

**MODERN DIRECTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICES
AND ENSURING REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

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Abstract: This article analyzes modern directions for improving the quality of services in the tourism sector and ensuring competitiveness between regions. The issues of innovative development trends in tourism services, digitalization, customer-oriented approach, marketing strategies and the introduction of service standards are covered. It also considers the possibilities of creating a regional brand, improving the state of infrastructure, improving staff skills and introducing modern technologies to enhance competitiveness. The article also recommends ways to increase the national tourism potential using international experience as an example.

Keywords: Tourism infrastructure, local economy, sustainable development, transportation, accommodation, dining, digital technologies, jobs, local entrepreneurship, investments

In today's globalization process, the tourism sector is recognized as one of the most important strategic directions in economic development. At a time when competition between countries is intensifying, the quality of tourist services and their improvement based on innovative approaches are becoming a key factor in ensuring regional competitiveness. Modern technologies, in particular, digitization, artificial intelligence and online platforms, allow improving the quality of services in the tourism sector. At the same time, the development of tourism infrastructure, the creation of local brands and the correct promotion of the cultural and historical potential of the region also play an important role in strengthening competition between regions. This article analyzes modern directions used to improve the quality of tourism services and ensure regional competitiveness, and studies existing problems and ways to overcome them.

Uzbekistan, with its rich cultural history and values, has long made a worthy contribution to the civilization of the peoples of the world, acting as a kind of bridge in the harmony of Western and Eastern cultures. Due to the policy of openness implemented in our country in recent years, the intensification of steadily developing trade, economic, humanitarian and social relations with countries of the world, today interest in the rich cultural history and values of our country is growing more than ever. Another noteworthy aspect of this process is the work carried out to expand the scope of tourism services and develop its infrastructure, as well as the adoption of legal documents aimed at further developing the sector. In particular, over the past five years, a 30-day visa-free regime has been created for citizens of about 100 countries, and the possibility of obtaining visas in electronic form has been created for citizens of many more countries. As a result, in 2017, 2.69 million foreign tourists visited our country, while before the pandemic this figure tripled to 6.75 million. people. However, given the rich history of our country and the scale of reforms being implemented in the sector, the results achieved in this area are not satisfactory. The reason is that the development of the sector not only increases the country's tourist attractiveness, but also has a positive impact on many other areas, such as the economy, employment, infrastructure development, and the development of science. Therefore, at the next videoconference meeting held recently under the chairmanship of the Head of our State, measures to expand the scope of tourism services and develop infrastructure were discussed in detail, and current tasks were identified. These will certainly be very useful for the tourism of our country. It was noted that within the framework of family entrepreneurship programs, loans of up to 50 million soums will be

provided for the establishment of guest houses in such villages, up to 300 million soums for the construction of cottages and eco-house complexes, and up to 300 million soums for the construction of tent camps, and 200 young people from tourism villages will be trained free of charge at tourism technical schools at the expense of the budget. Considering that one of the most important means of organizing trips is a safe and affordable means of transportation, in order to meet the demand of tourists for air travel, it was decided to introduce up to 50% discounts on services provided to foreign airlines within the framework of the "Pilgrimage Tourism" program from July 1. Also, a new "Silk Avia" company for domestic flights will be established by October 1. In order to reduce costs, 9 aircraft will be fully converted to economy class. It is worth noting that the Development Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan in 2022-2026 places special emphasis on further increasing the tourism potential of our country. In particular, within the framework of the "Travel Uzbekistan" program, it is aimed to increase the number of domestic tourists to 12 million, and the number of foreign tourists to 9 million. Also, as we noted above, taking into account the fact that the tourism sector is an important direction in the growth of the service sector and ensuring employment, it is aimed to double the number of people employed in the tourism sector by 2026 to 520 thousand people, and by transforming Samarkand into a "Tourism Gateway", to increase the volume of tourism services by at least 10 times in the next five years and create 40 thousand new jobs in the tourism sector. In today's era of globalization, the tourism sector not only develops cultural ties, but also plays an important role in the sustainable growth of the local economy. In particular, the development of tourism infrastructure - through transport, accommodation, catering, digital technologies and other services - creates favorable conditions not only for foreign, but also for domestic tourists. This, in turn, will lead to an increase in jobs, the activation of local entrepreneurship and increased economic activity. One of the main sectors of tourism infrastructure is the transport system. To ensure the convenient and safe movement of tourists from one region to another, roads, airports, railway and bus stations need to be modernized. A developed transportation system increases the flow of tourists and has a positive impact on the economy. Another important aspect is accommodation infrastructure. The number and quality of hotels, hostels, holiday homes, and rental apartments directly affect the number of tourists. As the quality of services improves, tourist satisfaction increases, and they develop a desire to visit the area again. Moreover, dining establishments – cafes, restaurants, and national cuisine houses – enrich the tourism experience. Promoting local cuisine not only showcases national culture but also creates a source of income for local entrepreneurs. In modern tourism, the role of digital technologies is invaluable. Online booking systems, mobile applications, and virtual guide services make travel easier for tourists. At the same time, digital services allow small business owners to present their services to a wider audience. The expansion of tourism infrastructure leads to the creation of new jobs. Hotel staff, guides, drivers, and restaurant workers from various segments of the population find employment. This is an important factor in ensuring socio-economic stability. Tourism also helps develop local entrepreneurship. Handicrafts, national souvenirs, and the service sector expand. This contributes to the growth of small and medium-sized businesses and the diversification of the economy. The continuous development of tourism infrastructure has many positive effects on the local economy: sustainable growth, entrepreneurship development, and a decrease in unemployment.

Conclusion: Improving the quality of tourism services and ensuring regional competitiveness is one of the most pressing issues of today. Any reform carried out in this direction directly affects the country's economic potential, the popularization of its cultural heritage, and its international image. As analyzed in the article, the quality of services not only determines the level of tourist satisfaction but also plays a key role in creating a healthy competitive environment among regions.

Modern technologies — artificial intelligence, digital services, mobile applications, and virtual tours — are taking tourism services to a new level. Especially through personalization of services, real-time feedback analysis, and adapting to customer needs, tourist sites and regions can gain distinctive advantages. At the same time, improving tourism infrastructure, enhancing staff qualifications, and implementing principles of ecological and sustainable tourism are essential tools for strengthening competitiveness. Another important aspect is that each region should develop its own individual tourism strategies, taking into account its historical, cultural, natural, and social characteristics. By creating local brands, adapting tourism products to international markets, and conducting effective marketing and PR campaigns, each province or district can increase its tourism appeal. We can confidently say that this will also be very beneficial for local entrepreneurs. In conclusion, improving the quality of tourism services and ensuring regional competitiveness depends not only on technical means but also on a comprehensive approach, innovative thinking, strategic planning, and investment in human resources. It is reasonable to believe that consistent reforms in this area will lead our country to become one of the leading destinations on the world tourism map.

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