

Foundations For Diversifying Income Sources Through The Implementation Of Green Tourism At Historical And Cultural Heritage Sites In Bukhara Region

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Abstract

this thesis analyzes the development of tourism and cultural heritage in the Bukhara region during the post-independence period, particularly focusing on the establishment of cooperation with UNESCO and other international organizations. The inclusion of Bukhara's historical center (Poyi Kalon, Labi Hovuz, and the area surrounding Mir Arab) in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993 is highlighted as a crucial milestone in promoting the region internationally and institutionalizing tourism policies. The article discusses the unique value of Bukhara's historical monuments and outlines strategies for implementing "green tourism" elements (such as pedestrian and bicycle paths, electric transport, efficient irrigation, and energy-saving lighting) in tourism development while preserving these cultural sites.

Keywords: green tourism, income diversification, Green Routes, ecotourism, agritourism, PPP (public-private partnership), Green Key certificate.

From the early years of our country's independence, development points were identified for each region based on its specific characteristics, and practical actions were initiated. Starting from the 1990s, Bukhara region also began to establish cooperation with various organizations such as UNESCO, ISESCO, and WTO through its tourism and cultural heritage sites. One of the main foundations in this regard was the inclusion in 1993 of Bukhara's historical center - including Poi Kalyan, Labi Hauz, and Mir Arab madrasahs - in the UNESCO World Heritage list. This encompassed a total area of 216 hectares, or 339 hectares when including buffer zones [5].

Bukhara, with a history spanning over 2000 years along the Silk Road, stands as the best-preserved example of medieval urban structure among Islamic cities of the 10th-17th centuries. The main monuments, gradually included in UNESCO's cultural heritage list, have retained their historical significance over the years. These include the Ismail Samani Mausoleum (built in the 9th-10th centuries), the Poi Kalyan complex and the Kalyan Minaret (built in the 11th-12th centuries), the Magoki Attari Mosque, the Chashmai Ayyub shrine, and the Labi Hovuz complex. Currently, numerous initiatives are being implemented to introduce elements of green tourism in these areas. Practical measures are being taken to widen pedestrian walkways, extend bicycle paths while ensuring they don't pose a risk to pedestrian tourists, and gradually increase the frequency of electric bus services. Additionally, efforts are underway to implement water-saving technologies for irrigating plants in these areas and to establish the use of energy-efficient lighting.

The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 outlines a series of measures aimed at expanding tourism infrastructure, improving services, and integrating these efforts with environmental initiatives [1].

The strategy also includes a specific program for Bukhara, which outlines objectives to increase international flights through Bukhara airport, construct 255 new hotels, and establish 60 new tourist routes.

As of 2025, 38 tourism development projects worth 111 million US dollars have been implemented in the Bukhara region. On August 12, 2025, during a meeting attended by the President, it was reported that \$8 billion in investments had been attracted to the region over the past 8 years. It was also announced that 21 new project packages worth \$1.7 billion had been formed in 2025. Naturally, tourism projects, particularly "green tourism" initiatives, have

a significant place in this economic package. Consequently, there are opportunities to implement various projects to diversify income based on the concept of green tourism in and around historical and cultural heritage sites. For instance, practical experiences can be offered to tourists in agricultural fields, vineyards, silk-producing facilities, eco-farms, and gardens. It would be appropriate to organize an ecotourism experience in the Gijduvan district, showcasing an "eco-farm experience." Here, foreign tourists could plant vegetables and prepare national dishes together with the local population. Additionally, it is advisable to establish combined tourist packages for sale; these would include visits to historical monuments (such as the Ark, Poi Kalon, and Sitorai Mohi Khosa) along with trips to natural areas (like the Jeyran Reserve, Zarafshan Forests, and Oasis Bukhara Complex), all sold at a package price.

In addition, it is possible to organize cycling tours, scooters, and electric buses around historical and cultural heritage sites. By creating green infrastructure, it is possible to reduce energy costs by up to 30%. It was analyzed that as a result of supporting the export of domestic products and services, providing tax benefits, the trade in carpets, ceramic products, and silk products will increase, and marginal income will be higher by 20-30%.

International cooperation and support from international financial organizations play a crucial role in diversifying revenue through green tourism. Eco-routes can be developed along the Zarafshan River and in other areas adjacent to the Bukhara region, based on UNDP grants. In many historical cities, museums, and historical monuments worldwide, AR and VR tourism technologies based on artificial intelligence have already been implemented. Organizing 360-degree paid online tours at historical and cultural heritage sites in the Bukhara region will contribute to income diversification. Through the public-private partnership system, it will be possible to attract investors to ecotourism in other regions by offering tax incentives to those interested in investing in the "Carbon Neutral Tourism District" project.

One of the crucial directions is obtaining "Green Key" certificates, which are highly relevant in the world today. By encouraging hotels in the Bukhara region to acquire this type of certificate, it is possible to increase the flow of tourists by up to 15% in the medium and long term.

It should be emphasized that the concept of green tourism in Bukhara should be based on mechanisms to increase income sources and ensure sustainable development by harmonizing historical heritage, ecological tourism, local products, and green infrastructure.

