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# GEOGRAPHICAL PREREQUISITES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN KAZAKHSTAN

Tourism is an actively developing branch of the economy. Despite the fact that Kazakhstan's tourist destinations are not yet widely represented on the world tourism market, having unique natural resources and objects of cultural and historical heritage, the country has a huge potential for a worthy place in world tourism. All the necessary cultural, historical, geographical and climatic conditions are sufficient for the development of tourism in the country.

There are three cultural heritage sites and two natural heritage sites listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Kazakhstan. However, the attractiveness of the tourism industry is characterized not only by beautiful natural landscapes and historical sites, but also by developed infrastructure and services, access to transport and security.

The regions of interest to domestic and foreign tourists in the republic are national parks and specially protected natural areas. The most popular destinations among Kazakhstanis are the cities of Almaty and Astana, as well as the East Kazakhstan region, and the most popular among foreign tourists is the Almaty cluster.

There are opportunities in the regions of Kazakhstan to increase the share of this industry in the country's economy through the development of tourism. To do this, it is necessary to solve the current problems of the development of the industry.

**Key words:** tourism, recreation, ecological tourism, social tourism, ethnotourism.

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## Қазақстанда туризм дамуының географиялық алғышарттары

Туризм-экономиканың белсенді дамып келе жатқан саласы. Қазақстанның туристік дестинациялары әлемдік туризм нарығында әлі кеңінен ұсынылмағанымен, бірегей табиғи ресурстар мен мәдени-тарихи мұра объектілеріне ие бола отырып, еліміз әлемдік туризмде лайықты орын алу үшін зор әлеуетке ие. Елімізде туризмді дамыту үшін барлық қажетті мәдени, тарихи, географиялық және климаттық жағдайлар жеткілікті.

Қазақстанда ЮНЕСКО-ның бүкіләлемдік мұра нысандарының тізіміне енгізілген үш мәдени мұра нысаны және екі табиғи мұра нысаны орналасқан. Дегенмен, туристік индустрияның тартымдылығы әдемі табиғи ландшафттармен және тарихи көрікті жерлермен ғана емес, сонымен қатар дамыған инфрақұрылым мен қызмет көрсетумен, көлікке қол жетімділікпен және қауіпсіздікпен сипатталады.

Республикада ішкі және сырттан келуші туристер қызығушылық туғызып отырған аймақтар ұлттық парктер мен ерекше қорғалатын табиғи аумақтар болып отыр. Қазақстандықтар арасында ең танымал бағыттар Алматы, Астана қалалары мен Шығыс Қазақстан облыстары болса, шетелдік туристер арасында ең танымал Алматы кластері болып отыр.

Қазақстанның өңірлерінде туризмді дамыту арқылы ел экономикасындағы бұл саланың үлесін арттыруға мүмкіндіктер бар. Ол үшін саланың дамуындағы өзекті мәселелерді шешу қажет.

Түйін сөздер: туризм, рекреация, экологиялық туризм, әлеуметтік туризм, этнотуризм.

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### Географические предпосылки развития туризма в Казахстане

Туризм-активно развивающаяся отрасль экономики. Несмотря на то, что туристические дестинации Казахстана еще не широко представлены на мировом рынке туризма, обладая уникальными природными ресурсами и объектами культурно-исторического наследия, страна обладает огромным потенциалом для достойного места в мировом туризме. Для развития туризма в стране достаточно всех необходимых культурных, исторических, географических и климатических условий.

В Казахстане расположены три объекта культурного наследия и два объекта природного наследия, внесенные в список объектов всемирного наследия ЮНЕСКО. Однако привлекательность туристической индустрии характеризуется не только красивыми природными ландшафтами и историческими достопримечательностями, но и развитой инфраструктурой и обслуживанием, доступом к транспорту и безопасностью.

Регионами, представляющими интерес для внутренних и внешних туристов в республике, являются национальные парки и особо охраняемые природные территории. Самыми популярными направлениями среди казахстанцев являются города Алматы и Астана, а также Восточно-Казахстанская область, а самым популярным среди иностранных туристов является Алматинский кластер.

