

## ECOTOURISM CREATES GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "GREEN" ECONOMY

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the ecological system as a direction for the development of the "green" economy. The importance of ecotourism in environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources, issues of effective use of the ecotourism potential of regions in the formation of the "green" economy are analyzed. Proposals and conclusions on the development of the industry are also presented.*

**Keywords:** *ecological tourism, ecotourism, "green" economy, "green" growth, environment, natural resources, recreation.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Ushbu maqolada ekologik tuzim “yashil” iqtisodiyotni rivojlantirishning yo‘nalishi sifatida tadqiq etilgan. Atrof-muhitni muhofaza qilish va tabiiy resurslardan oqilona foydalanishda ekoturizmning ahamiyati, “yashil” iqtisodiyotni shakllantirishda hududlarning ekoturistik imkoniyatlaridan samarali foydalanish masalalari tahlil etilgan. Shuningdek, sohani rivojlantirish bo‘yicha taklif va xulosalar keltirilgan.*

**Ключевые слова:** *экологический туризм, экотуризм, «зеленая» экономика, «зеленый» рост, окружающая среда, природные ресурсы, рекреация.*

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье экологическая система рассматривается как направление развития "зеленой" экономики. Проанализированы значение экотуризма в охране окружающей среды и рациональном использовании природных ресурсов, вопросы эффективного использования экотуристических возможностей регионов в формировании "зеленой" экономики. Также представлены предложения и выводы по развитию отрасли.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *ekologik turizm, ekoturizm, “yashil” iqtisodiyot, “yashil” o‘shish, atrof-muhit, tabiiy resurslar, rekreatsiya.*

**Introduction.** When discussing organizing trips to the bosom of nature, the term "ecotourism" is often mentioned. In fact, ecotourism, on the one hand, is a rapidly growing sector in the tourist market, and on the other hand, it is a system based on the positive impact of humans on nature.

Moreover, it is an integral part of the tourism infrastructure, not just an idea, but a specific type of tourism in general. Its impact on the environment can be varied (negative, neutral, and positive). "Ecotourism" is widely used in the modern activities of nature reserves and national parks. The reason for the rapid growth of this type of travel worldwide is not only the deterioration of the environment, but also the increasing development of popular recreation areas - mountain resorts, warm seashores, plains, and forests. [1]

**Analysis of the literature on the topic.** It should be noted here that the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 7, 2017, No. PF-4947 "On the Strategy of Actions for Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan" approved the Strategy of Actions for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021. Achieving the goals set out in the Action Strategy requires, first of all, increasing the efficiency of marketing activities of enterprises, which, in turn, requires the development and

implementation of marketing strategies. Strategy is a real action program for renewal processes. [2].

**Methodology.** This research extensively employed scientifically grounded statistical analysis, literature review, comparative analysis, and other approaches and methods. In particular, the systematic analysis method was used in analyzing relevant literature and sources.

**Analysis and results.**

Instead of the term "ecotourism," other terms are often used, such as "nature tourism," "sustainable tourism," "green tourism," "responsible tourism," and "philanthropic tourism." While some elements may be similar, they are not actually synonyms and do not replace each other. Ecotourism is a type of nature tourism (travel to nature). It may include some aspects of nature tourism, such as adventure tourism - horseback riding or boating. The following definition of ecotourism is more widely used: "Ecotourism" is nature tourism that includes the creation and understanding of the natural environment. [3]

**The "green" economy** is an economy that focuses on reducing environmental risks, using natural resources efficiently, and achieving sustainable development without harming the environment. In a nutshell, the "green" economy can also be called the economy of the future. There are the following directions for developing the "green" economy:

1. Harnessing renewable energy sources.
2. Improving waste recycling systems.
3. Water resource management.
4. Developing "green" transportation.
5. Developing organic product production in agriculture.
6. Increasing energy efficiency in housing and communal services.
7. Preserving ecosystems, increasing management efficiency, and developing ecotourism.
8. Creating and selling "green" technologies.

