

ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF TOURISM SERVICES IN THE REPUBLIC OF KARAKALPAKSTAN

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Abstract: The article analyzes the current trends in the development of tourism services in the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In particular, it covers the content of the projects being implemented to expand the tourism potential of the region and develop new tourism facilities. Also, based on a study of the indicators of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the export of tourism services, reasonable proposals and recommendations are given to increase the economic potential of tourism services in the region.

Key words: tourism services, tourism potential of the region, tourism facilities, projects, foreign and domestic tourists, export.

Introduction. Today, in order to organize new investment projects for the development of the region of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, improve the living conditions of the population, our state is also adopting a number of government resolutions to improve and develop tourism, agriculture, and entrepreneurial activity. In particular, it is no coincidence that the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 545 of September 28, 2022 "On measures to develop the tourism potential of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022-2026" [1] was adopted. In accordance with the resolution, a number of works were carried out to implement the above tasks and increase the flow of tourists. In particular:

- an action plan was developed to increase the tourism potential of the region;
- a database was created on 21 tourist attractions in Ellikkal'a district, 13 in Khojayly district, and 14 in Takhtakopir district, a total of 48;
- new destinations were created to increase the existing tourism potential in the regions;
- the database on tourist attractions was translated into Karakalpak, Russian, French, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, German, and Japanese.

Literature review. To date, a number of studies have been conducted on the development of tourism in the region, and scientific approaches in this direction differ. In particular, Ye.A. Zaliznyak defined "Regional tourism is a complex system organized to fulfill interrelated functions necessary for the satisfaction of tourist needs in a given region and its development" [4]. The tourism market plays an important role in the development of regional tourism. According to the economist I.T. Balabanov, "The tourism market consists of a set of economic relations between consumers and sellers of tourist products" [3]. One of the main objects of the regional tourism market is tourist services, and some researchers have defined tourist services as follows: "Tourist services are a set of basic, additional and complex services that satisfy tourist needs. They include basic services, services necessary for organizing and conducting tourism, additional services, services not included in the trip and provided at the resort if necessary, and complex services, a set of tourist services guaranteed in the ticket" [5]; [6].

Research methodology. Based on the priority areas of the concept of tourism development in Uzbekistan, the study aims to highlight the issues of increasing the economic potential of the region's tourism based on the analysis of trends in the development of tourism services in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, based on theoretical analysis and monographic observations. The research used

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the methods of induction and deduction of the theory of knowledge, logical approach, comparison in dynamics and comparative analysis.

Analysis and results. Several projects are being implemented to expand the region's tourism potential and develop new tourism facilities. In summary: A targeted innovative project on the topic "Organization of the Tuproqqala ethno-museum in the Ellikkal'a district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan" is being developed. During the project, the ethnic specificity of the activities of Karakalpakstan museums, clothing culture, national traditions were studied, and the potential of museums was analyzed.

During the study of the activities of existing museums in Karakalpakstan, the following conclusions were made, in particular:

- A total of 99,840 museum items are stored in the I.V. Savitsky State Art Museum of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, of which 55,122 are the main fund, 32,871 are the scientific auxiliary fund, and 11,847 are temporarily stored fund items. 12,995 of the items are in need of repair. Currently, 736 exhibits are placed in the exhibition hall.

- Republic of Karakalpakstan The State Museum of History and Culture of Karakalpakstan and 3 branches (Muynak Ecological Museum, Muynak Aral Sea History Museum and Ellikkal'a District Museum of Archaeology and History). A total of 83,479 museum items are stored in the museums, of which 32,779 are in the main fund, 32,779 are in the scientific auxiliary fund, and 17,921 are in the temporary storage fund. 2,266 of the items are in need of repair.

- The State Museum of the History of Karakalpakstan Literature named after Berdak has a total of 10,469 museum items, of which 6,659 are in the main fund, 2,032 are in the scientific auxiliary fund, and 1,778 are in the temporary storage fund. 3,500 of the items are in need of repair. Currently, 825 of the museum items are on display [1].