В регионах Казахстана есть возможности увеличить долю этой отрасли в экономике страны за счет развития туризма. Для этого необходимо решить актуальные проблемы развития отрасли.

Ключевые слова: туризм, рекреация, экологический туризм, социальный туризм, этнотуризм.

#### Introduction

Nowadays, the tourism industry is one of the most rapidly expanding industries in the global economy. As one of the most important sectors of the economy, tourism helps to the growth of other sectors through the increase of tax revenues, foreign currency flows, and employment.

Kazakhstan's effective geopolitical location, historical significance, and recreational potential have the potential for the development of tourism products and all the prerequisites for tourism to assume its place on the global map.

Nonetheless, the tourism industry in Kazakhstan is now developing at a moderate rate, therefore its socioeconomic impact is insufficient. For the growth of the tourism sector in the Republic of Kazakhstan, in order to enhance the tourist flow, it is important to establish the circumstances for the full realization of the industry's potential through state-led strategic planning.

Tourism is the largest and fastest-growing sector of the global economy, with a growth rate that is two times that of other businesses. The tourism business can be likened to the oil production industry in terms of total investment volume.

The COVID-19 global pandemic had a negative impact on the development of the tourism industry in the countries of the world. Between January and December 2020, the number of foreign tourists in

the world decreased by about one billion people. Developing countries suffered the most losses due to the pandemic: in 2020, they sharply decreased the number of tourists to 60-80 percent. The most affected areas were Northeast and Southeast Asia, oceanic islands, North Africa and South Asia.

Owing to COVID-19, the movement of international tourists was restricted and the inbound tourism flow to Kazakhstan was reversed. The pandemic made it possible to redirect the outbound tourist flow to domestic tourism, conduct an analysis of the industry's activities, identify gaps in the effectiveness of tourist activities, and direct the funds of state regulatory authorities and private investors to solve acute problems within the industry.

In Kazakhstan, the number of tourists visiting the country in 2020 decreased by 3.6 times or to 1.8 million people compared to 2019. At the same time, only 2.4 million people left the country-a decrease of 3.4 times compared to 2019. The indicator of domestic tourism decreased by 60.3%, to 3.1 million people.

# **Materials and Methods**

Throughout the course of the study, statistical data was gathered and a qualitative analysis of the resulting data on the growth of tourism was conducted. The study's information sources included literary works, the findings of scientific research on

the subject, state programs, and regulatory papers. When summarizing factual material, recommending or discovering new ideas, a review of the literature becomes quite beneficial.

During the years of sovereignty, Kazakhstan adopted several documents on the development of the tourism industry in the economy and carried out measures to develop the tourism market. In the consideration of tourism as an industry or economic sector, various opinions have formed among scientists in recent years. In connection with the need to consider the problem related to the use of natural resource potential in the region, geography began to be studied before science. They influenced the formation of the concepts of «natural recreational resource» and «recreational zone» in territorial and spatial terms.

We can note the works of scientists S. R. Erdavletov, B. I. Aktymbaeva, V. I. Kruzalina, O.B Mazbaev., B.K. Asubaev, E.A. Tokpanov., A. S. Aktymbaeva, Zh.N. Aliyeva, E. S. Bogomolova, Z. E. Namazbaeva, G. B. Uakhitova, Zh. Asipova, A. S. Kiseleva and others who were engaged in the development of tourism in Kazakhstan.

In the works of these scientists, the state of development of the tourism industry since the years of sovereignty,the main problems and ways to solve them are considered (Mazbaev, 2013; Aktymbaeva, 2020).

The issues relating to the growth of social tourism and the protection of the interests of those who use travel agencies have not been resolved in Kazakhstan. This indicates that the state has not yet developed a systematic approach to solving the problems of this industry, as the prospects for the development of social tourism are highly dependent on state policy, state regulation and support of the tourism sector, as well as the level of economic development of the country and the world (Kiseleva, 2022).

