

**MAIN FACTORS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM
SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TAJIKISTAN IN THE CONTEXT OF
COOPERATION WITH
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**ОМИЛҲОИ АСОСИИ РУШДИ
СОҲАИ САЙЁҲӢ ДАР ҶУМҲУРИИ
ТОҶИКИСТОН ДАР ЗАМИНАИ
ҲАМКОРӢ БО СОЗМОНҲОИ
БАЙНАЛМИЛАЛӢ**

**ОСНОВНЫЕ ФАКТОРЫ
РАЗВИТИЯ СЕКТОРА ТУРИЗМА
РЕСПУБЛИКИ ТАДЖИКИСТАН В
КОНТЕКСТЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА
С МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫМИ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯМИ**

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Main factors influencing the development of the tourism sector of the Republic of Tajikistan in the context of cooperation with international organizations are examined. The study analyzes regulatory and legal frameworks, including the Tourism Development Strategy of Tajikistan until 2030 and the Law on Tourism, as well as the role of international organizations such as World Tourism Organization and other world financial structures. The research integrates perspectives from international scholars and identifies structural challenges, opportunities, and policy recommendations. Based on the conducted research, the need for cooperation with international organizations in the field of infrastructure development, institutional reforms and sustainable tourism development was expressed.

Key-words: tourism development; international cooperation; sustainable tourism; investment; infrastructure

Омилҳои асосии таъсиргузор ба рушди соҳаи сайёҳии Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон дар заминаи ҳамкорӣ бо созмонҳои байналмилалӣ мавриди омӯзиши ва таҳлил қарор дода шудааст. Заминаҳои меъёрии ҳуқуқӣ, аз ҷумла Стратегияи рушди сайёҳӣ дар Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон то соли 2030 ва Қонуни Ҷумҳурии Тоҷикистон «Дар бораи сайёҳӣ», инчунин нақши созмонҳои байналмилалӣ, аз қабili Созмони умумиҷаҳонии сайёҳӣ ва дигар ниҳодҳои молиявии байналмилалӣ омӯхта шудааст. Нуқтаи назари олимони хориҷӣ ҷамъбаст карда, мушкилот ва имкониятҳои сохторӣ ва тавсияҳои сиёсӣ ироа гардидаанд. Зарурати ҳамкорӣ бо созмонҳои байналмилалӣ дар рушди инфрасохтор, ислоҳоти институционалӣ ва рушди сайёҳии устувор зикр шудааст.

Калидвожаҳо: рушди сайёҳӣ; ҳамкориҳои байналмилалӣ; сайёҳии устувор; сармоягузорӣ; инфрасохтор

Рассмотрены ключевые факторы, влияющие на развитие туристического сектора Республики Таджикистан в контексте сотрудничества с международными организациями. Анализируются нормативно-правовые акты, в том числе Стратегия

развития туризма в Таджикистане до 2030 года и закон «О туризме», а также роль международных институтов, например Всемирной туристической организации и других международных финансовых структур. Обобщены мнения международных экспертов, определены структурные проблемы и возможности и сформулированы рекомендации по вопросам туристической политики. Отмечена необходимость сотрудничества с международными организациями в области развития туристической инфраструктуры, институциональных реформ и устойчивого развития туризма.

Ключевые слова: *развитие туризма; международное сотрудничество; устойчивый туризм; инвестиции; инфраструктура*

Achieving the strategic goals of national economic development requires identifying priority sectors to ensure its competitiveness. One such priority area in Tajikistan is the country's tourism sector, whose significance within the national economy is underpinned by its considerable potential for growth. In mountainous Tajikistan, tourism acts as a key sector for expanding employment, developing social infrastructure in rural areas, ensuring an inflow of foreign currency, and enhancing the investment attractiveness of the country and its regions.

The world's leading nations are placing particular emphasis on the development of the tourism industry. At present, tourism is growing rapidly in the EU, the America, the Middle East and Africa. International tourism is growing by between 4% and 6% annually, a rate that far exceeds the growth figures of many sectors of the real economy. In this context, the governments of developed countries are channeling substantial funds into improving tourism infrastructure, taking into account the implementation of strategic programs for the sector's development. At the same time, a distinctive feature of the tourism sector's development in these countries is the implementation of measures related to the clustering of tourism companies.

