

TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

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In the article analyzed the development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The factors which are necessary for the functioning of the country's modern high-performance and competitive tourist complex providing opportunities for meeting the needs of local and foreign nationals in a variety of tourist services were identified. The conditions for attracting the investment for the development of material base of the tourism industry in the Republic of Kazakhstan were allocated; also the prospects directions of the development of tourism in the country have been identified.

Keywords: tourism, investment, economy, potential, market, information, culture, competitive, industry, a pilot project

Tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a priority. The main purpose of tourism development in Kazakhstan is the creation of a modern highly efficient and competitive tourist complex on the basis of which will be provided the conditions for the development of the industry as a sector of the economy, integration into the global tourism market and the development of further international cooperation in the field of tourism. Given that Kazakhstan has a unique natural potential, the country has all opportunities for the development of different types of tourism.

As noted by international experts in the field of tourism, the state of tourism industry development in Kazakhstan in recent years is characterized by its progressive and sustainable development. In the coming years our country has the opportunity to become one of the largest economies in the travel and tourism. Abroad are beginning to consider Kazakhstan as one of the most stable countries with unique tourism opportunities.

Tourism is defined by one of the major clusters of non-oil sector of the economy by the President of Kazakhstan. The republic set demanding task in the near future to enter the top 50 most competitive countries in the world. It is important to understand today – Kazakhstan's tourist complex can be a powerful lever for accelerating the pace of overall growth and modernization of the economy. These are evidenced by growth trends in inbound and domestic tourism and create a system of state regulation of tourism activities in the framework of tourism development. Significantly increased the number of foreign tourists has increased the demand for travel within the country.

According to the Statistical Agency, in Kazakhstan in 2010, registered travel agencies in 1252. Of those in the public domain is a travel company and the remainder in private ownership and enterprises with foreign participation (Table) [1, p. 37].

As the table shows, there is a positive growth of tourism firms. Compared with 2006,

in 2010 the number had increased by 36%. The greatest numbers of firms are located in Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan regions. A small number of tourist firms observed in the Kyzylorda region.

By definition of WTO, countries are divided into: the «countries that are in the first place, troop-tourists» and «countries in the first place, receiving tourists».

Kazakhstan on the gradation of the country belongs to the supplier of tourists. In world practice, supplier countries are highly developed country with an enormous industrial potential. Kazakhstan on many economic parameters is this country, and should try to attract tourists to the country in order to ensure the inflow of capital. The prevalence of outbound tourism in the early years of reform was associated with a decline in production in light industry, breaking the traditional relations, which led to the impoverishment of the consumer goods market and caused a «boom» shop-tourism. Dramatically increased the number of travelers to tourist trips resulting in significant tourist traffic was not in favor for Kazakhstan. Recently, with increasing incomes, the share of domestic tourism was increased.

According to the Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010, the number of visitors served by tourist firms totaled 459,337, an increase compared to the year 2009 by 32% (in 2009 – 347,413 people). There has been an increase in tourist traffic served by tourist firms of inbound and outbound travel:

- number of tourists traveling through the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has increased by 29% compared with 2009 and amounted to 157,986 persons;

- number of visitors inbound tourism increased by 27% compared with 2009 and amounted to 39,640 persons;

- number of visitors to outbound tourism increased by 35% to 261 709 people [1, p. 31].

According to the international financial institutions, tourism during the second half of

XX century confidently holds the leading position in terms of gross annual financial turnover of the global market. There is enough evidence

to suggest that, at certain periods, depending on market fluctuations, there may be a situation of absolute leadership of the tourism industry.