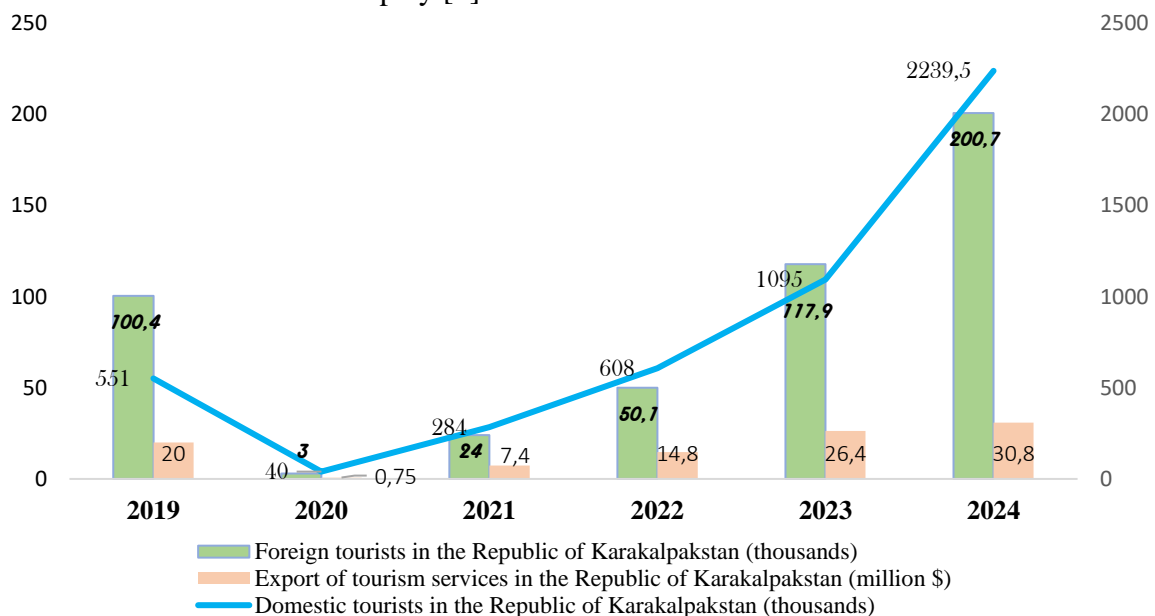


Figure 1. Indicators of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the Republic of Karakalpakstan and export of tourism services¹

The analysis of official reports on the flow of foreign tourists and domestic tourists visiting the Republic of Karakalpakstan in 2026-2023 shows the following. In particular, the number of foreign tourists visiting our country in 2020, which attracts everyone's attention, due to the coronavirus

¹ Compiled by the author based on information from the Tourism Department of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

pandemic, amounted to 3 thousand people, and the export of services amounted to about 750 thousand US dollars. In domestic tourism, 40 thousand domestic tourists traveled within the framework of the “Travel around Uzbekistan” program.

Also, in 2024, the number of foreign tourists visiting our country reached 200.7 thousand people, an increase of 158 percent compared to 2023, and the export of tourist services amounted to about 30.8 million US dollars. In domestic tourism, 2 million 239 thousand domestic tourists traveled, an increase of 148 percent compared to 2023. If we analyze tourists visiting from abroad by country, the majority are from Russia, Kazakhstan, France, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, the USA, and China.

Table 1

Indicators of foreign and domestic tourists to the Republic of Karakalpakstan by district²

N	District and city name	foreign tourists (millions)		Growth (%) compared to 2023	domestic tourists (millions)		Growth (%) compared to 2023
		2023	2024		2023	2024	
Total for Karakalpakstan:		117 962	200 000	170	1 100 000	1 500 000	137
1	Nukus city	32 589	55 000	169	194 210	255 000	134
2	Khojayly district	23 422	39 817	170	103 771	143 000	138
3	Kegeyli district	234	400	171	128 807	170 000	132
4	Chimbay district	2 023	3 400	168	11 607	15 500	134
5	Karaozak district	232	300	129	38 455	52 160	136
6	Takhtakopir district	256	439	170	32 361	44 220	137
7	Takhiyatash district	270	459	170	27 529	37 520	136
8	Kungrat district	10 874	18 485	170	71 826	98 000	136
9	Tortkul district	6 309	10 725	170	18 286	33 500	183
10	Ellikkal'a district	12 540	21 318	170	31 770	42 880	135
11	Beruniy district	8 558	14 548	170	22 411	29 480	132
12	Nukus district	275	465	169	40 814	54 940	132
13	Bozatov district	273	464	170	98 475	134 000	136
14	Kanlikul district	256	435	170	73 497	107 200	146
15	Amudarya district	6 877	11 690	170	58 517	80 400	137
16	Shumanay district	261	443	170	30 234	40 200	133
17	Muynak district	12 713	21 612	170	117 430	162 000	138