All regions of Kazakhstan have the opportunity to develop ecological tourism and rural tourism. Rural tourism is designed to encourage unconventional development and entrepreneurial opportunities, as tourism creates jobs, supports retail growth, and gives vitality to a traditionally poorly developed economy. Therefore, rural tourism has become part of the strategies and program documents for the development of rural areas at the national and international levels (Khartishvilli et.al, 2019).

Rural areas with a powerful sufficient natural, demographic, economic and historical-cultural potential, if used more fully, rationally and efficiently, can ensure sustainable multidisciplinary development, full employment, a high level and quality of life of the rural population (Aliyeva, 2021).

The Republic of Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the development of tourism as a cluster. In order to increase the competitiveness of the territory in the tourism market, five tourist clusters have been identified, which provide for the formation of ecological and cultural-ethnic zones: Astana, Almaty, East Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan. Particular attention is paid to: improving the efficiency of enterprises and organizations included in the cluster; stimulating innovation and developing new tourist destinations (Makenova, 2020).

# **Results and Discussion**

10% of the world gross output is contributed by tourism, each visitor spends an average of \$2.20 per hour, and 30 tourists create one job. Utilizing approximately 7% of the world's capital, tourism ranked third after the export of oil and oil products and automobiles (The state program for the development of the tourist industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025).

By 2026, the global business tourism market will reach 1.658 trillion. US dollars. It is estimated at US dollars, and the annual growth is expected to be an average of 3.7%.

Tourist destinations of Kazakhstan are not yet widely represented on the world tourism market, but, having unique natural resources and objects of cultural and historical heritage, the country has the potential to take a worthy place in World Tourism.

The average indicator of the tourist potential of Kazakhstan is 35.8% higher. This means that more than half of the country's landscape-geographical and climatic resources can be used to develop various tourist destinations. For comparison, the tourist potential of Turkey is more than 38.4%, Greece-35, Italy-49, France, Germany and Spain – 50% (of course, the potential of individual districts and districts can be quite high) (Daubaev K. Zh., Iskakova M. K., Tulegenova Zh. U., Pyagai A. A., 2019).

Analysis of the development of types of tourism shows the growth of so-called ecological tourism around the world. Ecological tourism is best suited to the concept of sustainable development, as it is organized in such a way that the tourist is in harmony with the tourist landscape. However, according to Tizdell, for the development of tourism (including environmental) and related industries, it is necessary

to form special tourist clusters with the inevitable costs of certain economic resources (Vechkinzova E. A., Daribekova A. S.).

In the global index of travel and tourism development of the World Economic Forum in 2021, Kazakhstan ranked 66th out of 117 countries.

The top 5 countries leading this ranking include countries such as Japan, USA, Spain, France, Germany. Higher than Kazakhstan are countries such as Georgia (44th place), Armenia (61st place) and Azerbaijan (63rd place), lower in the ranking, Montenegro (67th place), Morocco (71st place), Mongolia (84th place), Kyrgyzstan (90th place). At the same time, Uzbekistan and Belarus traditionally do not participate in the rating.

The high potential of the country is noted in the overall ranking of individual domestic indices. For example, in terms of price competitiveness, Kazakhstan ranks 1st (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The price competitiveness of a country indicates how expensive vacations or investments are there. The low costs connected with traveling throughout the country improve its appeal to many tourists and make the tourism industry more appealing to investors. Aspects of price competitiveness include taxes on air tickets and airport fees, which can significantly increase the price of air tickets (5 seats); relative hotel costs and short-term housing rentals (12 seats); cost of living, represented by purchasing power parity (20 seats); and fuel costs (4 seats), which directly affect the cost of the trip.

