

**PROSPECTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF
KARAKALPAKSTAN**

Adilova Zulfiya Djavdatovna

Tashkent State University of Economics

Professor of the Department of Marketing

Kusekeev Bayram Kallibekovich

Deputy Head of the Department of Tourism of the Republic of Karakalpakstan

Candidate of the Department of Economics of Karakalpak State University

Abstract. This article provides a detailed analysis of current issues of tourism development in Karakalpakstan, current opportunities and future plans. Through investments and innovative approaches in the field of tourism, the region of Karakalpakstan can soon become one of the famous tourist destinations in the world. Also, the article highlights the state of tourism infrastructure in the districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan by grouping and comparing statistical data, and the influence of the region's climate on tourism is also studied.

Keywords: Republic of Karakalpakstan, tourism, infrastructure, regional climate, marketing, flow of tourists.

Introduction

Karakalpakstan is one of the regions of Central Asia, distinguished by its unique nature, rich history and cultural heritage. In recent years, the government and local residents have been paying special attention to the development of tourism. It is aimed to show the rich historical and cultural heritage of the region to the world, preserve its natural beauty and increase the flow of tourists by creating modern infrastructure. In this regard, Karakalpakstan, which is rich in tourism resources, can develop special types of unique tourism with its rich cultural heritage, historical and cultural monuments, nature reserves and colorful landscapes.

In this regard, we will consider some unique aspects and prospects of tourism in the Republic of Karakalpakstan:

- if we dwell on the direction of historical and cultural tourism, the region has an ancient history, the location of architectural complexes of antiquity, the early Middle Ages and the Middle Ages allows visitors to get acquainted with the rich historical and cultural heritage of the region;
- at a time when the Aral Sea in the region is facing serious environmental problems, its receding waters and changing landscapes are attracting the attention of ecotourists and researchers;
- tourists and researchers, the Aral Sea area provides opportunities to study the ecological consequences of human activities, to discuss the ongoing activities in the field of environmental protection and restoration;
- the region contains protected areas such as the Barsa-Kelmes Reserve and the Ustyurt Plateau, which offer tourists ecosystems, wildlife, bird watching, outdoor walks and overnight stays in special desert camps;
- The culture of the Karakalpak people is famous for its ancient and traditional crafts, including woodcarving, pottery, jewelry, embroidery, and carpet weaving.

The vast Kyzylkum Desert of the region offers many opportunities, especially desert safaris, camel and horse riding, and stargazing under the open sky.

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In order for Karakalpakstan to fully realize its tourist potential, factors such as improving the infrastructure, developing transport and logistics connections, promoting tour routes and constantly conducting marketing activities, preserving cultural and natural objects in their original form increase the interest in regional tourism in the international market.

Literature review

The tourism potential of Karakalpakstan serves not only to develop the local economy, but also to strengthen intercultural relations. In order to analyze the contribution of the tourism sector to the economic and cultural development, the scientific research conducted in different regions of Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan is important. In this regard, several scientists have conducted research on the issues of tourism development.

N.Zufarova[11] conducted economic analyzes in the field of tourism in Uzbekistan at the Tashkent State University of Economics and focused on developing strategic approaches to the development of tourism in the country. His research sheds light on the economic foundations necessary for the development of tourism in various regions of Uzbekistan.

Soliev Bakhadir[12] studied the cultural and social aspects of tourism at the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies and analyzed the problems and opportunities in this field. In his works, issues such as the connection between tourism and culture, the impact of tourism on society are widely covered.

In addition, local scientists Z.Adilova[13], A.Zokhidov[14], A.Tuychiev[15] conducted scientific research on the development of tourism in the country, studying the economic, cultural and social aspects of tourism.

Research methodology

This article analyzed the available scientific literature and statistical data on the development of tourism in Karakalpakstan. Through this method, specific information on the tourism potential, opportunities and existing problems of the region was collected. Statistical data were analyzed and used to develop tourism development strategies in Karakalpakstan. The official website of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was used to collect statistical data.

Analysis and results

The tourism market of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is promising, because the region embodies its rich historical heritage, natural beauty, ethnography, unique ecological landscapes. Karakalpakstan should attract tourists and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region by attracting active investments in the development of existing tourist resources and ensuring sustainable development.

Foreign tourists visiting the Republic of Karakalpakstan are brought by tourist companies and organizations located in other regions of our country. In solving such problems, it is necessary to master marketing research and new types of services in the regional tourism market.