It should be noted that the Karakalpakstan region, with its rich cultural heritage, historical and cultural monuments, reserves and diverse landscapes, can develop unique types of tourism. The analysis of the general situation of the tourism services market of the Republic of Karakalpakstan provides for the following. In particular, the services offered in the region include:

- cultural tourism - Karakalpakstan has a rich history and culture. There are many historical monuments, museums, cultural centers here;

² Compiled by the author based on information from the Tourism Department of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

- ecological tourism - Karakalpakstan is rich in natural beauties: deserts, rivers, lakes, flora and fauna;
- ethnographic tourism - the people of Karakalpakstan have their own unique culture. Here you can see national costumes, cuisine, music and dances;
- medical tourism - Karakalpakstan has mineral waters and healing muds. Medical tourism has potential for development here.

Among the services that are in high demand are:

Cultural tourism: Visiting historical monuments and museums, getting to know the national culture.

Ecological tourism: Seeing the beauties of nature, hunting, fishing.

Ethnographic tourism: Getting to know national costumes, cooking, music and dances.

Table 2

Indicators of the Republic of Karakalpakstan on tour operators and travel agents³

№	District and city name	Unit of measurement	2023	Growth compared to 2022, %	2024	Growth compared to 2023, %	2025	Growth compared to 2024, %
Total for Karakalpakstan:		<i>Piece</i>	57	116,3	77	135	97	125,9
1	Nukus city	Piece	30	125	41	136,6	50	121,9
2	Amudarya district	Piece	2	0	3	150	5	166,6
3	Beruniy district	Piece	6	0	7	116	11	157,1
4	Bozatov district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Kegeyli district	Piece	2	0	4	200	4	0
6	Kanlikol district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Koraozak district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Kungrat district	Piece	1	0	3	300	3	0
9	Muynak district	Piece	7	116	7	0	7	0
10	Nukus district	Piece	1	0	3	300	4	133,3
11	Takhiyatash district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Takhtakopir district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Tortkul district	Piece	3	150	4	133	5	125
14	Khojayly district	Piece	4	0	4	0	5	125
15	Chimbay district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Shumanay district	Piece	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Ellikkal'a district	Piece	1	0	1	0	3	300

³ Compiled by the author based on information from the Tourism Department of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

The analysis of the indicators of tour operators and travel agents of the Republic of Karakalpakstan presented in Table 2 shows the following results. In general, in 2024, the number of tour operators and travel agents increased by 20 compared to 2023, which is 135.0%. In 2025, it increased by 125.9% compared to 2024.

An analysis of the data on visitors served by districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan shows that the main flow of tourists is to the city of Nukus, which occupies the leading position in terms of the number of tour operators and travel agents. That is, the number of tour operators increased by 136.6% in 2024 compared to 2023.

Next in line are the Amudarya, Beruniy, Kungrat, Tortkul, Khojayly and Nukus districts, which have a relatively developed infrastructure for serving visitors to the republic, which are improving their indicators from year to year. In particular, in 2024, compared to 2023, this indicator increased by 150% in the Amudarya district, by 133% in the Tortkul district and by 116% in the Beruniy district. Also, in the Kegeyli district, this indicator increased by 100% in 2024 compared to 2023, that is, the number of tour operators and travel agents doubled.

From this analytical data, it is worth noting that the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-135 dated April 26, 2023 "On additional measures to accelerate the development of the tourism potential of the Republic and further increase the number of local and foreign tourists" [2] is explained in connection with the implementation of the target indicators for the development of tourism in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions and the city of Tashkent in 2023.