The high potential for the development of tourism in Kazakhstan is also indicated in the following rating indicators:

- \* according to the internal labor market index in the field of tourism, the country ranks 59th;
- \* according to the indicator of cultural resources 63rd place;
- \* By the number of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites-42nd place.
  - \* seasonality of international visits (26th place)
- \* by the length of stay of foreign tourists (52 seats)
  - \* interest in cultural attractions (37th place)

In addition, there is a positive trend in the direction of "priority tourism" (+15, 68th place) (rating of the country's brand strategy, etc.), "international openness" (+4, 103rd place) (visa requirements, degree of financial transparency, etc.), Kazakhstan is higher than Malaysia, Poland, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, «Natural Resources» (+2, 33rd place) (increased digital demand for recreation in nature; total area of protected areas, etc.), «tourism services

infrastructure» (+2, 76 seats) (the number of rooms in the accommodation, the number of ATMs, etc. B.) Kazakhstan is ahead of such countries as Azerbaijan, Indonesia and Egypt.

Also in the potential of tourism development of the Republic, the «business environment» (-23, 90th Place) (property rights, the effectiveness of the legal system in resolving disputes and challenging actions carried out by the state, the availability of small and medium-sized businesses to finance, etc. there is a decrease in its position in the ranking on such indicators as «health and hygiene» (-4, 33rd place) (the number of doctors, the availability of Health Services, the number of infectious diseases per 100 thousand people, the level of drinking water supply per 1000 people, etc.) and «security» (-12, 77th Place) (business costs in the event of crime and violence, the reliability of the police service, the safety of night walks, the number of murders per 100 thousand people of the population, organized violence, etc.) (travel-and-tourism, 2021).

The tourism industry in Kazakhstan is still not a highly profitable industry and is not an attractive direction for investment. The share of tourist services in the GDP of the Republic is only 1.8%. Despite this, positive changes are taking place in the tourism sector. In 2019, the volume of services provided by various travel companies increased by 17%, the flow of visitors increased by 14%, and foreign citizens' travel expenses to Kazakhstan increased by 5.6% (Kenzhebekov Nurzhan, Yerlan Zhailauov, Emil Velinov, Yelena Petrenko, and Igor Denisov, 2021).

The Gross Value Added created in direct tourism in Kazakhstan in 2009 amounted to млрд 229.6 billion. from tenge in 2019, it increased 3.5 times to 821.5 billion tenge, and in 2020 it decreased by 2 times, that is, to 410.5 billion tenge. The share of Gross Value Added created in direct tourism in the gross domestic product increased from 0.9% in 2009 to 1.3%, and in 2020 its acceleration decreased to 0.6%.

It is assumed that the rapid development of tourism in China, India and Russia, which are currently neighboring the Republic, will also contribute to the development of tourism in Kazakhstan.

According to UNWTO forecasts, in the next two decades, the ecotourism industry will develop at a high pace, and the volume of spending on ecotourism will develop at a higher pace compared to the tourism industry as a whole (Achilov N. 2017).

Ecological tourism accounts for 25% of World Tourism. This area of tourism is the most dynami-

cally developing sector of the tourism industry. According to the World Tourism Organization, over the past ten years, the number of ecotourists has been increasing by 20% annually.

Kazakhstan has a tremendous potential for the growth of ecotourism due to its abundance of natural assets. Spectacular natural vistas, unique ecological routes, and ethno-cultural tourism will not leave even the most discerning traveler unmoved.

When visiting natural regions, the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems is the defining characteristic of ecotourism. Ecotourism also enables the creation of economic conditions in which the conservation of natural resources will benefit local populations.

Currently, 8 billion US dollars are allocated annually to specially protected natural areas in the world. a person goes, 80% of them belong to Europe and North America. As a result, 600 billion in the form of direct expenses. US dollars and an additional 250 billion in the form of consumer spending. the profit will come in the amount of US dollars. At the same time, according to the estimates of the In-

ternational Society of ecotourism, the market grows by 25% annually and reaches млрд 470 billion. It generates income in the amount of US dollars.

Tourism growth is expected through the emergence of new territories that can be visited due to the fact that the recreational opportunities of traditional areas in the global tourism market reach their limits.