One of the directions for developing the "green" economy is directly focused on ecosystems, their preservation, efficient management, and the development of ecotourism. In this regard, we can study ecological tourism as an important branch, a tourism in harmony with nature. [4]

Tourism is a vital part of a country's economy. Domestic tourism and ecotourism, in particular, have become major sources of income in many countries. Uzbekistan is one of those countries with high tourism and recreational potential, rich in ecotourism opportunities. That's why special attention is being paid to developing ecotourism today.

Despite being a new and young branch of tourism, ecological tourism (ecotourism) is growing at a rate 2-3 times faster than other tourist sectors. At the same time, ecotourism accounts for 15-20% of the tourism industry, and this figure is expanding year after year. The goal of ecotourism is to ensure the ecological safety and sustainable development of present and future generations through tourism. In this regard, ecotourism serves as an important direction of the "green" economy, contributing to economic growth. [5]

According to analyses, tour operators providing ecotourism services mainly operate within the Chimgan-Charvak recreation zone. However, Uzbekistan has a vast potential for ecotourism development, including:

- The Hisor, Bobotog', Ko'hitangtog' (Surxondarya), Chaqchar (Qashqadaryo), Nurota (Navoiy-Jizzax), Zarafshon (Samarqand), Turkiston (Jizzax), Alay (Fergana), Kurama, Chatkal (Namangan) mountains,
- The remnant mountains in the Kyzylkum desert,
- The Kyzylkum desert itself,
- The dried-up bottom of the Aral Sea and the remaining salt lakes,
- The Ustyurt plateau,
- The Borsa Kelmas salt marsh,

These are just a few examples of the diverse natural landscapes and unique ecosystems that Uzbekistan offers. Developing ecotourism in these areas would not only contribute to the country's economic growth but also help preserve these valuable natural resources for future generations.

Uzbekistan has immense potential for ecotourism, but many of its unique locations remain unexplored and inaccessible to tourists.

\* Lack of Infrastructure: Despite having fascinating places like Mingbuloq, Aydarko'l, Dengizko'l, the forests along the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the Muruntov quarry, and other natural landmarks, comprehensive and thematic ecotours haven't been established in these areas. [6]

\* Untapped Potential of Speleotourism: Uzbekistan is rich in caves, over 500 in total, but the lack of tourist infrastructure hinders the development of speleotourism.

\* Opportunities for Camel Trekking: The deserts and plains of Uzbekistan offer unique opportunities for camel trekking, allowing visitors to witness sand dunes, oases, salt marshes, wells, and the traditional lifestyle of local herders.

\* Potential for Hiking, Trekking, and Mountaineering: The mountains of Uzbekistan, such as Katta Chimgan, Zomin, Chatkal, Ko'ksuv, Piskom, Turkiston, Hisor, Zarafshon, Alay, Kurama, and Nurota, provide ideal conditions for hiking, trekking, and mountaineering.

\* Opportunities for Rafting: Numerous fast-flowing rivers and streams descending from the mountains, such as the Ugam, Chatkal, Piskom, Ko'ksuv, Topolondarya, Shoximardon, Sangzor, and Zarafshon, offer excellent opportunities for rafting.

It's crucial to emphasize that ecotourism development should be sustainable and minimize environmental impact. Infrastructure should be built to minimize damage to nature, and tourists should be educated on responsible behavior in the wild.

Scientific research institutions and experts highlight that ecotourism development in Uzbekistan should be based on sustainable principles, taking into account natural laws and the stability of ecosystems.

Developing ecotourism in Uzbekistan can become a significant factor in the sustainable development of regions, creating new jobs and attracting tourists interested in environmentally responsible travel.

The Strategy for Uzbekistan's Transition to a "Green" Economy for 2019-2030, approved by the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 4, 2019, No. PQ-4477, outlines a number of tasks related to adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects, improving the efficiency of natural resource use, and preserving natural ecosystems.

Furthermore, the 15th goal of the National Goals and Tasks for Sustainable Development for the period up to 2030 focuses on "Protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, promoting

their sustainable use, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, and halting biodiversity loss."