Table 1. The number of visitors served by districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (2023) [1]

Districts	Number of firms and organizations that have implemented	Visitors Served, Person*	Among them		Person-day (for overnight visitors)
			Day visitors (excursionists)	Overnight visitors (beachgoers)	

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	tourist activities, unit				
Republic of Karakalpakstan	13	9704	5247	4457	10616
Nukus city	3	3094	1324	1752	4068
Amudarya	-	-	-	-	-
Beruni	2	720	700	20	48
Bozatov	-	-	-	-	-
Karauzak	-	-	-	-	-
Kegeyli	-	-	-	-	-
Kungirat	1	900	510	390	1170
Qonlikol	-	-	-	-	-
Moynaq	3	2580	940	1640	3270
Nukus	-	-	-	-	-
Takhiatash	-	-	-	-	-
Takhtakpir	-	-	-	-	-
Tortkol	2	12335	1060	175	620
Khujayli	1	250	200	50	150
Chimboy	-	-	-	-	-
Shumanay	-	-	-	-	-
Ellikkala	1	925	495	430	1290

* It was calculated including only citizens who were provided with visa, foreign passport, hotel reservation and similar services.

According to the analysis of the data on visitors served by districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Table 1), the main flow of tourists to the city of Nukus is 3094, which is 31.8% of the total number of visitors served. The districts of Moynaq, Beruniy, Kungiro, Tortkol, Khojayli, Ellikkala, which have a relatively developed infrastructure for providing services to visitors to the republic, are improving their indicators year by year. Other districts did not provide any visitor services. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that not a single touristic company or organization is registered in these districts.

Table 2. Information on employees employed in hotels and similar accommodations in the Republic of Karakalpakstan (per person) [1]

Indicators	Total basic rate employees	Including				Total number of women	In addition, deputy employees
		Highly educated people	Professional tourist information from them	Secondary special education	Professional tourist information from them		
Republic of Karakalpakstan	201	66	6	135	7	94	4

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Nukus city	149	47	5	102	7	82	4
Amudaryya	5	1		4			
Beruni	1	1					
Bozatov							
Karauzak	1			1			
Kegeyli							
Kungirat	15	3		12		6	
Qonlikol							
Moynaq	8	5		3			
Nukus							
Takhiatash							
Takhtakpir	2	1		1		1	
Tortkol	12	6	1	6		4	
Khujayli	2	2					
Chimboy							
Shumanay							
Ellikkala	6			6		1	

According to the analysis of employees employed in hotels and similar accommodation facilities in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 149 employees are working in the city of Nukus, 47 of them have higher education, 102 of them have secondary education, 82 of them are women. According to these indicators, the districts have low indicators, in Amudaryo district there are 5 employees, 1 of them with higher and 4 with secondary special education, in Kungirotdistrict the number of employees with higher education is 3, with secondary special education 12, in Tortkoldistrict 6 with higher education, 6 with secondary education people with special education, in the rest of the districts, the work in this regard is not at the level of demand. The fact that not a single tourism specialist works in Takhiatash, Kegeyli, Qonlikol, Nukus, Chimbay, Shumanay districts indicates that there is no attention to this field at all. In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Karakalpak State University has a department that trains highly educated personnel in the field of tourism, and most graduates who graduated from the university are not employed in their specialties. Mechanisms for attracting local entrepreneurs should be developed in order to establish effective use of tourist resources in Takhiatash, Kegeyli, Qonlikol, Nukus, Chimbay, Shumanay districts.

Table 3. Activities of specialized means of placement in the districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan [1]

Indicators	Number of specialized means of placement, unit	Objects in them, unity	Number fund, unit		Number of placed persons, person	Including		
			Rooms	Places		From Uzbekistan	from CIS countries	From distant foreign countries

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Republic of Karakalpakstan	25	23	505	2071	14633	14583	95	
Nukus city	2	2	91	270	912	893	19	
Amudaryya	1	1	4	120	550	550	-	
Beruni	4	4	34	185	1118	1118	-	
Bozatov								
Karauzak								
Kegeyli								
Kungirat	3	3	90	225	2889	2889		
Qonlikol	1							
Moynaq	3	3	57	290	1575	1575		
Nukus	1							
Takhiatash	2	2	69	250	3866	3790	76	
Takhtakpir								
Tortkol	1	1	15	150	969	969		
Khujayli	1	1	7	80	899	899		
Chimboy								
Shumanay								
Ellikkala	6	6	138	501	1855	1855		

Looking at the major changes and trends in world tourism, reducing the disparity between tourist seasonality is becoming an urgent issue. In fact, one of the main characteristics of tourism is its seasonality. It should be understood in such a way that it can be explained by the fact that the demand in tourism increases during a certain period of time, and vice versa, the demand decreases during a certain period of time.

