

Section 3. Cultural studies

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DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS OF TREATMENT AND HEALTH TOURISM IN THE OCCUPIED AREAS

Abstract. A lot of work has been done in our country on the development of health tourism in the city of Naftalan, Absheron Peninsula, and there are sanatorium-resort facilities that meet world standards. We believe that the construction and commissioning of medical sanatoriums in Karabakh, rich in the world-famous KalbajarIstisuyu and other healing waters, would create a basis for the flow of tourists to the liberated territories.

It should be noted that the liberated territories are of great importance to the population. In this regard, their interest may lead to the development of domestic tourism. It is also about the fact that, currently, the limited opportunities in the field of domestic tourism do not create conditions for competition in terms of price and quality. This leads to a lower level of service at a higher price, which hinders the development of domestic tourism. As a result, people choose foreign countries. It can be considered that with the construction of large and modern tourism infrastructure in the liberated territories, the opportunities for domestic tourism can be expanded, thus creating conditions for competition.

Keywords: liberated territories, healing waters, balneological resources, tourism potential, thermal water sources, medical tourism.

A number of factors have a negative impact on the development of tourism around the world. The occupation of the Karabakh region, which has great tourism potential, was one of the main factors affecting the development of tourism. Foreign countries were reluctant to invest in the tourism sector in Azerbaijan due to the conflict zone. However, thanks to the 44-day counterattack on September 27, 2020, the liberation

of Karabakh, which has rich tourism resources, has created ample opportunities for foreign tourism companies to invest in our country [4, p. 3–4].

Kalbajar and Lachin districts were known as tourist areas during the USSR, and 50,000 tourists a year came to Kalbajar from the allied republics alone. The territory of this region is located at an altitude of 2,000 meters above sea level, in the valley of the Tartar River, in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, has a rich flora and fauna, thermal waters of medical importance (Istisu), historical monuments. For example, the monastery complex popularly called “Khotavang” or “Khudavang”, i.e., “Temple of God” is located in Kalbajar. This object became the religious center of the Albanian principality of Khachin, which was established in the mountainous part of Karabakh after the collapse of Caucasian Albania (in the IX century). In other words, the region has always been of interest to tourists due to its natural resources and history. The Lachin region also has great tourism potential. It is rich in ancient Bronze Age mounds and is attractive to tourists.

In a video conference on the results of last year’s socio-economic development, the President noted that the effective use of the rich tourism potential of the Karabakh region and the transformation of Azerbaijan into a major tourism zone is a priority and there is a need to take urgent measures in this direction.

On the instructions of the President, a strategy for the development of tourism in the liberated territories has been developed. According to the document, the development of tourism products should be carried out in parallel with the construction of tourism infrastructure in these areas, to ensure the safety of tourists. Along with the return of the population, and the restoration of housing and infrastructure, it is important to create tourism products there. Investments in this direction have already begun.

The availability of healing waters in the liberated areas indicates that the region has great potential for medical tourism. It is no coincidence that in the past, sanatoriums in these areas were the treatment centers for people suffering from various diseases. Although our cultural and historical monuments have been destroyed in the area, it will be possible to organize tours to those destinations after their restoration. Khudafar’s bridge, Azykh cave may become a tourist routes in the future. There are great prospects for future cooperation with Turkey and Iran in this area. It is possible to build the Kars-Igdir-Nakhchivan route and the railway line through Iran. The construction of the railway here will also reduce the cost of the tour package compared to the plane.

If we look at the prospects of inbound tourism in the Karabakh region, we can see that even in Soviet times, people were constantly paying visit to the Karabakh region. Azykh cave is a monument of unique importance for mankind. In addition, we have many monuments in the Karabakh region that will be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Although the restoration work will take some time, the use of Karabakh’s tourism potential will bring great economic benefits to Azerbaijan.

The liberated areas are suitable for both summer and winter tourism. One of the main issues facing us in the future is the creation of winter tourism. In order to develop the potential of winter tourism in the liberated areas, it is necessary first to conduct research and identify suitable places for skiing and places where people can relax. We believe that the most suitable place for winter tourism is Kalbajar region. The presence of natural heritage samples is favorable for the creation of winter tourism here [9].