This, in turn, is closely linked to the effective use of the tourist-recreational potential of regions and the development of ecotourism.

Therefore, the system of ecotourism is based on principles that allow for the application of various types of tourist activities. These include educational or adventure tours (hiking, horseback riding, water, mountain, sightseeing, etc.), student holidays, ornithological tours, scientific tours and expeditions, health tours, children's camps, and more.

The interest in ecotourism arose due to the growing demand for authentic tourist experiences and nature conservation. Summarizing the definitions given above, we can say that, in our opinion, ecotourism is a special branch of tourism that harmonizes with natural, cultural, and social values, promotes the harmonization of man with nature in its natural environment, and changes the way of life of the local population.

Key factors driving the development of ecotourism are the combination of travel to nature and its protection, which thus serves as an economic incentive for environmental protection. Another advantage is that it allows for a better understanding and more information about the relationship between wildlife and diverse cultural values of society.

The main task is to create a mechanism that will allow ecotourism to be commercially viable, environmentally sustainable, and responsible towards culture. Tourism planning professionals, tour operators, managers, marketers, and the media have used the term "ecotourism" in a very broad sense. As a result, this term has been applied to a number of tourist products. Unfortunately, they do not logically fully correspond to the definitions given above.

Today, the development trends and prospects of ecotourism are being shaped in conjunction with the laws of nature and the stability of geosystems. The natural and climatic conditions of our country, recreational resources create opportunities for the development of ecological tourism in accordance with the specifics of each region. [7]

Currently, the focus is on organizing ecotourism in protected natural areas. For your information, our country has 6 state reserves, 1 complex (landscape) reserve, 5 state national natural parks, 11 state natural monuments, 12 state reserves, 1 state natural nursery, 2 state biosphere reserves, 1 national park, as well as 71 forestry and 5 hunting farms. [8]

In the context of the formation of a "green" economy in Uzbekistan, the main areas of development of ecological tourism are: □ mamlakatimizdagi har bir hududning tabiiy sharoiti va imkoniyatlaridan kelib chiqib, ekoturistik master-rejalarni ishlab chiqish;

- Broadly attracting "green" investments to ecotourism;
- Improving tourism infrastructure in the "Charvak" Free Tourist Zone and the "Zomin" Tourist-Recreational Zones;
- Attracting the attention of foreign and domestic tourists to major ecotourism destinations in our country;
- Providing employment and reducing poverty through the rational use of the natural conditions and resources of the regions; [9]
- Using digital technologies in ecotourism destinations to create tourist maps and signs;
- Paying serious attention to environmental protection in ecotourism destinations and strengthening environmental control in this area.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, the role and significance of ecotourism in Uzbekistan's transition to a "green" economy and the implementation of national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development are significant. This direction, which develops in harmony with nature, still has a lot of work to be done, and there are many untapped opportunities. In this regard, developing ecotourism as an important sector of the "green" economy, shaping the ecotourism image of our country by attracting advanced foreign experience and innovative technologies is one of our key tasks.

In Uzbekistan, procedures for establishing recreational zones are being simplified, and ecotourism is being further developed. This is indicated by the draft law "On Amending and Supplementing Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan", considered by deputies at the next plenary session of the lower house of parliament. [10]

This document proposes amendments and additions to the Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the laws "On Forest Protection" and "On Specially Protected Natural Territories". The draft law is necessary to regulate the issues of efficient and rational use of forest land, the provision of land plots by the State Committee for Forestry to legal entities and individuals on the basis of investment agreements or public-private partnerships.

Speakers at the plenary session noted the need to simplify procedures for placing bee families (hives) and farms on forest land by legal entities and individuals. This can only be achieved by amending the relevant legislation.

The adoption of this draft law will ensure increased efficiency of the State Committee for Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In particular, it will create a legal basis for providing legal entities and individuals with unused forest land for a period of no more than 49 years for the implementation of investment agreements or public-private partnership projects. In addition, procedures for establishing recreational zones on forest land will be simplified, creating new opportunities for the development of ecotourism.

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