

<https://doi.org/10.29013/EJEMS-22-1-57-61>

*Humbatov Yusif Abulfat,*  
*Ass.prof.,*

*Gapagov Vugar Faig,*  
*Ass.prof.cand., Azerbaijan Technology University*  
*Ganjacity, S. İ. Khataiave, Azerbaijan*  
*E-mail: f.kerimov@uteca.edu.az*

## **STATE POLICY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH TOURISM IN AZERBAIJAN**

### **Abstract**

**Summary:** The article considers several factors influencing the development of medical tourism in Azerbaijan: the need for joint activities of the public and private sectors in the development of medical tourism, the effective use of the country's tourism potential, and the use of mineral and thermal tourism resources.

The directions of state support and implementation of state regulation in the development of medical tourism were analyzed.

**The actuality of the subject.** One of the main issues in the development of tourism in the country is proper use of tourism potential. Moreover, the utilization of the existing Naftalan oil and internationally recognized waters of Azerbaijan is essential for maximizing the tourism potential. Therefore, increasing state support for the development of medical tourism is pivotal.

**The purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to assess the current state of medical tourism in Azerbaijan. Increasing the flow of tourists to the country through the establishment of healthresorts& sanatoriums and improving the quality of treatment is integral part of development directions in the field of medical tourism.

### **The objectives of the study are:**

- Assessment of the current state of medical tourism;
- study of factors influencing the development of medical tourism;
- to determine the role of health resorts and sanatoriums as a means of treatment of various diseases;
- Improving the implementation of state support for the development of medical tourism in our country.

**Object of research.** Reforms in the tourism sector in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the development of medical tourism were selected.

**Research methods.** Economic-statistical, statistical grouping, comparative economic analysis and observation methods were used in the research process.

**Keywords:** health tourism, sanatoriums and resorts, reforms, state support.

The favorable geographical location, historical monuments, mineral springs, thermal waters, and the presence of a rich national cuisine are the factors that motivate the subject.

The Azerbaijan International Tourism Exhibition (AITF) has been held in our country every year since 2002, and this has become a tradition. At the same time, Azerbaijan's tourism resources, materials showing the development of this field in Azerbaijan have been presented at many foreign exhibitions.

Another State Program is the State Program on Tourism Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2007–2016. The program includes issues such as increasing human resources in the field of tourism, the correct and efficient use of tourism resources, the formation of state policy in this area and so forth.

The main focus in the organization of medical tourism is the study of medical resources, the establishment of sanatorium-resort facilities in certain areas, the organization of tourist routes to resort areas, preparation and organization of additional events for recreation of tourists and etc. [4].

In the promotion of these areas, the organization of publications, the advertisement materials with information about these areas, the creation of symbolic souvenirs in accordance with the resort, the implementation of the work are of particular importance. The announcement of 2011 as the year of tourism was an important step in the development of tourism.

However, in the 1950s and 1960s, Azerbaijan was the weakest tourist destination among the countries of the USSR. The decree adopted by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2010 approved the State Program for the Development of Tourism from 2010 to 2014.

During 2010–2015, the number of tourists visiting the country increased by 8.5 percent, the number of facilities in the field of tourism increased by 4.5 percent, and the level of employment in this sector increased by 6 percent. These indicators indicate that the development of tourism will increase in the coming years.

The sharp decline in oil prices towards the end of 2015 highlighted the need to develop the non-oil sector. As a result, increased attention was paid to the development of tourism. As in other countries, many measures are being taken in Azerbaijan to develop tourism and increase the number of tourists. As a result, positive results are obtained every year.

Thus, European and Asian tourists have been coming to Azerbaijan in recent years. These results in the development of tourism are due to the renewal of infrastructure, hotel network, sanatorium-resort network, as well as the impact of international exhibitions, events and government programs in the country.

Although the study of Azerbaijan's medicinal resources began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, tourists who came here in ancient times also benefited from 59 medicinal sources. At present, there are world-renowned treatment centers in Azerbaijan. The main task in this area is to promote our health facilities at the international level and to hold a PR campaign and complex events for tourists to come to the country.

