



## FACTORS AND DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF PILGRIM TOURISM

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### Annotation

The article examines the development of pilgrim tourism, factors and opportunities that affect it. Various approaches to the definition of the concepts of religious tourism, pilgrim tourism, Islamic tourism are analyzed. The achievements in the development of pilgrim tourism in the country are analyzed and the tasks that need to be solved are highlighted.

**Keywords:** religious tourism, pilgrim tourism, religious excursion tourism, tourist infrastructure, the concept of tourism development, conscientious standard.

### Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются вопросы развития паломнического туризма, факторы и возможности, которые на него влияют. Анализируются различные подходы к определению понятий религиозный туризм, паломнический туризм, исламский туризм. Анализируются достижения в развитии паломнического туризма в Узбекистане и выделяются задачи, которые необходимо решить.

**Ключевые слова:** религиозный туризм, паломнический туризм, религиозно-экскурсионный туризм, туристическая инфраструктура, концепция развития туризма, халяль стандарт.

### Introduction

In the 21st century, tourism has become one of the important sectors of the world economy, which has a significant impact on the development of the world economy and individual regions and countries. In some countries, tourism is the main source of foreign exchange earnings and serves to ensure the well-being of the population. Currently, international tourism has come out on top in terms of share in world exports, ahead of the export of cars and oil.

It should be noted that international tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the share of tourism in world GDP decreased by 50.4%, or 4.8 trillion. US dollars and amounted to 5.3%, for comparison - the decline in the global economy in this period amounted to 3.3%. During this period, 18.2% of those employed in the tourism industry, or 62 million people, were forced to leave their jobs, according to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), in 2020, tourists' spending on domestic travel decreased by 45%, and spending on international travel - by almost 70%. 2021-2022 was a period of rising international tourism, in 2021 the volume of tourism services provided increased by 21.7% compared to 2020 and reached 5.8 trillion. dollar, which amounted to 6.1% of world GDP, for comparison, it should be noted that the growth of world GDP over this period amounted to 5.8% [1]. Such growth rates indicate that, despite the crisis associated with the pandemic, tourism



continues to occupy an important place in the global economy and the export of services. For this reason, the competition between countries, regions, industries and manufacturers for getting a worthy place in the international tourism market, ownership of investment, labor and other tourism resources is intensifying.

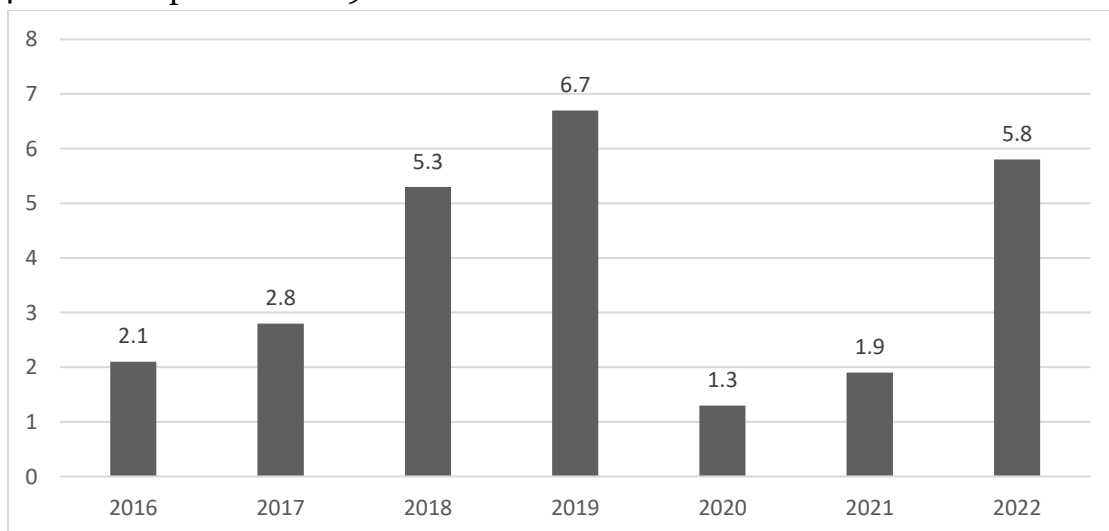
Currently, the restoration of tourism in Uzbekistan in the post-pandemic period, attracting investment in the industry, creating new jobs, increasing the potential of personnel and, ultimately, turning tourism into one of the locomotive sectors of the economy are urgent tasks.

Uzbekistan has a high potential for the development of various types of tourism. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it can be seen that the indicators of tourism development in the country in 2016-2019. steadily increased (Fig. 1). The number of tourists who arrived in the country in 2016-2019 increased 3.2 times and amounted to 6.7 million people. In 2020, despite the financial, organizational and economic measures taken to improve the situation, 1.3 million tourists visited the country, i.e. the number of visits decreased by 5 times. 2021 was a period of tourism recovery, during the year Uzbekistan was visited by 1.9 million foreign tourists. Despite the increase in the number of tourists who arrived in the country by 2.7 times compared to the previous year and amounted to 5.8 million people, the level of 2019 was not reached in 2022 [2].

It is known that the tourism sector creates a significant amount of secondary demand in other sectors of the economy, in particular, in transport, catering, crafts, trade, and this has a significant impact on the country's economy.