According to the tourist and recreational potential of Kazakhstan, there is a high potential for the development of Tourism. Tourist resources form the tourist infrastructure. There are two main elements in the composition of the tourist infrastructure. The first element is enterprises that provide accommodation and catering services, restaurant services (state program development of the tourist industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019).

The number of enterprises of the tourist infrastructure of Kazakhstan is steadily growing every year. The number of enterprises providing tourist services in the Republic in 2009 was 44,578, in 2019 this figure was 109,265, in 2021 their number reached 132,254.

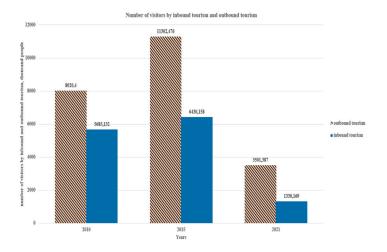


Figure 1 – Number of tourists arriving and leaving in the Republic of Kazakhstan from 2010 to 2021, thousand people (https://stat.gov.kz/)

As shown in Figure 1, in the period from 2010 to 2021, the number of tourists from the territory of the country increased 16.6 times from 210 thousand people to 3,500 people, and the number of tourists from 39.8 thousand people to 1,330 people increased 33.4 times. The number of visitors to Kazakhstan is growing every year, and there is a positive trend in this indicator. The country as a tourism destination has long been known to everyone, but the world is

now learning about the variety and possibilities of tourism in the Republic, including eco and ethnotourism. Therefore, it is expected that in the future the flow of tourists from abroad will increase every year.

The region where ecotourism is developed includes Almaty and Zhetysu regions. In this region there is a tour «golden necklace of Almaty region». The tour includes national parks in the region, Kol-

sai, Kayyndy lakes and Charyn gorge, Ile Alatau National Park. The shchuchinsk-Borovoe resort area also has great potential. The East Kazakhstan region also has a great potential in the development of eco-tourism and ethnotourism. But since accommodation facilities are not created in all places, development has just begun in this region. With such initiatives, business, society and the state can de-

velop any type of Tourism (Akhmedenov K. M., 2020).

Mangystau region has another great potential for the development of ecotourism. In it, priority is given to adventure tourism. Now the world is experiencing a double trend of eco – and adventure tourism. Because travel does not harm nature so much, so eco – and adventure tourism will also develop in our country.

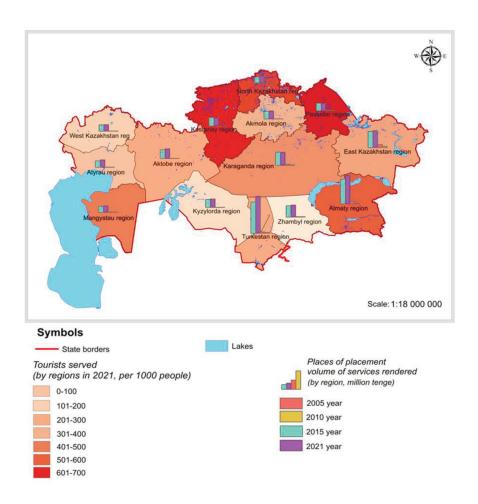


Figure 2 – Service of tourists in the regions (within the old administrative divisions until 2022) of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Bureau of national statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

As can be seen in Figure 2, the number of tourists served per thousand people in the regions of Kazakhstan in 2021 was high in Kostanay, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Almaty and Mangistau regions. In terms of places of accommodation and the volume of services provided, there has been an increase in all regions since 2015, while in Turkestan, Almaty, East Kazakhstan and Karaganda regions this indicator is higher than in other regions. As a whole, the volume of services provided by accommodation

facilities in the Republic increased 30 times from 2005 to 2021 (Bureau of national statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

Kazakhstan is a «newly developed tourist destination». Tourism infrastructure in Kazakhstan is limited, tourism products and services are insufficient. In such conditions, the need for state intervention in terms of ensuring the basic infrastructure of tourism, creating favorable conditions for attracting investment in the development of products, forming

a good perception of the country as a tourist destination is obvious (Kisselyova A.S., Sh.G.Kairova, Zhaksalykov K.N.,2022).