The number of tourist companies by the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period 2006–2010 years

Regions of Kazakhstan	Years				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Akmolinskaya	17	20	26	26	22
Aktubinskaya	18	20	27	26	27
Almatinskaya	50	47	54	43	37
Atyrauskaya	23	24	25	18	21
Zapadno-Kazakhstanskaya	8	10	11	10	13
Zhambylskaya	13	19	21	21	19
Karagandinskaya	52	54	72	76	81
Kostanaiskaya	13	19	26	26	27
Kyzylordinskaya	4	4	3	2	4
Mangistauskaya	21	22	26	29	30
Yuzhno-Kazakhstanskaya	18	18	26	22	27
Pavlodarskaya	32	48	52	56	59
Severo-Kazakhstanskaya	16	18	20	23	21
Vostochno-Kazakhstanskaya	39	40	47	48	42
Astana city	44	57	88	87	158
Almaty city	553	587	639	690	664
Republic of Kazakhstan, total	921	1007	1163	1203	1252

Note. Compiled by author based on data from the Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The leading position of tourism, due to processes of economic globalization, the rapid development of aviation and transport, media, computing and advertising industry, the liberalization of visa regimes, rising living standards and the degree of informativeness of the population in developed economies, the emergence in the world of new centers of economic breakthrough irreversible process of internationalization of the criteria defining the key concepts of human values.

The initiating factor in the rapid development of tourism was also negative environmental impacts of industrialization and urbanization of the society, encouraging people to seek for rest and rehabilitation of health eco-friendly places abroad. Geography and species composition of international tourism are in the state, mostly stable, positive centrifugal dynamics, resulting in the emergence of new centers and the tourist industry while maintaining the traditional popularity.

Becoming increasingly popular trip, providing an opportunity to meet in professions or interests, travels of the fans on the international sports competitions, and participate in carnivals, national holidays and festivities of the local population (especially – the indige-

nous peoples). But along with these processes is gaining a pilgrim tourism. The number of pilgrims and just want to get acquainted with the culture of other nations is growing. This is especially important today, given the ethnic conflicts on religious grounds. Now began to appear, some encouraging signs that allow being optimistic about the future of Kazakhstan's tourism in general, and pilgrim aging tourism in particular. A good sign of close government attention to the high economic potential of tourism, was the message of President to the people of Kazakhstan «Kazakhstan 2030» (long-term priority «Economic growth based on an advanced market economy with high levels of foreign investment»), as well as the annual message of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Recently, interest to the Kazakhstan as a tourist destination, has increased significantly worldwide, and thus, year by year the range of tourist services offered by local tour operators to attract more travelers. Today we attract tourists from Kazakhstan, Germany, England, Japan, Korea and China. The Germans and the British had already explored tourist destinations in Kazakhstan. Today, Kazakhstan has almost all the existing forms of tourism – cog-

nitive, entertaining, pilgrim, ecological, and others. Tourists invited to a large number of routes of travel throughout the territory of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is a huge country, which has a unique natural potential, unique culture and art. Many Kazakh resorts for many years been abandoned, dilapidated, and therefore of little interest, not only foreigners, but fellow citizens. They turned their attention, in fact, quite recently, and we can not say that all problems have been solved manifested.

Today in the republic has over a thousand travel agencies and operators. But most of them focused not on domestic and inbound tourism, they work with abroad travels.

During the 2007–2010 development of the industry based on the State Program of development of tourist industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007–2011, approved by Decree of the Head of State on December 29, 2006 № 231 [2].

During this period, work was carried out to improve the regulatory framework. In 2008 changes were made to some legislative acts on tourist activities and approved by the orders of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which from January 20, 2012 Presidential Decree «On further improvement of the system of government of the Republic of Kazakhstan» was reorganized into the Agency for Sports and Physical Education (hereinafter – the Agency) on tourism [3].

It should be noted that the Agency on an ongoing basis, work on the formation of the image, including the promotion of tourism information of Kazakhstan abroad. The main tools are the creation and broadcasting of promotional videos on leading TV channels of the world, conducting information tours for representatives of leading international media, participation in major international tourism fairs.

The main event in a certain image in 2009 was held in Astana in October 2009 – the 18th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which brought together over 700 delegates from 146 countries, the actual members of the UNWTO, as well as representatives of foreign world media.

At the end of the UNWTO General Assembly adopted important documents of strategic importance to the world of tourism:

1. Astana Declaration on development of tourism on the Silk Road.

2. The Support of the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Nursultan Nazarbayev – to declare an August 29 – the World Day of free of nuclear weapons.