In his Address to Majlisi Oli the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon in 2023, noted that "Between 2018 and 2023, four state investment projects totaling 330 million somoni were implemented to develop the tourism and folk crafts sectors; in addition, the country's banking system allocated more than 300 million somoni in preferential loans to entities in these sectors. During this period, 1,450 tourist facilities were created, and in 2023 the number of tourists reached 1.2 million. However, I would emphasize that there is still enormous untapped potential for the sector's development... With a view to expanding the reconstruction, restoration and protection of historical and cultural monuments, as well as developing tourism in this area, I propose the establishment of a separate body under the Government – the Agency for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage" [1].

The country is implementing the "Tourism development strategy for the period up to 2030", and the commitment to contribute to the effective realization of the Strategy's objectives entails supporting the development of key aspects of the country's tourism sector, such as: "establishing the institutional foundations for the development of the tourism industry, developing a modern tourism infrastructure, strengthening the tourism potential of the Republic of Tajikistan and ensuring the rational organization of its comprehensive promotion and popularization, ensuring the competitiveness of the tourism sector by improving the quality of human resources and productive employment in the tourism sector, adapting to international standards and ensuring the safety of tourists, creating and developing tourism clusters (groups of separate economic tourism and recreational areas) and ensuring innovation and investment in the development of tourism, industry and etc." [2].

According to the Tajik scholar Mahkamov F.F., tourism is currently one of the most dynamically developing sectors of the economy in many countries. According to estimates by the World Tourism Organization, tourism's share of global gross domestic product in 2022 amounted

to US\$7.7 trillion, which is four times higher than the 2021 figure [3, p.143].

It is worth noting that many developed countries around the world, including Italy, France, Switzerland, Turkey and some post-Soviet states, recognize the importance of tourism to the economy and are actively developing this sector. They pursue a strategy of using tourism as a source of revenue to bolster the national budget.

In many of the countries listed, tourism accounts for a significant share of total GDP and is one of the main sources of economic growth. The level of dependence on tourism may vary, but is estimated to be in the range of 15% to 20% of the national budget. The Republic of Tajikistan ranks 148th in the world for this indicator, and in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this figure fell to US\$0.06 billion [4].

Statistical evidence demonstrates that international tourism to Tajikistan has been increasing consistently in recent years, reflecting both rising global interest and the effectiveness of domestic reforms and international engagement. According to data from the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, the number of foreign visitors rose steadily, exceeding 1.22 million in the first nine months of 2024 - a 19 % increase compared to the previous year, with more than 941,000 of these classified as tourists by international standards. Similarly, tourism arrivals continued to grow in 2025, with nearly 1.4 million foreign tourists visiting the country in the first nine months of that year, representing a 24 % year-on-year increase; approximately 1.26 million of these came from countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), with China, the United States, and several European countries contributing to non-CIS arrivals. During the first half of 2025 alone, foreign tourist numbers rose by over 30%, with approximately 925,700 visitors across six months, many of whom came from neighboring Uzbekistan, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Table 1. International tourist arrivals in Tajikistan, 2020-2025.

Year	Foreign Visitors (million)	Growth Rate (%)
2020	0.85	-
2021	0.95	11.8
2022	1.05	10.5
2023	1.10	4.8
2024	1.22	19.1
2025	1.40	24.0

The data in the table indicate that in 2020 the number of foreign visitors to Tajikistan amounted to 0.85 million, which represents a relatively low level compared to subsequent years. This decline is primarily explained by the global impact of the COVID-19, which led to international travel restrictions, border closures, and a significant reduction in tourism flows worldwide. Despite these limitations, the figure did not drop to zero due to the presence of essential travel, regional mobility, and non-tourism visits. Thus, 2020 can be considered a baseline year reflecting the crisis period in the tourism sector.

In today's world, government regulation plays a vital role in the development of tourism; in this context, one of the state's primary functions is economic in nature. There are direct and indirect methods of government regulation, each of which pursues a single objective: to create the necessary conditions for the sustainable development of the national economy. Tourism is used as a stimulus for the economic development of every country in the world, but for rapid and successful development, the tourism sector requires the establishment of basic rules for the provision of tourism services, i.e. state regulation.