There is a great need for propaganda in this area. If we pay attention to the measures taken by the Association for Health and Thermal Tourism Support established in our country for the development of this field, it is possible to see that important work has been done. Information on the location of the association's health centers, various entertainment programs in the health centers, the organization of excursions to the surrounding area, medical services, service personnel was posted. He started working on the preparation of catalogs. A map showing the location of treatment facilities is also being prepared. The info-tours organized by the Association to Naftalan and Masalli also play an important role in the development of medical tourism.

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 6, 2016, "The Strategic Roadmap for the Development of the Specialized Tourism Industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan aims to increase Azerbaijan's cooperation

with other countries, improve service standards at enterprises and facilities in this sector”. The treatment is related to the measures to be taken in the development of medical tourism: an action plan for the development of medical tourism for 2017–2020 will be prepared.

This plan will be developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to the plan, mainly in Gabala, Masalli, Lankaran and other regions. It is also envisaged that natural resources will be used. The action plan will be implemented after 2020 to stimulate the development of medical tourism. The event is planned.

Thus, a research group consisting of professionals and scientists should be established to create products in the regions, and information on Azerbaijani tourism should be placed on the products. Short-term tours to treatment-dependent regions should be organized and the participation of relevant companies and authorities in these plans should be encouraged. Attention should be paid to the improvement of transport routes for the convenient transportation of tourists to the resort areas. Azerbaijan pursues a state policy on the organization and development of resort business [5].

A developed tourist complex has been established with the support of the implemented state policy. Sanatoriums-resorts, which play an important role in terms of recreation, treatment and health of people, also play an important role in increasing employment, socio-economic development of the region, infrastructure, services and other related areas. The main work in the organization of resorts is to update the network of resorts and sanatoriums, to organize them at the level of international standards.

To regulate the implementation of this work at the state level, the “State Program for the Development of Resorts in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2009–2018” was adopted. The program is expected to have the following results in the future:

- Correct assessment of natural treatment resources in the country;

- International level of treatment and health centers operating in the republic development;
- The development of the industry-resort network in other areas related to this sector.
- Therapeutic measures and human resources of industrial and resort enterprises Reduction of many diseases as a result of improving its quality;
- The formation of an image that will recognize the country as a result of the development of this field and this service use of tourists, low-income families;
- Increase in income as a result of the development of the industry-resort network at the same time as the existence of these resorts, the population living in the surrounding areas of the time. increase in employment indicators [2].

On June 9, 2017, a conference was organized under the title “The Greatest”.

The conference is organized by the Azerbaijan Health and Thermal Tourism Support Association. During the conference, with the participation of sanatoriums, resorts and tourism enterprises and organizations, the future development of medical tourism in the world and the international tourism market integration were discussed. The decrees signed by the President of the country were noted in the conference. Governments and government programs show that there is a constant concern for this area.

Every year there is a big increase in this area. In 2016, the European History of the “Galati” medical and recreational complex was opened. The election of each member of the Association is one of the achievements in this field. In 2015, 35,000 tourists visited the Naftalan resort area, which is the result of the measures taken.

Certain work is being done to attract tourists to our country. If 5–10 years ago there were 30 tourism companies in Azerbaijan, now there are more than 120 of them. In order to improve the quality

of staff in this field, the University of Tourism trains its students and sends them to a foreign country for experience. In addition, [www.azerbaijan.travel](http://www.azerbaijan.travel) tourism portal organized tourism companies, hotels in the country. The portal is important for obtaining information about the nature and transport of the territories.

In order to promote tourism in other countries, electronic banners are placed on the websites.

By the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 29, 2012, "Azerbaijan 2020: The "Concept of the Future" Development Concept has been approved. The concept includes support for the development of the non-oil sector, new jobs in areas such as the opening of infrastructure, the development of infrastructure and transport. Issues such as the acquisition of property were highlighted.

Sustainability of economic development, increase in the level of welfare of the population, assessment of the country's resources and potential, strategic goal of the concept of issues such as the protection of human rights were taken into account.