While talking about the importance of the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, the contribution of the region to the country's economy also plays an important role. This allows us to determine future activities in relation to the economic potential of these areas. Although the tourism sector is currently inactive in countries around the world, including Azerbaijan, the promotion of local tourism potential continues. The tourism potential of Azerbaijan already includes the liberated territories, in which measures have already been taken to create tourism infrastructure.

Currently, the State Tourism Agency is developing a strategy and policy for tourism development of the liberated territories. The development of tourism products will be carried out in parallel with the construction of tourism infrastructure in these areas. For this, several components must be provided. Of course, ensuring the safety of tourists is one of the key components. Along with the return of the population, and the restoration of housing and infrastructure, it is necessary to create tourism products there. Another important issue is to attract both domestic and foreign investment to the region. Therefore, first of all, it is planned to create transport and civil infrastructure and create favorable conditions for investment. On the basis of the project document, in the liberated part of the Aghdam region, and on the basis of relevant cooperation with the Special Representation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the relevant infrastructure works required for the organization of the "Our Way to Agdam" tourist route was carried out. The State Tourism Agency has developed an initial architectural and tourism development concept for the Shahbulag Fortress.

We believe that several tourism clusters can be created in the liberated territories:

- in the direction of Fuzuli-Khojavend-Shusha-Lachin;
- parallel to it Fuzuli-Jabrayil-Zangilan;
- Zangilan-Gubadli;
- Kalbajar-Lachin;
- Barda-Aghdam.

The potential of the city of Shusha, identified by the President as a cultural center, is of special importance to the tourism potential of individual regions. Several international events have already been held in Shusha. In the future, the organization of cultural events, and festival tourism products can be presented here. It is necessary to demonstrate winter tourism and health tourism in Lachin-Kalbajar, culture and nature in Gubadli-Zangilan, and culture and nature in Fizuli-Aghdam-Jabrail. It is

known that along with the economic side of tourism, it also affects the promotion of countries in the world arena.

Karabakh and East Zangazur region have significant tourism potential for the creation of tourism and recreation zones. Shusha is highly valued for its location around the rich nature, proximity to historical and cultural tourism facilities, the possibility of tourism activities, and the proximity to the main highway [5, p. 86].

The Istisu region in Kalbajar has great potential for the Karabakh tourism and recreation zone. Long-term use of the Istisu spring for health and resort purposes creates the basis for the development of the area. In this regard, there are high opportunities for recreation in natural areas such as Istisu, Vang, Zulfugarli in Kalbajar. The territories of tourism and recreation zones planned to be established in Kalbajar, Zangilan, Khojavend, Gubadli and Lachin regions have been determined by the State Tourism Agency. Along with tourism and recreation zones, the Kharibulbul and Karabakh hotels in Shusha have been renovated to the latest standards.

In addition, Karabakh's tourism potential was presented at the ATM 2021 (Arabian Travel Market 2021) in Dubai and OTDYKH Leisure in Moscow: in accordance with the Action Plan for the Development of Tourism in the Occupied Territories adopted by the State Tourism Agency. strategic development, development and promotion of tourism, creation of tourism and recreation zones, design of health and winter tourism resources, and implementation of other measures.

The region also has a favorable geographical location for the reception of tourists. Tourists can come here from Iran via Khudafar Bridge and from Turkey via Nakhchivan. The Fizuli International Airport, which was opened on October 26, 2021, and the Zangilan and Lachin airports under construction are of special importance for the effective use of Azerbaijan's tourism potential. Called the air gate of Karabakh, the port was built in accordance with world standards [10].

The region also has ample opportunities for the development of health tourism. Experts believe that the region's tourism revenues may exceed the country's tourism revenues to date, reaching \$1.5 billion.

In general, promoting the creation of large tourism facilities in Kalbajar and Lachin, as well as the development of rural tourism, the development of rural tourism for the population who will settle there in the future can serve the formation and growth of their incomes. Local and foreign businessmen should also be encouraged to build large tourism facilities. Tax breaks for businessmen to ensure the flow of investment would revive tourism in the region. Friendly and brotherly Turkish entrepreneurs have already expressed interest in the Karabakh region.

In recent years, our country has become an integral part of international tourism, a global tourism fair, hosting important events such as European competitions. After

the European Games, the economic, political, social, and cultural levels of the capital and the country's regions increased [2, p. 53].

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