The state's primary role in the development of the tourism industry consists of the following:

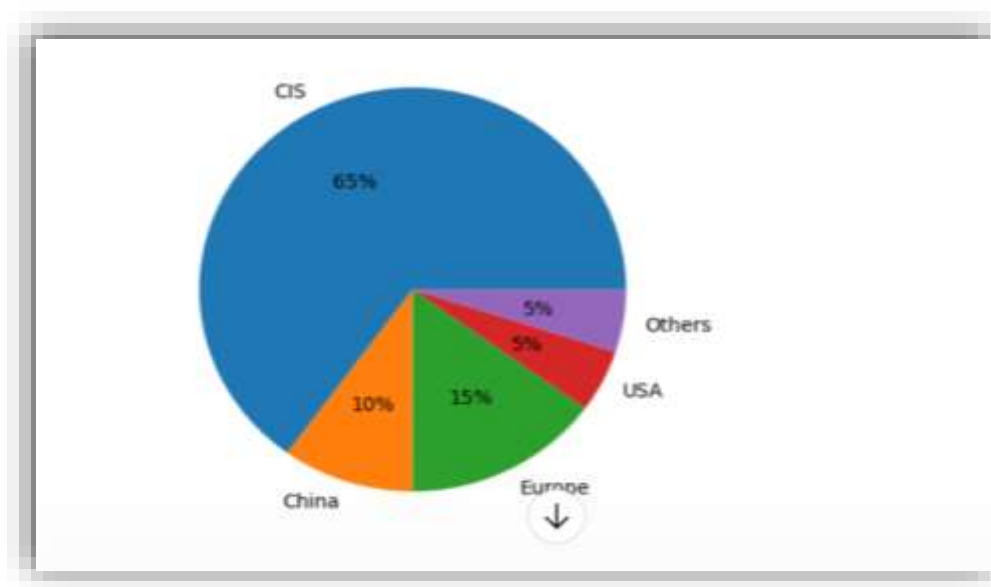
- the state formulates national policy on tourism, regulating all aspects of the sector on a day-to-day basis;
- research and analysis are conducted annually at the state level, on the basis of which tourism statistics are compiled;
- states are often involved in the process of developing tourism in the region;
- foreign affairs bodies, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Tourism Development Committee and other specialist departments, are actively engaged in promoting the country and helping to attract tourist flows by securing direct investment for the development of tourism in the country.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is currently taking effective measures to promote the development of tourism as an independent sector within the national economy. In this regard, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Tourism” from August 7, 2020 should be noted as a foundational document aimed at the comprehensive development of tourism [5].

As we have already noted, the country’s foreign economic activity plays a significant role in attracting investment. In this regard, developing cooperation with the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) is a key priority for enhancing the country’s image and attracting tourists.

Despite these positive trends, direct tourism’s contribution to gross domestic product has remained modest compared to global norms. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data, tourism accounted for approximately 3.37 % of Tajikistan’s GDP in 2022, consistent with figures in previous years but indicating room for growth in value capture [6].

Figure 1. Distribution of foreign tourist arrivals by region of origin in 2025



Success in expanding tourism flows stems from several interconnected factors, including institutional reform, infrastructure development, human capital formation, marketing and digitalization, as well as proactive engagement with international organizations that drive both standards and investment. Among these factors, international cooperation stands out as a multifaceted catalyst that influences regulatory reform, capacity building, statistical modernization, and strategic planning.

International cooperation is operationalized through numerous formal partnerships, technical assistance initiatives, and strategic forums. Membership in the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) provides Tajikistan with access to global expertise, capacity-building programs, and methodological tools. One notable collaborative project includes the joint initiative between UNWTO, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Committee for Tourism Development of Tajikistan focused on delivering statistical assistance, producing a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) report, and developing sustainable tourism plans and visitor surveys. This project not only enhances the country's ability to gather and analyze reliable tourism data but also strengthens its policy planning capabilities, particularly in relation to heritage-linked routes such as the historical Silk Road.

Another dimension of international engagement is demonstrated by high-impact investment projects. For instance, reports indicate that the Asian Development Bank financed a USD 10 million project to support the development of master tourism plans for major destinations, including Dushanbe and the Fann Mountains, involving foreign consulting expertise to ensure best practice integration [7]. Simultaneously, the World Bank provided USD 30 million aimed at stimulating tourism sector development through broader economic support, with approximately half of this amount directed toward tourism-related activities [8]. These investments are significant not only for the capital they provide but also for the transfer of international planning standards, environmental assessments, and strategic design practices that align Tajikistan with global sustainable tourism norms.

The Republic of Tajikistan is indeed actively engaged in efforts to establish and promote the country's tourism image on the international market. Participation in international exhibitions, such as those in Spain, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, China, South Korea and Japan, enables Tajikistan's tourism potential to be presented to a wide audience of professionals and potential tourists.

International cooperation is not limited to multilateral institutions and development banks; bilateral engagement with neighboring states also plays a key role. For example, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have intensified their tourism cooperation through mechanisms such as the Tashkent International Tourism Fair (TMTYA)-2025, where officials from both countries discussed developing joint tourism routes, simplifying travel procedures, and jointly branding the region as a unified tourism space. This kind of bilateral cooperation aims to build integrated regional tourism corridors, which can enhance the competitiveness of Central Asia on the global tourism map by leveraging common cultural and historical links.

