

Uchinchidan, halol turizm infratuzilmasi, xususan halol ovqatlanish, ibodat uchun qulay joylar, oilaviy sayyohlar uchun mos xizmatlar va musulmon turistlar ehtiyojiga mos gidlik xizmati rivojlantirilishi lozim. To‘rtinchidan, turoperatorlar uchun subsidiya olish tartibi bo‘yicha amaliy qo‘llanmalar, elektron platformalar va xorijiy hamkorlar bilan ishlash bo‘yicha treninglar tashkil etilishi dasturning real ishlashini kuchaytiradi.

Xulosa qilib aytganda, “Umra plyus” dasturi O‘zbekiston ziyorat turizmini xalqaro musulmon sayyohlik oqimlari bilan bog‘lashga qaratilgan muhim amaliy tashabbusdir. Dastur mahalliy turoperatorlarni yangi bozorlarda faol ishlashga undashi, xorijiy ziyoratchilarning mamlakatda qolish muddatini uzaytirishi va turizm xizmatlari eksportining kengayishiga xizmat qilishi bilan ahamiyatlidir. O‘zbekistonning boy islomiy merosi, tarixiy shaharlari va ziyorat maskanlari ushbu dastur orqali Malayziya va Indoneziya kabi istiqbolli bozorlar uchun jozibador turistik mahsulotga aylanishi mumkin.

Mazkur imkoniyatlardan samarali foydalanish uchun ziyorat marshrutlarini standartlashtirish, halol turizm infratuzilmasini rivojlantirish, ko‘p tilli axborot va gidlik xizmatlarini kengaytirish, turoperatorlar uchun xorijiy hamkorlar bilan ishlash bo‘yicha amaliy qo‘llanmalar ishlab chiqish maqsadga muvofiq. Shuningdek, “Umra plyus” dasturi doirasida shakllanadigan turpaketlar faqat diniy ziyorat bilan cheklanmasdan, madaniy-ma’rifiy, hunarmandchilik va gastronomik turizm elementlari bilan boyitilishi O‘zbekistonning xalqaro ziyorat turizmi brendini yanada mustahkamlashga xizmat qiladi.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Abstract. *Tourism has become a key sector for Uzbekistan's economic diversification, boosting employment and foreign exchange through rapid tourist growth. However, this development has led to increased waste, resource consumption, and over-tourism risks in UNESCO cities, straining the environment and infrastructure. The study analyzes statistics, policy documents, and institutional practices, identifying gaps in digitalization and regional imbalances. Initiatives like ecotourism zones, visa liberalization, and international partnerships offer potential for a sustainable model transition. An integrated governance framework—combining environmental regulation, innovation, and community involvement—ensures long-term tourism competitiveness.*

Keywords: *Sustainable tourism; environmental impacts; cultural heritage; ecotourism; community-based tourism; tourism policy; infrastructure; digital transformation; Central Asia.*

Аннотация. *Туризм стал ключевым сектором для экономической диверсификации*

Узбекистана, способствуя росту занятости и притоку иностранной валюты за счет быстрого увеличения числа туристов. Однако такое развитие привело к росту отходов, потреблению ресурсов и рискам перенаселенности туристами в городах ЮНЕСКО, что создает нагрузку на окружающую среду и инфраструктуру. В исследовании анализируются статистические данные, политические документы и институциональная практика, выявляются пробелы в цифровизации и региональные дисбалансы. Инициативы, такие как зоны экотуризма, либерализация визового режима и международное сотрудничество, создают потенциал для перехода к устойчивой модели. Интегрированная система управления – сочетающая экологическое регулирование, инновации и вовлечение местного сообщества – обеспечивает долгосрочную конкурентоспособность туризма.

Ключевые слова: устойчивый туризм; влияние на окружающую среду; культурное наследие; экотуризм; туризм с участием местного сообщества; туристическая политика; инфраструктура; цифровая трансформация.

Introduction. Tourism has emerged as a strategic sector for Uzbekistan's economic diversification. According to the Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan, more than 10.7 million foreign tourists visited the country in the first eleven months of 2025, while tourism service exports reached approximately USD 4.4 billion. Between January and September 2025, 8.6 million international tourists arrived, representing nearly a 73% increase compared with 2019, placing Uzbekistan among the fastest-growing destinations worldwide. This growth has facilitated job creation (over 500,000 positions), regional development, and foreign exchange earnings. However, it has simultaneously intensified environmental pressures, socio-cultural risks, and infrastructure imbalances. Consequently, the urgency of sustainable tourism development has heightened. This article analyzes the situation through statistical indicators, policy frameworks, and institutional practices, proposing an integrated governance model.