The experience of foreign countries shows the effectiveness of priority measures aimed at ensuring transparency (simplification of the visa regime), accessibility (provision of air and ground transport), infrastructure and places of deployment according to international standards of facilities at this stage of development.

Diagnostics of the state of tourist facilities shows that in the Republic of Kazakhstan there are currently more than 100 well-known tourist facilities called «tourist magnets» and «tourist growth points».

The uniqueness of the object as a tourist magnet and the potential growth of the tourist flow were used as selection criteria. The historical and cultural significance of the objects was also taken into account. For example-monuments included in the list of objects of UNESCO or the Great Silk Road, as well as sacred objects of the Ruhani zhangyru program (Grebenyuk D. D., Salavatova D. M., 2018).

The state program for the development of the tourism industry of Kazakhstan for 2019-2025 identified the following priority areas (Makenova, G., Tuleubayeva, M., Issayeva, A., Daurenbekova, A., 2020).

- \* Mountain cluster of Almaty region-with a potential of 2.5 million tourists per year;
- \* Lake Alakol-with a potential of 2 million tourists per year;
- \* Shchuchinsk-Borovoe resort area-with a potential of 2 million tourists per year;
- \* Development of historical and cultural tourism of Turkestan-with a potential of 1.5 million tourists per year;
- \* Development of MICE tourism in Astana-with a potential of 1 million tourists per year;
- \* Mangystau beach tourism development-potential of 750 thousand tourists per year;
- \* Bayanaul resort area-with a potential of 450 thousand tourists per year;
- \* Imantau-Shalkar resort area-with a potential of 400 thousand tourists per year;
- \* Lake Balkhash-with a potential of 400 thousand tourists per year;
- \* Development of the Baikonur tourist zone as an entertainment tourist hub-the potential is from 250 to 500 thousand tourists per year.

These destinations were identified as the main directions of Tourism Development, each of which has its own specifics, its own product and potential.

The effectiveness of the development of the selected 10 directions is the main condition for the formation of a modern tourism complex in the Republic and increasing the contribution of tourism to the economy of Kazakhstan.

#### Conclusion

Today, global trends in the field of tourism are concentrated in the following areas:

- deepening and expanding digitalization and automation in the field of providing tourist services and hotel business;
- tightening of environmental requirements for doing business in the field of tourism;
- change consumer preferences and promote eco
  agro-and ethnotourism in the country.

In this regard, Kazakhstani experts in the tourism industry have formed a number of ideas related to the introduction of digital innovations and changes in demand and consumer preferences for services in the tourism industry.

For the effective development of the tourism industry, the appropriate structuring and positioning of tourism products is one of the main success factors, which does not necessarily correspond to the administrative-territorial division of the country in the way of planning and developing tourism. The regions of Kazakhstan can unite and provide a unique tourism product to foreign markets through the creation of a tourist calaster.

It is necessary to increase the level of development of tourist resources in order to ensure a stable flow of tourists and orient some of the international tourist flows to Kazakhstan. As the main generator of demand for visiting the country, the state and business should make every effort to develop tourist resources.

Currently, the main problems that hinder the development of tourism in the Republic are affected by the low level of tourist infrastructure and tourist services. The low level of development of tourist infrastructure creates serious difficulties in attracting the flow of tourists.

The second important point is the low quality of tourist services.

Even with a well-developed tourist infrastructure that meets all international requirements, the low quality of services leads to a negative assessment of the activities of the tourism industry as a whole.

Issues of improving the quality of services provided in the industry should be solved in a

comprehensive manner, from marketing promotion of tourist destinations to the provision of individual services at the request of tourists. Industry experts note that, first of all, the quality of services depends on the professional training of industry employees.

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