Result of these measures, about Kazakhstan, finally talked about as a country with

huge potential for tourism, unique nature and rich historical and cultural heritage.

In order to identify major problems and causes hindering the development of tourism on the ground, during June 2008 to July 2009 were carried out research of the Korean International Cooperation Agency in December 2009, developed a master plan of «Creation of a national tourism cluster along the international highway «Western Europe – Western China»» [4].

The recommendations of the Master Plan provided the basis for the formation of further vision for the development of tourism in the State program of forced industrial-innovative development of Kazakhstan for 2010–2014.

Despite of the fact that there has been a steady trend of growth, mainly placements are located in cities and large towns. To create favorable conditions for tourists, not only foreign but also domestic, given the long distances between settlements, it is important to their location along highways in certain areas.

However, the absence of the accommodation directly to the places where the tourist facilities and tourist routes in the nodal points prevents the development of inbound and domestic tourism of mass. As a result, domestic tourism is dominated by one-day routes with a length of 400–500 km, indicating a significant amount of time spent on the road. Such trips are boring and leave the bad memories for most travelers.

Another of the problems to be solved is the fact that the global financial crisis, domestic investors will not risk further invest in the construction of tourist facilities.

Creating a mechanism for long-term lending preferences of the tourism organizations for the development of tourism infrastructure helps for the increasing the investments for the development a competitive tourism industry.

In countries that make a bet on the development of tourism, usually taken legislative measures to encourage the development of tourism infrastructure, particularly hotels. At the same time government agencies and financial institutions based on the fact that investment in tourism is creating new jobs and generates some income. Therefore, in most legislative decisions are taken to facilitate the attraction of foreign and domestic investments and loans, for example by establishing for them tax breaks.

The target group of tourists with an interest in Kazakhstan:

- 1) lovers of wild unspoiled nature and amazing landscapes;

- 2) fans unexplored tourist destinations, curious tourists who want to be pioneers.

Ecological tourism in Kazakhstan has good potential, but not sufficiently developed.

The state program of tourism development for 2007–2011, ecotourism was highlighted as one of the priorities, and provided for the development of national, regional and local policies for its development. However, to date has not yet formed as the policy itself, as well as common organizational approaches.

Ecotourism is not aimed at increasing tourist flows to natural areas; it allows you to preserve nature, which does not require the implementation of investment projects that can have a negative impact on the environment.

In Kazakhstan there are 118 protected areas, including 11 state national parks, which allowed the use of controlled tourism, aimed at the development of ecotourism. Given that its objects can be both natural and cultural attractions, natural and natural-anthropogenic landscapes, where traditional culture is integral with the natural environment, the development of eco-tourism can provide not only financial support for natural areas, but also give the opportunity to create interest in their preservation.

Rural Ecotourism also has the potential for developing. Its development is limited to rural areas and due to the activity for the production of agricultural products.

As part of this form of tourism in Kazakhstan have developed guest houses, living in which tourists are rural way of life, become familiar with everyday of the Kazakh culture and natural attractions.

Since 2005, the Information Resource Center operates the Ecological Tourism in Almaty, who works for the creation and development of these guest houses. These homes are part of the concept of ecological and sustainable tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The study of international experience on the subject shows that the socio-economic role of ecotourism in different areas with different functions. In the agricultural areas of ecotourism can be an additional source of income for sustains production, landscape and traditional way of life of local people. In the territories, the main function is to protect the natural and cultural heritage; eco-tourism is a major source of revenue, cost-justifying the execution of this function. In industrial areas, the role of ecotourism is to protect natural areas unchanged and maintaining physical and mental equilibrium of the population.

In general, the potential interest in ecotourism in the international market is 8,9 million (or 63% of total capacity). This tourism product is the best position in the global tourism market and has become one of the key developments in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has an ancient and unique history, as evidenced by the presence of twenty-seven thousand ancient monuments such as Saki mounds / hills, the Golden Man of Issyk, and many others.