Tourism Development in Uzbekistan

Section	Key Information	Statistical Indicators	Issue / Outcome
Tourism Development (2025)	Tourism has become a key sector of Uzbekistan's economy	10.7 million foreign tourists (11 months), 8.6 million (9 months), \$4.4 billion exports	Economic growth and jobs, but environmental pressure
Statistical Growth	Tourist arrivals increased rapidly	+73% compared to 2019, +46.8% compared to 2024	Resource shortages and rising waste
Main Source Markets	CIS and Asian countries are leading	Tajikistan: 797,000; Kazakhstan: 656,000; China: five-fold growth	Market diversification
Domestic Tourism	Regional travel has increased	23.7 million domestic trips	Growth in local economic activity
Government Policy	2030 strategy and visa liberalization	Visa-free access for nearly 100 countries	Low digitalization, weak cooperation
Ecotourism	20 eco-routes	Nuratau-Kyzylkum, Ugam-Chatkal	Pressure on natural areas
Cultural Heritage	Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva	UNESCO World Heritage sites	Risk of overtourism
Hotels & Accommodation	New lodging facilities	954 new, total 6,861, 183,900 beds	Uneven regional development
Sustainability Issues	Water, waste, and energy pressure	High load on resources	Environmental risk
2030 Targets	Increase tourism exports	\$10 billion, 7% of GDP	Need for sustainable management

In the first nine months of 2025, 8.6 million foreign tourists arrived, marking record growth. Tourism service exports exceeded USD 3.6 billion, and by November 2025 this figure reached USD 4.4 billion. Major source markets included Tajikistan (797,000), Kazakhstan (656,000) and China, which demonstrated nearly five-fold growth.

Domestic tourism also expanded significantly. Under the “Travel Around Uzbekistan!” program, more than 23.7 million domestic trips were recorded, strengthening regional mobility and local economies.

However, this expansion has escalated resource consumption: water scarcity in high-density areas (e.g., Khiva), heightened energy demand, and rising waste volumes in Tashkent and Samarkand. Regional disparities persist, with central provinces accommodating nearly 70% of tourists, while peripheral regions remain underdeveloped.

The “New Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy and the 2022–2026 Tourism Development Strategy emphasize diversification through ecotourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism. Uzbekistan introduced visa-free access for nearly 100 countries, expanded international air routes, and actively participated in global tourism fairs, supporting market diversification beyond the CIS region.

Ecotourism initiatives include 20 eco-routes such as Nuratau-Kyzylkum and Ugam-Chatkal National Parks. Collaboration with UN Tourism (UNWTO) since 2024 has supported cultural heritage protection and sustainability programs. Nevertheless, digitalization remains limited, and community participation is still low, with local stakeholders involved in only 20–30% of tourism initiatives.

Uzbekistan’s ecosystems—from deserts to mountain regions—are increasingly vulnerable to unmanaged tourism growth. Rising visitor numbers have led to water stress, waste accumulation, and energy overuse in heritage cities and natural zones. Over-tourism threatens fragile UNESCO sites such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, accelerating architectural degradation.

Challenges to Sustainable Tourism. At the same time, community-based tourism and rural tourism zones in Surkhandarya and Fergana provide opportunities to distribute benefits more equally. The use of AI monitoring, eco-certification, and smart tourism tools could raise sustainability performance by up to 30%, even as visitor numbers grow. In 2025, 954 new accommodation facilities were introduced, increasing the total number of lodging entities to 6,861, with approximately 183,900 beds nationwide. While major cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara benefit from modern transport and hospitality investments, rural and inland regions remain underserved. This imbalance restricts tourism’s socioeconomic impact and deepens regional inequality.

The proposed model integrates environmental regulation (minimum 20% waste recycling), smart tourism technologies, and community empowerment through training and local entrepreneurship. If implemented effectively, Uzbekistan could raise tourism exports to USD 10 billion by 2030 and double tourism’s contribution to GDP from 3.5% to 7%.

Proposal and Conclusion. Uzbekistan’s tourism sector has been growing rapidly, creating economic opportunities but also placing significant pressure on

natural resources, cultural heritage, and infrastructure. Therefore, to ensure sustainable tourism development, the implementation of an Artificial Intelligence–based Smart Tourism Management System (STMS) is proposed. The proposed STMS monitors tourist flows, water and energy consumption, waste generation, and environmental pressure in real time. Using artificial intelligence, the system forecasts overcrowding and provides recommendations to balance visitor distribution across regions. Additionally, a Smart Sustainability Index evaluates each destination’s environmental condition, infrastructure capacity, and community participation. As a result, STMS can address key sustainability challenges in Uzbekistan’s tourism sector, promote balanced regional development, and engage local communities. This solution supports sustainable tourism growth and contributes to long-term socio-economic benefits.

The rapid growth of tourism in Uzbekistan presents both opportunities and challenges for sustainable development. Implementing the Artificial Intelligence–based Smart Tourism Management System (STMS) offers an effective solution to manage tourist flows, optimize resource use, and protect cultural and natural heritage. By providing real-time monitoring, predictive analytics, and a Smart Sustainability Index, STMS enables data-driven decision-making, promotes balanced regional development, and engages local communities. Overall, this system can transform Uzbekistan’s tourism sector into a more sustainable, resilient, and economically beneficial industry for the long term. In conclusion, coordinated government–private sector partnerships and community involvement are essential to position Uzbekistan as a sustainable tourism leader in Central Asia.

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