The concept includes the development of tourism, increasing its role in economic growth, increasing its share in per capita national income, the development of various types of tourism in the regions. support of the Caspian Sea, assessment of the tourism potential of the Caspian Sea, measures and implementation of legislative rules. Creation and improvement of air transportation and railway transport in tourism regions are also substantial. Furthermore, the measures taken in the field of education are comprehensive in this area since it will create the ground for development.

Development of the specialized tourism industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2016 "Strategic Road Map" plays an important role in the organization of medical tourism. Taking into account the potential of Azerbaijan for the organization of medical tourism, a "Working Group" has been established in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Road

Map. The Working Group was established for the development and organization of medical tourism.

In other areas with potential medical tourism, infrastructure upgrades are underway. Draft of "Action Plan for the Development of Medical Tourism for 2018–2020" is already prepared. The plan envisages that the measures will be implemented using international experience. Galaalti, Naftalan and Duzdag resorts are selected for the recognition of our country at the international level. It will be ensured that it will pass international certification [2].

In 2018, the next forum of the Global Medical Tourism Forum was organized. The forum was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. About 30 countries participated in the Global Travel Forum. The forum, which was attended by about 500 delegates, was organized under the auspices of the Emirate of Dubai.

The exhibition provided information about Naftalan, Galalati, Istisu, Absheron. Active topics discussed include accreditation, global medical tourism, and health. There have been topics such as relations between the countries of the world, branding, medical tourism and so on. According to the information provided, the purpose of the meeting was to provide experience in the field of medicine and tourism. It was an exchange of knowledge and skills. For this reason, important leaders in the field of tourism from each country have been brought together.

### Results

It can be concluded from the research that the development of tourism, along with many other factors, directly depends on the treatment – medical tourism, which is of special importance in the development of tourism in our country.

The essence of medical tourism and its place in Azerbaijani tourism, the problems arising in the direction of industrialization have a negative impact on human and public health. In an unhealthy society, there is a decrease in working capacity and production capacity.

Medical tourism is the most priority direction in Azerbaijan. Thus, the development of medical tour-

ism using its own oil, the famous Naftalanin and the KalbajarIstisu mineral water in Karabakh, is one of the most important issues of the day.

The “Strategic Roadmap for the Development of the Specialized Tourism Industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved by the Presidential Decree dated December 6, 2016 has opened wide opportunities for the organization of the tourism industry and the development of medical tourism in our country. The development of medical tourism is expected to accelerate in the near future [1].

### **The objectives of the study are:**

- The current state of medical tourism was assessed;
- Factors influencing the development of medical tourism have been identified;
- Resorts and sanatoriums as a health facility have been identified as a tool for the treatment of various diseases;
- treatment – directions of state support for the development of medical tourism were identified and proposals were made.

### **References:**

1. “Strategic Road Map for the development of the specialized tourism industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan”. Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated December 6, 2016.
2. State Program on Development of Resorts in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2009–2018. Order, – No. 125 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 6, 2009.
3. Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan. “On tourism activities”.– Azerbaijan, 1999. July 27.
4. Bilalov B., edited by Gulaliyev Ch.G. “Fundamentals of tourism”.– Baku, “NGO Publishing House”, 2015.
8. Bilalov. B. Medical tourism in Azerbaijan: problems and prospects. “Tourism and Hospitality Research” magazine,– No. 3.– Baku, “Crescent 3”, 2013.
5. Dr. Kazimov Hasan. “Health from Petrol: Naftalan”. “IRS” International Azerbaijan Magazine,– No. 9. 2014.
6. Heydarov Parvan. “Diamond model of Azerbaijan Naftalan region in terms of health tourism”. Higher undergraduate thesis,– Sakarya University, Institute of Social Sciences. 2016.
7. Gamze Bayın. “Internal assessment of theses made in the field of health tourism in Turkey”. Hacettepe University,– Ankara, 2015.
8. URL: <http://www.mct.gov.az/en/tourism-news3>.<http://www.medeniyyet.az/pages/news/5637/Mualice-tourism:-natural-opportunities-vezeruri-infrastructure.html>
9. URL: <http://www.saglikturizmi.org.tr/tr/saglik-turizmi/genel-bilgi>
10. URL: <http://www.bilgeh-sanatoriyasi.az>