Kazakh section of the Silk Road is a unique complex of historical monuments, archeology, architecture, urban planning and monumental art. They are the ancient cities of Otrar, Taraz, Sairam (Ispidzhab), Turkestan (Iasi), Balasagun and others who were not just shopping centers but also centers of science and culture.

All of this should contribute for the effective development of cultural tourism, but considering the dependence on the sector on many factors, such as a lack of advertising and information materials, poor infrastructure, including small number of placements near the tourist facilities, poor quality of roads, there is its low competitiveness.

With its unique natural and mineral resources and climate, Kazakhstan could also develop a medical spa and ski tourism.

The market situation for the provision and development of therapeutic services is changing towards a quantitative increase in business tourism and recreational areas.

Analysis of the status of this issue shows that since 1999, begins a gradual rise and development of sanatoriums and recreation organizations, whose number grew to 121 by end of 2010.

The study of international experience in this highly topical issue in Kazakhstan indicates that the leadership of tourist arrivals to the spa treatment, thanks to the Czech Republic belongs to the largest and the world famous health resort of Karlovy Vary. According to the National Tourism Administration of the Czech Republic every year it is visited by about 50 thousand people from more than 70 countries for the treatment and about 2 million tourists in recreational and fitness purposes.

Switzerland is a country in the last decade, the popular ski tourism, which generates revenues of up to U.S. \$ 20 billion. The same type of tourism was developed in Italy and France, who are actively using high – Alps, Austria, Slovenia and Montenegro. Plans to enhance the development of tourism destinations, such countries as Bulgaria and Turkey.

For Kazakhstan, the development of ski tourism is of high importance; its development in some regions can be the basis of socio-economic development.

The unique natural conditions make it possible to create a large modern ski centers with a high level of comfort and services.

The development of all of types of tourism will contribute for the economic stability and profitability of tourist and recreational

complex, conservation and sustainable use of valuable natural medicinal resources of the country, improve the provision of tourist and recreational services, creating conditions for the formation and development of a competitive tourism industry in the country.

Despite of the development of tourism infrastructure, quality of service at many tourist sites remained low. This is due to the fact that the implementation of measures to improve the system of training for the tourism industry takes time.

July 5, 2008, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On making amendments and addenda to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on issues of tourist activities» was adopted.

As part of this law established the regulatory framework to ensure that employers have a real opportunity with the formation of associations and organizations to introduce vocational training, retraining and skills they need tourist staff.

An important issue is the introduction of higher educational institutions (hereinafter – institutions of higher education) of the country, preparing personnel for the tourism industry of the quality of tourism education «WTO-Ted-Qual», recommended by the World Tourism Organization.

For this purpose, together with experts from the UNWTO and the Ministry of Education and Science continues to investigate the issue of a pilot project to introduce the system of certification based on one of the leading public institutions of higher education in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan plans to become a center of tourism in the region, it is necessary to take measures to improve the system of training in the tourism industry, where the impact is particularly acute shortage of qualified professionals in middle and senior managers in demand in the tertiary sector.

Agency with the participation of business associations, employers, and managers of higher, technical and vocational schools that train personnel for the tourism industry, has developed a new qualification structure of the tourism industry within the framework of the European Training Foundation (ETF), «National Qualifications Frameworks in Central Asia». For approval of its experimental testing is needed.

For this purpose, with the support and direct participation of the Agency implemented a pilot project to introduce a flexible qualification structure in the tourism sector as a pilot project.

In the past two years, work was undertaken on amendments and additions to the Classification of Economic Activities and Classifieds areas of training by industry in conjunction with the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare, Education and Science and the Statistical Agency, the Ministry initiated in connection with the implementation of cluster development tourism.

At the same time, was introduced an auxiliary account in the tourism, which is formed on the basis of tourism statistics, and which allows us to estimate the contribution of the tourism industry to the economy of the state. However, it still needs to continue the improvement statistics on a par with countries, the share of tourism in the economy of more than 50%.

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