


# Tourism Sector in Uzbekistan and its Growth Prospects

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## Abstract

In 2022, the number of tourists visiting Uzbekistan increased 3 times compared to 2021, and the export volume of the industry reached 1.6 billion USD. The number of domestic tourists has exceeded 11 million. But we are far from the opinion that the existing potential is being fully used, despite the fact that there are many cultural heritage objects, places of rest, and monuments that can attract the attention of tourists. There is a need for scientific approaches in the development, promotion and presentation of tourism products. The article analyses the current trends in the tourism sector of Uzbekistan and evaluates its potential in contributing to economic growth and development. Used data is derived from statistical reports of the last years. Evaluation of perspectives is performed on correlation of several indicators, related with tourism sector and overall economic conditions. Research and analysis within the scope of the article proposes that there are evident perspectives for increasing the share of tourism sector in GDP. The main recommendations for the policy in the sphere are targeted to infrastructure improvement, education, marketing and branding measures, as complex approach in promoting Uzbekistan tourism.

## 1 Introduction

In today's rapidly developing era, the current indicators of the tourism development show that the influence of this industry on both the world economy and the economy of individual countries is increasing. Tourism is not only an activity aimed at meeting specific touristic needs of the population, but it is becoming a large independent sector in the national economy. Due to the diversity of these needs, not only tourist enterprises, but also establishments of other sectors actively participate, and thus tourism appears as one of the factors that have a multifaceted effect on the development of the national economy complex. Furthermore, tourism is one of the main needs of people, and it significantly helps people in reducing emotional and psychological negative effects caused by the rapid development of science and technology, labour intensity.

The tourism sector is developing in Uzbekistan, but we cannot praise the pace of this development enough. After all, for the perfect development of this industry, it is necessary to carry out scientific research and introduce innovations in several areas, more importantly, it is expedient to increase income, reduce the level of unemployment, study the tourist services market, expand the tourist education system, activate regulatory processes by the state to stabilize the socio-economic situation of the country, establish programs ensuring the development of certain regions.

The general economic growth of tourism contributes to the development of less developed regions. It is known from the experience of foreign countries that opening tourist centres in underdeveloped regions has been the main method of many countries. The establishment of tourist centres in mountain and rural areas depends on the development of these areas and the living conditions of the population. In order to determine the future of tourism development, first of all, it is necessary to thoroughly study the material and technical base, the scope of tourist resources and the demand for this tourist product. Of course, one should not overestimate the value of tourist resources in this case. For example, a historical monument in a certain region may be interesting only for this place, and many other monuments in the international arena may not be so important, and this leads to the fact that they do not attract tourists. That is why it is impossible to get much benefit from creating a material and technical base in such districts.

## 2 Methods

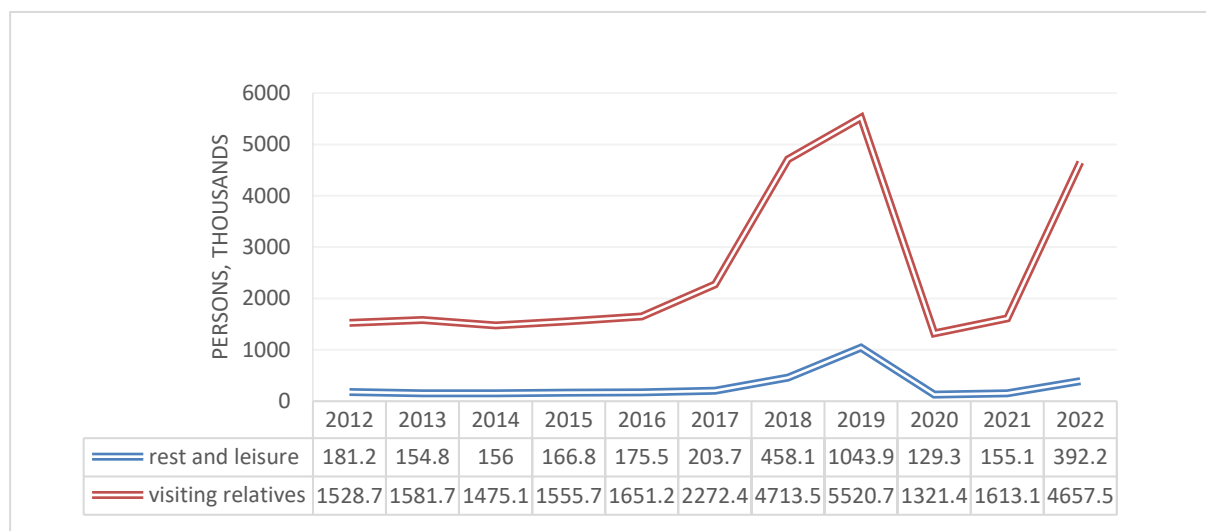
In the course of the research, travelling purposes around Uzbekistan, the indicators of the international and domestic tourism were studied on the basis of scientific research on international and national experiences. Scientific-theoretical, observation and selection methods were used in the process of creating the article. The reliability of the research results is explained by the use of foreign statistical official sources used in the research, the official website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