Considering the climate of the region, the months of January, February and December are very unfavorable for tourism. Since most of the region is located in the desert zone at this time, the weather is characterized by sudden changes. Low tourism season is June, July and November. In the months of June and July, the hot summer heat reigns in the region. This causes a number of inconveniences when traveling. Also, if we look at the age of the tourists visiting the area, most of them are 55-65 years old. They often don't plan trips during the hot summer months.

According to the analysis of the region's tourism market, it should be noted that most of the tourists who visit are from the category of tourists who visit to see historical objects and architectural monuments.

According to the analysis of the tourism market, the following can be indicated as the main strategic directions of regional tourism development:

- development of airways, railways and highway networks and improvement of infrastructure;
- providing new innovative services to the tourist market, bringing the quality of services up to international standards;
- continuous improvement of service culture and qualification of employees;
- strengthen marketing activities in the regional tourism market and create a regional brand.

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In this regard, parameters for the future development of tourism in the Republic of Karakalpakstan have been developed in accordance with the tourism development strategy in our country in 2022-2026 (Table 4).

Table 4. Indicators of tourism development in the Republic of Karakalpakstan until 2026 [2]

Indicator name	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of domestic tourists (thousands)	552	663	774	885	996
Number of foreign beaches (thousands of people)	50	80	110	150	180
Export of services (million USD)	13,5	25	36,5	48	59,5
Number of rooms in accommodation facilities (units)	1 005	1 200	1 360	1 555	1 905
Occupancy of rooms in accommodation facilities (in %)	35,0	43,0	51,0	59,0	74,0
Number of places in placement vehicles (bed, unit)	1 990	2 260	2 520	2 850	3 370
Number of hotels (units)	36	40	42	44	50
Number of family guest houses (units)	48	57	66	78	92
Number of bedrooms (units)	23	29	35	41	48
Increasing the level of Internet coverage (taking into account 4G and 5G technologies)	10	12	14	16	20

As for the work done in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in 2022, 50.1 thousand foreign tourists and 600.8 thousand local tourists were served, and the export of tourism services amounted to 138 million. amounted to US dollars. Foreign and local tourists are provided services by 57 tour operators and travel agents. If we analyze the tourists visiting from abroad by country, the majority of them come from Russia, Kazakhstan, France, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, USA and China.

Conclusion and suggestions

In conclusion, the above-mentioned trend should be considered as one of the most important aspects of tourism products and services, not only for the regional tourism market, but also because it has a global trend. The reason is that underestimating such factors may have negative consequences in the region's tourism market.

In order to reduce imbalances between seasons in the regional tourism market and attract tourists to the region, the following should be implemented:

- introduction of discounted prices for hotel and transport services;
- making sightseeing, visiting museums free of charge for tourists visiting historical and cultural destinations (in the off-season, introducing ways to cover these costs at the expense of hotel and transport services);
- transfer of services provided to tourists to a new form, introduction of innovations depending on the form of service;

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– it is necessary to develop and create new service-based tourism areas (recreational, safari, sports) in the region.

Many experts do not welcome the establishment of new tourism areas in the region. The reason is that if these actions require attracting certain financial resources, on the other hand, it is not easy to attract consumers, namely tourists, to new products and services.

As we have seen above, the consumers of the region's tourism market are mainly older tourists, so when developing new products and services in the off-season, we should focus on the following:

- organization of youth-oriented events, colorful program events and festivals, taking into account that the majority of the country's population is made up of young people;
- paying more attention to religious and pilgrimage centers in the region, creating favorable conditions for pilgrims (the concept of seasonality in religious and pilgrimage tourism is insignificant);
- organization of international scientific conferences, conventions, MICE (business) tourism for scientists, researchers and experts of certain fields based on the specific features of the region;
- taking into account the rich ethnography of the region, we focus on organizing special events for those interested in this direction, those who appreciate theater, art, and folklore, that is, competitions on national musical instruments, art exhibitions, theater, public "Navroz" entertainments, agricultural harvest holidays, and various public events must.

However, in the implementation of such measures, it is not always possible to offer products during the off-season due to the reduction in the prices of accommodation, catering and transportation services. The reason is that the tariffs for electricity and utility services increase during off-season, especially in the winter months. That is why some experts do not support such measures. However, at the same time, it considers it appropriate to apply special discounts to tourist attractions, museums, conferences and festivals and public holidays.

In our opinion, the region's image is first of all important for providing new products and services in the tourism market. Factors affecting the image of tourism products and services in the tourism market are:

- complex environmental conditions;
- low level services;
- activities of no interest among tourists;
- is that service networks are not well-established.

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