data in scientific literature



Cluster formation and development is an effective mechanism for attracting foreign direct investment and enhancing foreign economic integration.

The presence of successful large businesses in this area will encourage small and medium-sized businesses to achieve higher rates. The cluster will be the center of attraction and activation of relationships between business and academic circles. The presence of an innovative cluster in the region enables businesses, universities, and research institutions to participate in a variety of projects [5].

N.N. Volkova and T.V. Sahnó emphasize that “for the administration of clusters, firstly most modern, comfortable an instrument in economic policy; secondly it’s good platform for interaction with business, thirdly, at regional and municipal large volume of administration tasks to solve which are missing neither effort, no money, no time. Cluster approach gives effective tool to achieve the main goals: region profitability, employment” [6].

Application of cluster principles in all sectors of the economy:

- encouragement of innovative activity, effective functioning of innovative infrastructure facilities and creation of favorable investment climate;
- creation of a system for ensuring competitiveness of manufactured goods and services;
- increasing the level of diversification of the national economy modernization;
- Formation of effective management and optimization of management decisions.

Today, the use of cluster mechanism is very important in developing tourism, which is a strategic sector of the economy. The goal of creating a tourism cluster is to increase the competitiveness of the region in the tourism market, including: increasing the efficiency of enterprises and organizations that are part of the cluster, encouraging innovation and more. Creating tourist clusters in a particular area also helps shape the image of the area.

Tourist clusters include businesses in various sectors related to tourism services in the region, such as tour operators, hotels, catering, souvenir manufacturers, transportation companies and more.

Tourist cluster refers to the concentration of interconnected businesses and organizations engaged in the production, promotion and sale of tourism products, as well as tourism and recreation services.

Creation of clusters in tourism enhances the tourist attractiveness of the region in the international arena and promotes domestic and foreign tourism. As a result of the establishment of tourist clusters, the competitiveness of tourism services will increase, as well as the development of modern business.

The following table describes the stages of formation of tourist clusters and the tasks and features that are to be followed during these stages Creation of clusters in tourism enhances the tourist attractiveness of the region in the international arena and promotes domestic and foreign tourism. As a result of the establishment of tourist clusters, the competitiveness of tourism services will increase, as well as the development of modern business.

The following table describes the stages of formation of tourist clusters and the tasks and features that are to be followed during these stages.

Table 1
Stages and features of tourism cluster formation²

Stages	Properties
1st stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study of the conformity or incompatibility of the tourist cluster to the designated area; - Analyzes the unique tourist resources and attractions in the area; - analysis of infrastructure and entrepreneurship entities and their interrelations; - To establish whether there are state, non-profit organizations in the cluster and how they are related to the cluster.
2nd stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The geographical structure and boundaries of the cluster are defined; - Once the boundaries are established, its elements, namely clusters, infrastructure facilities and service providers, will be identified; - Selected elements will be analyzed in detail, as well as the

²Author's work by summarizing data in scientific literature



	specifics and features of the tourist cluster.
3rd stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At this stage, the cluster is analyzed. At this stage it is advisable to carry out both internal and external analysis. - Internal analysis examines the existing shortcomings and problems in the cluster and analyzes the adequacy or inconsistency of the cluster entities' interactions; - All factors affecting the performance of the tourist cluster, including political, social, environmental, etc., are analyzed during the external analysis; - At this stage it is necessary to emphasize the following: human resources in the region, licensing and certification of tourist services, etc.

The scientific literature states that the structure of the tourist cluster consists of several sections. These include the main section and the additional sections that ensure the effective operation of the main unit. The core is the base of the tourist cluster, which includes tour operators, travel agencies, hotels and resorts. Additional subdivisions include assistants, service providers, resources, financial and legal departments. The assisting unit incorporates such components as medicine, education, information, industry, transport and communications, while the service provider section comprises food, rental, sales, gifts, and communications. The Resource Division includes attractions, sports, hunting, national culture, customs and values, wildlife, nature reserves and more. The financial and legal department finances the tourist clusters and forms the legal framework. The joint activities of these units ensure the efficient operation of tourism clusters.

In today's conditions, with the ever-increasing importance of innovative and digital technologies in the economy, it is imperative to develop innovative tourism clusters, or to create innovative tourism clusters. Because innovation clusters are not only close to businesses, customers and suppliers, but also with major universities and research centers creating innovation. Innovative tourism clusters provide an opportunity to coordinate investments in the production of new products and to sell them using new technologies.

Uzbekistan has a great opportunity to create and develop tourist clusters. The natural climate and geographical location of our country are very important. The regions also have great potential and untapped potential. Tourist clusters unite tourism entities, including various businesses and many industrial facilities close to the industry, to promote domestic and foreign tourism and serve as one of the key factors in creating a competitive economy.

In summary, the use of the cluster mechanism in tourism will increase the competitiveness of the manufactured tourism products and services and promote the development

of tourism as one of the strategic sectors of the economy.

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