Table 1. Mechanisms for diversifying income sources through the implementation of green tourism at historical and cultural heritage sites in Bukhara region

Mechanism	Source of income	Implementation mechanism
Diversification of tourism products	Ecotours, agritourism, combined routes	In eco-farms, foreign tourists can grow vegetables and prepare food.
Green infrastructure and services	Eco-hotels, green transport (cycling, electric bus, scooter)	Solar-powered hotels reduce electricity costs by 30%
Local products & services	Crafts, ecological food, organic products	Carpets, ceramics, and silk products will be sold to tourists at a price 20-30% higher.
Financing and international cooperation	Grants, investments, carbon credits	Based on UNDP grants, an eco-route can be created along the Zarafshan River.
Digital services	Virtual tourism (AR/VR), online booking	A 360° tour of the historical center of Bukhara can be viewed online for a fee.
Public-Private Partnership (PPP)	Special green zones, tax benefits	Tax benefits should be provided to investors through the implementation of the "Carbon Neutral Tourism District" project.
Environmental monitoring and green branding	Green certificate, additional tourist flow through environmental ratings	The issuance of a "Green Key" certificate to Bukhara hotels will increase tourist flow by 12-15%.

In Bukhara region, there are a total of 407 sites for pilgrimage tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, "fishing season" tourism, as well as tourism villages, tourism and gastronomic streets, and recreational tourism spots in desert areas. These sites play a significant role in income diversification.

In the service sector, there are 153 catering establishments, accounting for approximately 37.6% of all facilities. There are 27 museums, theaters, and cinemas, and 12 cultural, entertainment, and shopping centers have been established. Among the specialized segments of tourism, agro-facilities number 21, comprising 5.2% of the total facility structure. There are 16 craft centers, 4 gastronomic facilities, 4 recreational facilities, 4 industrial areas, 2 ethnocultural sites, and 1 extreme sports facility.

These components confirm that Bukhara's tourism has formed around a "classical heritage-pilgrimage core": the main points of interest are concentrated on historical and cultural monuments, while the service chain is primarily supplemented by catering and entertainment segments. The share of ecotourism (eco/agro facilities) is still small, with a significant conceptual gap for expanding the "green" direction. The distribution of green tourism sites in the Bukhara region shows a state of strong concentration: Bukhara city, with 283 sites, is clearly the region's "core." This concentration, on one hand, ensures infrastructure efficiency (transportation, catering, guides, tour packages), but on the other hand, contradicts the principle of "wide territorial dispersion," leading to asymmetry in the interregional distribution of tourism income. In scientific literature, this situation is explained by the "tourist core - peripheral ring" model: in the core, demand is high, prices are elevated, and service quality and profitability are relatively stable; in the periphery, despite available resources (nature, agro, crafts), demand flow is weak, and investment signals are low.

In terms of ecotourism, the top 5 regions ranked from highest to lowest are as follows: Karaulbazar district - 5, Bukhara district - 3, Jondor - 2, Kagan district - 2, Peshku - 2. Consequently, eco/agro facilities are mainly developing outside the city center; this indicates the need for systematic planning of "route bridges" (city-heritage connections). Since the natural resource characteristics of ecotourism are typical for peripheral zones, a package is needed that integrates logistics, signage, sanitary and safety protocols with the hotel and restaurant cluster in the city. Structural analysis clearly reveals an imbalance between segments: catering establishments (153) and heritage sites (829) meet the "classic" tourist demand, while extreme/sports (1), medical (1), and industrial (4) segments are still in an "embryonic" stage. From a scientific standpoint, due to the low level of diversification, income volatility may increase when the probability of demand shocks (seasonality, geopolitical risks, changes in transport prices) rises. The fact that the share of ecotourism facilities remains around 5% indicates insufficient supply in strategies focused on "green" branding. Additionally, it appears that crafts (16) and gastronomic facilities (4) play a lesser role in shaping the concept of green tourism. However, in the global market, it is through "experience-based tourism" that it becomes possible to increase the average check, improve the return rate, and extend the tourist's length of stay.

In Bukhara, it is possible to increase income through thematic eco-clusters around heritage directions (agro experience, slow food, silk road gastronomy, "farm-to-table" events). When analyzing the trips of visitors to historical and cultural heritage sites of the Bukhara region, it turned out that the largest share belongs to consumers with a short cycle, i.e., those who prefer daily excursions and overnight stays. Ecotourism and practical experience packages can have a multiplier effect on the local economy by increasing the length of stay, that is, an increase in transport services, an increase in the demand for guides, and an increase in service and trade.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the main "classical heritage-pilgrimage core" of tourism in Bukhara region ensures stable demand, the low share of ecotourism and agro-experience segments has been limiting income diversification. The concept of green tourism serves to fill this gap, necessitating the creation of a "route bridge" between the historical center and the natural and

agricultural resources in the periphery. Overall, the green tourism model in Bukhara has the potential to become a practical mechanism for sustainable development, integrating heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and support for local products.

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