In most of the remaining districts, the number of tour operators is very small, and in some districts there are none at all. Or, despite being rich in tourist resources, the districts of Bozatov, Kanlikol, Karaozak, Takhiatash, Takhtakopir, Chimbay, and Shumanay have not provided any services to visitors. The main reason for this is that no tour operator companies and organizations carrying out tourist activities have been registered in these districts.

But even so, the Chimbay district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is attracting the attention of tourist organizations with its national crafts. Many people in the district are engaged in making "Black Houses", their decorations and necessary items from reeds, as well as Karakalpak jewelry. If we take the Takhtakopir district, there is 1 family guest house in the district and an ethno-tourist complex on the shores of Lake "Qaratereng" with restaurants, accommodation facilities and places for holding events, there are no other accommodation facilities. The tourism infrastructure in the district is practically not formed, one of the main reasons for this can be the fact that tourist facilities are not included in tour routes.

In a practical solution to the issue, we propose that, in order to increase the economic potential of tourism services in the region, we propose that businesses implement business projects to partially cover the costs of creating and promoting various audiovisual media products aimed at promoting their activities by hotels, catering establishments and restaurants, which will be compensated for a certain period of time from special funds.

The implementation of the proposals, in turn, will contribute to a certain increase in the potential of the tourism sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

Looking at the data in Table 3, the number of places in placement facilities in the Republic of Karakalpakstan in 2023 increased by 115.9% compared to 2022, which in turn indicates a significant increase. In 2024, an increase of 117.7% was observed compared to 2023, which is also a good positive indicator.

Table 3

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Indicators of the Republic of Karakalpakstan's position in the placement tools⁴

№	District and city name	Unit of measurement	2023	Growth compared to 2022, %	2024	Growth compared to 2023, %
Total for Karakalpakstan:		Piece	2208	115,9	2600	117,7
1	Nukus city	piece	1 221	116	1 438	118
2	Amudarya district	piece	46	100	46	100
3	Beruniy district	piece	0	0	30	200
4	Bozatov district	piece	0	0	0	0
5	Kegeyli district	piece	0	0	0	0
6	Kanlikol district	piece	0	0	0	0
7	Karaozak district	piece	12	100	12	100
8	Kungrat district	piece	241	145	241	100
9	Muynak district	piece	435	131	445	102
10	Nukus district	piece	6	100	6	100
11	Takhiyatash district	piece	0	0	0	0
12	Takhtakopir district	piece	10	100	25	250
13	Tortkul district	piece	97	100	137	141
14	Khojayly district	piece	27	100	42	156
15	Chimbay district	piece	12	100	27	225
16	Shumanay district	piece	0	0	0	0
17	Ellikkal'a district	piece	101	100	151	150

The analysis of the region by city and district gave the following results. In particular, the city of Nukus occupies the leading position in terms of the number of places in accommodation facilities, and this indicator increased by 116% in 2023 compared to 2022, and in Kungir district - by 145%.

As for Muynak district, it increased by 131% in 2023 compared to 2022. The next places are Tortkul, Takhtakopir, Khojayly, Chimbay and Ellikkal'a districts, and in these districts an increase of 100% was observed in 2023 compared to 2022.

In the remaining districts, the number of places in accommodation facilities is very small, and in some districts it does not exist at all. This, in turn, is explained by the lack of adequate housing facilities in some districts, the low quality of some housing facilities, and the high cost of some housing facilities.

Conclusions and suggestions. Summing up the above considerations, we conclude that in the future it is important to take support measures to increase the number of accommodation facilities in the Republic of Karakalpakstan; it is advisable to further intensify state policy aimed at improving the quality and reducing the cost of accommodation facilities, as well as developing the tourism sector. In this regard, we believe that it is necessary to actively attract grants and funds from foreign countries, international organizations and investors to the region in order to alleviate the problems of the Aral Sea through the development of tourism in the region. This, in turn, will to a certain extent contribute to the financial support of the development of ecotourism in the region.

⁴ Compiled by the author based on information from the Tourism Department of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

Thus, the tourism market of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is promising, since the region has a rich historical heritage, natural beauty, ethnography, unique ecological landscapes. Active investment in developing the potential of existing tourism resources in Karakalpakstan and ensuring sustainable development will attract more tourists and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region to a certain extent.

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