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Buxoro davlat universiteti
“Yashil iqtisodiyot va agrobiznes” kafedrası**

**“O‘ZBEKISTONDA BARQAROR RIVOJLANISH
MAQSADLARIGA ERISHISH VA YASHIL IQTISODIYOTNI
RIVOJLANTIRISHNING ISTIQBOLLI YO‘NALISHLARI”**

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CIRCULAR ECONOMY, TOURISM AND ECOLOGY: A REVIEW PAPER

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Abstract

The growing concern over environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change has led to the exploration of sustainable development models. This review explores the interconnection between circular economy principles, sustainable tourism, and ecological preservation. As global tourism expands, pressure on natural environments increases, necessitating more sustainable models. The circular economy (CE) offers an innovative framework for minimizing waste, conserving resources, and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems. By integrating CE into tourism, stakeholders can shift from linear, extractive models to regenerative systems that promote ecological balance and long-term economic viability.

Keywords: circular economy; tourism; ecology; ecosystem; stakeholders; SDGs

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries globally, contributing approximately 10% to global GDP and supporting one in ten jobs worldwide (UNWTO, 2022). However, this rapid growth has led to significant environmental degradation, including carbon emissions, water pollution, habitat destruction, and overconsumption of resources. In response, the concept of a circular economy has emerged as a potential solution to make tourism more sustainable and ecologically responsible.

2. Ecology and Systems Thinking

Ecology, the study of interactions among organisms and their environment, provides a critical perspective for understanding sustainable development. Systems thinking, a core aspect of ecology, emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all components within an ecosystem. This perspective is crucial for developing sustainable practices that recognize the complex relationships within natural and human systems (Capra, 1996).

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3. Circular Economy: Principles and Relevance to Tourism

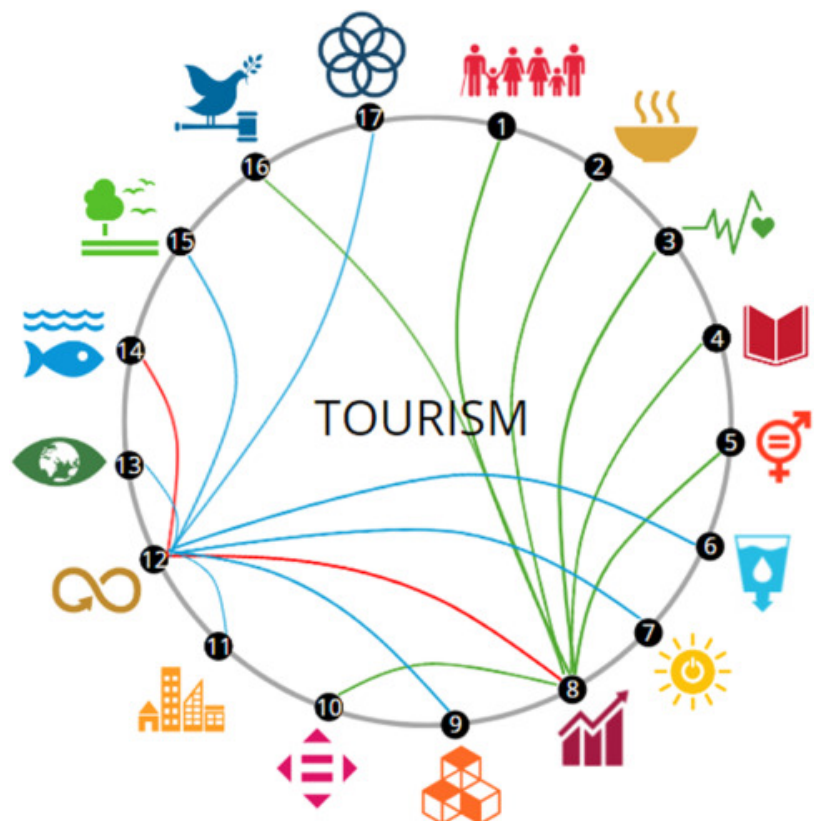
The circular economy is based on the idea of closing the loop of product lifecycles through greater resource efficiency, waste reduction, and the reuse and recycling of materials. It contrasts with the traditional linear economy, which follows a 'take-make-dispose' model. The circular economy emphasizes the importance of designing products for durability, reparability, and recyclability, and encourages business models that prioritize product-as-a-service and sharing economy principles (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017).

The circular economy is a model that decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. It emphasizes reducing, reusing, recycling, and regenerating natural systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013). Unlike the traditional linear economy - take, make, dispose - the CE model fosters closed-loop systems where materials are continuously cycled back into the economy.

In tourism, CE practices can include:

- Waste minimization and valorisation: Reusing or recycling materials in hotel operations.
- Sustainable product design: Using biodegradable and reusable materials in hospitality.
- Sharing economy models: Promoting shared transport, accommodation, and experiences.
- Local sourcing and food systems: Encouraging farm-to-table dining and reducing food waste.