According to World Bank calculations, the indirect contribution of tourism to the economies of Europe and Central Asia (taking into account the multiplier effect) averages 4.3 percent [3].

In 2020, the closure of external borders completely stopped the arrival of foreign tourists. In addition, the introduction of quarantine restrictions across the country has practically stopped domestic tourism. As a result, revenues received from the export of direct tourism services in our country decreased by more than 4 times compared to 2019.



**Fig.1. Number of tourists visiting Uzbekistan, million people.**



(Uzbekistonda tourism - 2016-2019, 2020)

Among the consistent efforts of the government of the country aimed at restoring and enhancing tourism, one can attribute a special emphasis on the development of pilgrimage tourism. There are many shrines of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism in our country. Using this opportunity, it is possible to attract 700,000 visitors and ensure the export of services worth 130 million dollars [4].

It should be noted that a number of measures have been implemented to increase the attractiveness of Uzbekistan in the field of pilgrimage tourism. According to Presidential Decree No. 5611 dated January 5, 2017, a "pilgrim visa" was introduced, which is issued for up to 2 months to foreign citizens arriving to study the cultural, historical, religious and spiritual heritage and traditions of Uzbekistan. In accordance with the presidential decree of February 3, 2018 "On additional organizational measures to create favorable conditions for the development of the tourism potential of the Republic of Uzbekistan", a visa-free regime was introduced for citizens of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, South Korea, Japan and Israel and for tourists from 39 countries introduced a simplified visa regime. Today, a simplified procedure for issuing entry visas for citizens of 86 countries has been introduced in Uzbekistan.

The Ministry of Tourism Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, together with the international organization Crescent Rating, has developed proposals and recommendations for the development of pilgrimage tourism in our country. Based on these recommendations, the necessary conditions were created for performing rituals (prayers) at international airports.

Based on the Malaysian Standard "MS 2610:2015 – Muslim-oriented hospitality services. Tourist services" in the country, a draft standard has been developed - "Oz DSt: 2018 Muslim hospitality. One of the most important events in the field of pilgrimage tourism is the introduction of the Halal standard. At the same time, the country has not formed an information package on the objects of pilgrimage tourism, tour packages have not been classified taking into account the country of arrival, culture, customs, religious values, etc., maps of objects have not been compiled, and the infrastructure of pilgrimage tourism has not been sufficiently formed. At present, the theoretical aspects of the development of pilgrimage tourism have not been sufficiently studied. Experts do not have a common opinion on the definition of the concepts of religious tourism, pilgrimage tourism. According to most experts, religious tourism is a type of activity related to meeting the needs and providing services to tourists traveling to holy places and religious centers located outside the territory of residence [5]. It includes pilgrimage tourism, religious excursion tourism and religious and scientific tourism. Accordingly, religious tourists are persons who leave their place of residence for a period of not more than one year to visit various religious centers and holy places, perform certain rituals, study religion and religious sources. Pilgrimage is a visit by people to holy places and the performance of certain actions, rituals there, and pilgrimage tourism is a type of activity aimed at providing services to pilgrims.

Religious excursion tourism includes trips to religious centers where tourists can see religious monuments, museums, and participate in religious events. This type of tourism is closely related to



scientific tourism. Scientists visit existing religious centers, countries and regions with rich religious traditions and study religious heritage - manuscripts, objects of religious architecture.

According to a number of authors, the fact that Muslims travel the world for various purposes, such as performing religious rites (hajj and umrah), in search of a better life, studying religious heritage and for other reasons, has led to the development of a peculiar approach and standards in the field of tourism [6]. In connection with the problematic aspects of the proposed terms, such as pilgrimage tourism, Islamic tourism, religious tourism, Sharia tourism, halal tourism, preference was given to the term Muslim-friendly travel (friendly tourism for Muslims), based on the opinions of experts in the religious sphere and tourism [7].

According to the definition of the Center for Islamic Tourism (Malaysia), Islamic tourism is any event, meeting, pilgrimage, carried out in accordance with Islamic rules during a trip, the purpose of which is to familiarize and interact with the history, art, culture, lifestyle, heritage of the place of travel [8]. In addition, according to the definition of this center, the following destinations are identified as the main destinations of Islamic tourism:

- Muslims traveling in different directions;
- Muslims traveling to Muslim countries;
- travel according to Islamic principles;
- Muslims traveling to study Islamic heritage;
- representatives of other religious denominations traveling to study the Islamic heritage [8].

It should be noted that in our country there is an opportunity to develop all of the listed areas of pilgrimage tourism. Thousands of tourists from different parts of the world visit Uzbekistan every year to visit and travel to historical and holy places.

The recognition of Uzbekistan as one of the centers of pilgrimage tourism in the world community gives impetus to the development of tourism infrastructure in the country and a significant increase in the flow of tourists. Religious sites alone are not enough for the development of pilgrimage tourism. To attract tourists, there should be good advertising work, a convenient visa regime, conditions for praying at the airport and hotels.

For the development of pilgrimage tourism, it is necessary to solve the issues of developing the hotel system, waiting rooms in hotels, airports and train stations that meet the standards of pilgrimage tourism. From this point of view, the collection of information on the resources for the development of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan, the generalization of the description of the spiritual and material resources available in the country, the creation of a single electronic platform that provides complete information about pilgrimage tourism is of great importance.

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