That is why, in this article, firstly, we have studied the tourism situation in Uzbekistan based on statistical data, which tourist destinations are growing in demand and flow, and which are lagging behind, which areas should be given great attention to development and so on.

## 3 Results and Analysis

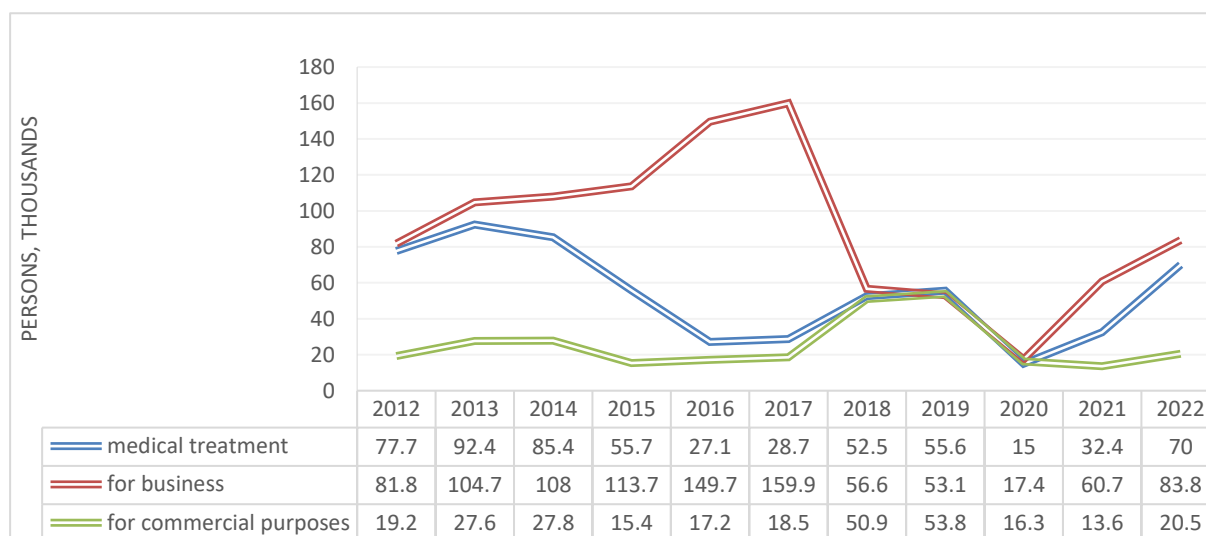
As we mentioned, in 2022 alone, the number of tourists increased by 3 times compared to the previous year, which shows that tourism in Uzbekistan is becoming internationally recognized. We have studied the flow of

tourists who visited for different touristic purposes over a period of 10 years, which can be seen in the following tables. (Diagrams were prepared by the author based on data from the stat.uz platform)



**Diagram 1.** Arrivals of foreign citizens to the Republic of Uzbekistan by purpose of trip, thousands of persons for 2012-2022 years.