At its core, the successful expansion of tourism in Tajikistan reflects a complex interplay of domestic reforms and external partnerships. From a human capital perspective, research on tourism industries globally - such as that examining innovation in tourism entrepreneurship - underscores the importance of education, investment, and managerial capacity in fostering sector competitiveness. Studies show that tourism enterprises that innovate in service delivery, product diversification, and technological adoption are more resilient and successful in competitive markets, which implies that cooperation with international bodies can support knowledge transfer and entrepreneurial development. Similarly, research into sustainable tourism across South Asian countries highlights the positive effects of public-private collaboration, comprehensive planning, and institutional engagement - the very conditions international cooperation seeks to reinforce - to achieve long-term tourism growth and sustainability outcomes.

Infrastructure development remains a critical determinant of tourism performance. While Tajikistan has made notable improvements - evidenced by the growth of registered tourism companies and hotel establishments, including four- and three-star accommodations - the lack of comprehensive transport networks, limited budget properties, and underdeveloped digital connectivity continue to pose challenges, particularly in remote regions. International

organizations contribute to addressing these gaps through project financing, technical support for planning, and advocacy for inclusive infrastructure development that benefits both tourists and local populations.

Another significant factor is global marketing and branding, which is often facilitated through international recognition and external validation. International media and travel platforms such as Lonely Planet have highlighted Tajikistan as a leading destination for adventure tourism, including hiking and wild camping, which bolsters its visibility in competitive markets. Such recognition attracts niche tourists and stimulates interest among travel professionals, tour operators, and global travelers seeking unique experiences.

Statistical modernization and data governance are foundational for policy planning and effective international cooperation. The establishment of Tourism Satellite Accounts, supported by UNWTO and ADB, allows Tajikistan to align its data collection with global methodologies, ensuring comparability and credibility of tourism statistics. This enhances the ability of policymakers to track performance indicators, identify growth segments, and design evidence-based interventions.

The integration of sustainability principles into tourism planning is also a vital factor that is reinforced through international cooperation. Research on international tourism and biodiversity risks suggests that tourism growth - if not managed responsibly - can have significant environmental impacts. International partnerships provide frameworks for environmental assessments, risk mitigation strategies, and sustainable tourism practices that protect natural ecosystems while promoting economic activity. For Tajikistan, which boasts fragile high-mountain ecosystems and rich biodiversity, adopting such principles is crucial to avoid degradation while leveraging tourism for development.

Institutional capacity and governance, intertwined with international engagement, further determine the trajectory of tourism. Effective policy implementation, regulatory enforcement, licensing regimes, and quality standards are all influenced by international norms and donor-supported programs. Cooperation with international partners often includes training workshops, peer learning exchanges, and technical support aimed at strengthening bureaucratic competencies in tourism governance.

In this context, Tajikistan's efforts to simplify visa procedures and promote regional travel integration illustrate practical policy measures that enhance tourist flows and align with international expectations regarding accessibility and ease of movement.

Despite the progress, challenges persist. Sectoral growth requires addressing infrastructure gaps in rural and peripheral areas, expanding affordable accommodation options, enhancing digital connectivity, and elevating service standards through professional training. Moreover, diversifying the source markets beyond CIS countries remains important for achieving a more balanced international tourism portfolio. The relatively low proportion of tourists from non-CIS countries indicates both an opportunity and a challenge: targeted marketing, direct air connectivity, and strategic partnerships with travel platforms and international tour operators can help bridge this gap.

To maximize the developmental potential of tourism, Tajikistan must sustain and deepen its cooperation with international organizations while also strengthening domestic implementation capacity. Policies that foster a conducive business environment, protect cultural and natural assets, and incentivize private investment will contribute to enhanced competitiveness. International cooperation provides the frameworks, tools, and financial resources necessary to support these domestic reforms, while global research and comparative experiences offer insights into best practices.

In conclusion, the development of the tourism sector in Tajikistan is shaped by a confluence of factors that encompass natural endowments, legal frameworks, infrastructure, human capital, international cooperation, and global market integration. International organizations play a central

role in facilitating sustainable growth through project financing, technical assistance, statistical modernization, and global policy alignment. Enhanced cooperation, coupled with strategic domestic reforms and evidence-based planning, will enable Tajikistan to capitalize on its unique tourism potential and achieve sustainable economic benefits in an increasingly competitive global tourism landscape.

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