Figure 1. Circular economy and tourism



4. Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Challenges

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Key environmental challenges associated with tourism include:

- **Over-tourism:** Overcrowding in popular destinations causing resource depletion and stress on infrastructure.
- **Carbon emissions:** Air travel and transportation are major contributors to greenhouse gases.
- **Biodiversity loss:** Development of tourist infrastructure leads to deforestation and habitat loss. Integrating CE can help alleviate these pressures by rethinking how tourism infrastructure is built, operated, and maintained.

5. Ecological Benefits of Circular Tourism

By embedding CE principles, the tourism sector can contribute to:

- **Resource efficiency:** Hotels and resorts can implement water-saving devices, renewable energy, and smart systems to reduce consumption.
- **Biodiversity conservation:** Eco-tourism initiatives can reinvest in local ecosystems and support conservation programs.
- **Community empowerment:** Local communities' benefit from circular practices such as crafts from recycled materials or local food networks.

According to Ghisellini et al. (2016), CE strategies help close resource loops, reduce environmental footprints, and foster long-term sustainability.

6. Case studies and best practices

- **Slovenia's Green Scheme:** A national program integrating circular practices in tourism, such as waste separation, energy efficiency, and green certifications (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2021).
- **Zero waste hotels in Spain:** Hotels implementing circular design and operations to eliminate single-use plastics and optimize energy and water usage (Mair & Wong, 2010).
- **Bali's sustainable tourism initiatives:** Promotion of local crafts, composting, and low-carbon travel options to reduce ecological impacts.

These examples illustrate how CE can be applied at both policy and operational levels to transform tourism into a regenerative sector.

7. Challenges and future directions

Despite its promise, implementing CE in tourism faces several challenges:

- **Lack of awareness and training** among tourism operators.
- **Economic pressures** that prioritize short-term profit over long-term sustainability.
- **Regulatory gaps** and lack of incentives to adopt circular models.
- Effective waste management and resource recovery are central to circular economy. This involves implementing strategies for reducing waste generation, increasing recycling rates, and developing technologies for recovering valuable materials from waste streams. Circular supply chains and reverse logistics are essential components of this approach (Ghisellini, Cialani, & Ulgiati, 2016).

Future research should focus on developing scalable circular tourism frameworks, metrics for measuring circularity in tourism, and policies that integrate CE at national and international levels.

8. Conclusions

Circular economy principles offer a transformative approach to making tourism more sustainable and ecologically sound. By reducing waste, optimizing resources, and regenerating ecosystems, CE can address many of the critical environmental challenges facing the tourism industry today. A paradigm shift toward circular tourism is not only desirable but essential for ensuring the long-term health of the planet and the resilience of tourism-dependent economies.

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Soatov Anvar Mahkamovich, EKOLOGIK ONG VA EKOLOGIK BOSHQARUV BIOXILMA-XILLIKNING BOSH OMILI SIFATIDA.....	623
Temirbekov Sayfiddin Farxodjon o'g'li, SUN'IIY INTELLEKT YORDAMIDA TABIIY RESURLARDAN SAMARALI FOYDALANISH VA ULARNING XAVFSIZLIGI.....	625
Toshtemirov Abduvalixon Abdivohid o'g'li. O'ZBEKISTONDA TABIAT VA ATROF MUHITGA BO'LGAN MUNOSABATNING TARIXIIY ILDIZLARI (QADIMGI VA ILK O'RTA ASRLAR).....	628
Aliyeva K.B., Razzaqova O.B., Abulfayzov H.Sh. O'rta Osiyoning endem Elymus turlarini bioiqlimiy modellashtirish.....	633
Akbarova Kamola Ilhom qizi, MOLGUZAR BOTANIK-GEOGRAFIK RAYONIDA TARQALGAN SAPINDACEAE OILASIGA MANSUB ACER L. TURKUM TURLARI.....	642
Tursunbayeva Iroda Shukrullo qizi. QORAQPLPOG'ISTON EKOLOGIK MUHITIDA QUYONCHILIK SOHASINING XALQ XO'JALIGIDAGI AHAMIYATI.....	649
Tursunbayeva Iroda Shukrullo qizi. QORAQOLPOG'ISTON MINTAQASIDA ECHKICILIK SOHASI YASHIL IQTISODIYOTINI RIVOJLANTIRISH.....	650
Ataxonova Sayyora Koraboyevna. BARQAROR RIVOJLAANISHNING XALQARO VA MILLIY MAQSADLARIGA ERISHISHNING AMALIYOTI VA ISTIQBOL YO'NALISHLARI.....	653
Gapparov Bexzod Nematillayevich. ZAMONAVIY EKOLOGIK MUAMMOLAR VA ULARNING INNOVATSION YECHIMLARI.....	657
Шилец А.Н., Дарибекова Н.С. ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЗАГРЯЗНЕНИЯ ВОЗДУХА В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ КАЗАХСТАН.....	659
Kadirova Maraljon Matyakubovna, Oltiyeva Sevara Usmonovna. EKOLOGIYA VA BIOLOGIK XILMA-XILLIKNI ASRASHNING USTUVOR YO'NALISHLARI.....	661
Lóránt Dénes Dávid, Moaaz Kabil, Al Fauzi Rahmat, Erkin Farmanov Alimovich. CIRCULAR ECONOMY, TOURISM AND ECOLOGY: A REVIEW PAPER.....	668