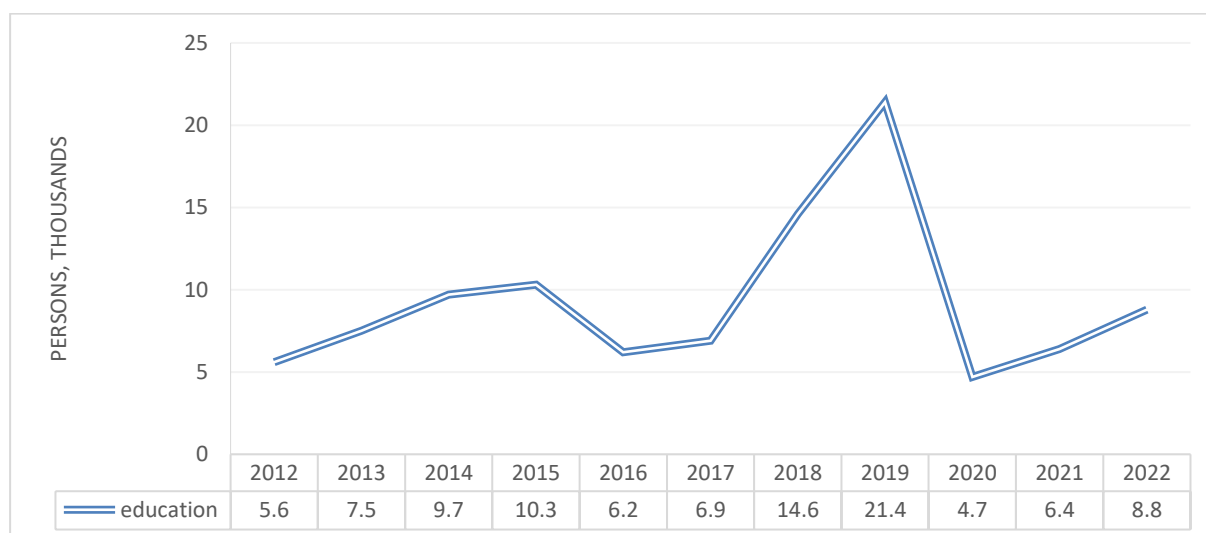
First, 6 important tourist purposes for visiting Uzbekistan were determined. This diagram 1 shows that the most tourists come for rest and leisure and to visit relatives among the tourist purposes. In this case, we can see that these two areas have grown in general over the past 10 years, but in 2019 they reached their peak. We need to take necessary measures to return to this indicator.



**Diagram 2.** Arrivals of foreign citizens to the Republic of Uzbekistan by purpose of trip, thousands of persons for 2012-2022 years.

In the Diagram 2, we combined medical treatment, business and commercial goals, because their indicators are almost close to each other. Here too, we see the growth in the number of visitors for business and commercial purposes over the 10-year period, along with ups and downs in all three directions, but there is a slight decrease in the flow for medical purposes. In other words, the number of visitors for medical purposes was the highest in 2013, for commercial purposes in 2013-2014, and for business purposes in 2016-2017. It is necessary to study the tourist offers, political events, and government reforms introduced in these years, and look for ways to achieve such an indicator in the future.

In diagram 3, we can see the flow of visitors for educational purposes. It is clear from the diagram that in 2019 this direction reached its peak, but in 2022 it was much lower. So, tourism offers, programs, international agreements, scientific and research works carried out in 2019 within the framework of the government or educational institutions were widely known internationally. By thoroughly analysing these measures, increasing their number and quality, it is possible to achieve a further increase in the number of visitors in this area in the future.



**Diagram 3.** Arrivals of foreign citizens to the Republic of Uzbekistan by purpose of trip, thousands of persons for 2012-2022 years.

## 4 Conclusion

In general consideration, the number of visitors grew till the end of the given period, but the decrease in 2020 is known to be due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, once the threat of the pandemic has passed, we will need to implement more reforms than in previous years to reach the numbers of previous years. After all, as our main work, we would recommend further improvement of the infrastructure, efficient and effective use of marketing tools, development of the tourism sector as a big system as the areas that should be paid attention to by the government.

If we look at other numbers, it shows that Uzbekistan is a promising direction of tourism. In 2022 alone, about 5163.2 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan travelled in Uzbekistan on outbound tourism. This year, the number of international tourists from abroad was 5232.8 thousand. In domestic tourism, this indicator exceeded 11 million.

Tourism also has enough resources to take its proper place in the economy of our republic along with agriculture, industry, transport and other macroeconomic sectors. Our country is the leader among Central Asian countries in terms of tourism development opportunities.

At the same time, if we look at the role of tourism in our national economy, it becomes clear that the available resources are not always being used effectively. The development of tourism in our country coincides with the period of renewal of the society, and it is necessary to further improve its quality, taking into account the process of changes taking place gradually. It is known from the experience of developed countries that the development of the economy is also related to the tourism sector. That is why it is important to focus on international tourism in countries that are transitioning to market economy. If we take into account the fact that there are enough tourist resource opportunities for the development of tourism in the conditions of Uzbekistan to the extent that it can meet the requirements of the present time, then it is known that this sector is of great importance for the economy and the development of society in general. At the same time, the development of tourism in our republic is directly related to the ongoing economic reforms and effective use of available resources.

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