

Geotourism: Problems and Solutions on the Example of Uzbekistan

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Abstract – The article discusses the theoretical and practical problems of geotourism associated with the creation of a new direction of the tourism industry in the post-soviet space. It, on contractual examples, substantiates urgent issues of the development of geotourism as geographic tourism in Uzbekistan and suggests ways of its implementation.

Keywords – Tourism, Geotourism, Ecotourism, Problems, Forum, Concept, Object, Geoparks, Goal, Objectives, Requirements, Development, Opportunities, Uzbekistan, Road Map.

The tourism industry is one of the most dynamical developing areas of the national economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan over the past three years. With more than 120 laws and regulations governing tourism relations adopted over 28 years of independence, more than half (66 documents) were adopted after December 2016, when tourism was given the status of a strategic sector of the economy. In Uzbekistan, there are over 8 thousand objects of natural and cultural heritage, which may well be a place of travel. “Ichan Kala in the city of Khiva”, “Historical center of the city of Bukhara”, “Historical center of the city of Shakhrisabz” and “City of Samarkand” are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. In addition, the republic has 11 national natural parks and state reserves, 12 nature reserves, 106 museums and many other objects that can

attract tourists [1]. But meeting the demand of the tourism market requires an innovative approach in this sector of the economy. Therefore, in paragraph 4 of the “Concept for the development of the tourism sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019 - 2025” [2] the task is set to “diversify the tourism product and services targeted at different segments of the tourism market”.

However, these regulations do not indicate which particular sectors of the tourism market are the highest priority. Such directions could be pilgrimage, ethnographic, gastronomic, cultural and educational tourism, given the great diversity of the natural structure of the territory and the social development of the population of Uzbekistan. Maybe that’s why on August 1–3, 2019, the “International Geotourism Forum” was held in Shakhrisabz with the

participation of more than 60 experts from 15 countries to explore the possibility of developing a new tourism industry - geotourism [3].

The transition to new forms of tourism based on the principles of diversification, the ideas of sustainable development and the popularity of alternative types of tourism have become widespread [4, p. 49-50]. World tourism development provides for a new segment of the tourism market - eco and geotourism (Fig.1).

But in the post-Soviet space, and in Uzbekistan, there is no scientific and practical basis for the development of geotourism. This was evidenced by the International Geotourism Forum, held on September 1-3, 2019 in Shakhrisabz [1]. In the new Law of Uzbekistan "On Tourism" and in the national "Concept for the Development of Tourism for the Period 2019–2025y" there is no word on geotourism. Therefore, there is an urgent need to define the concept, purpose and object of geotourism.

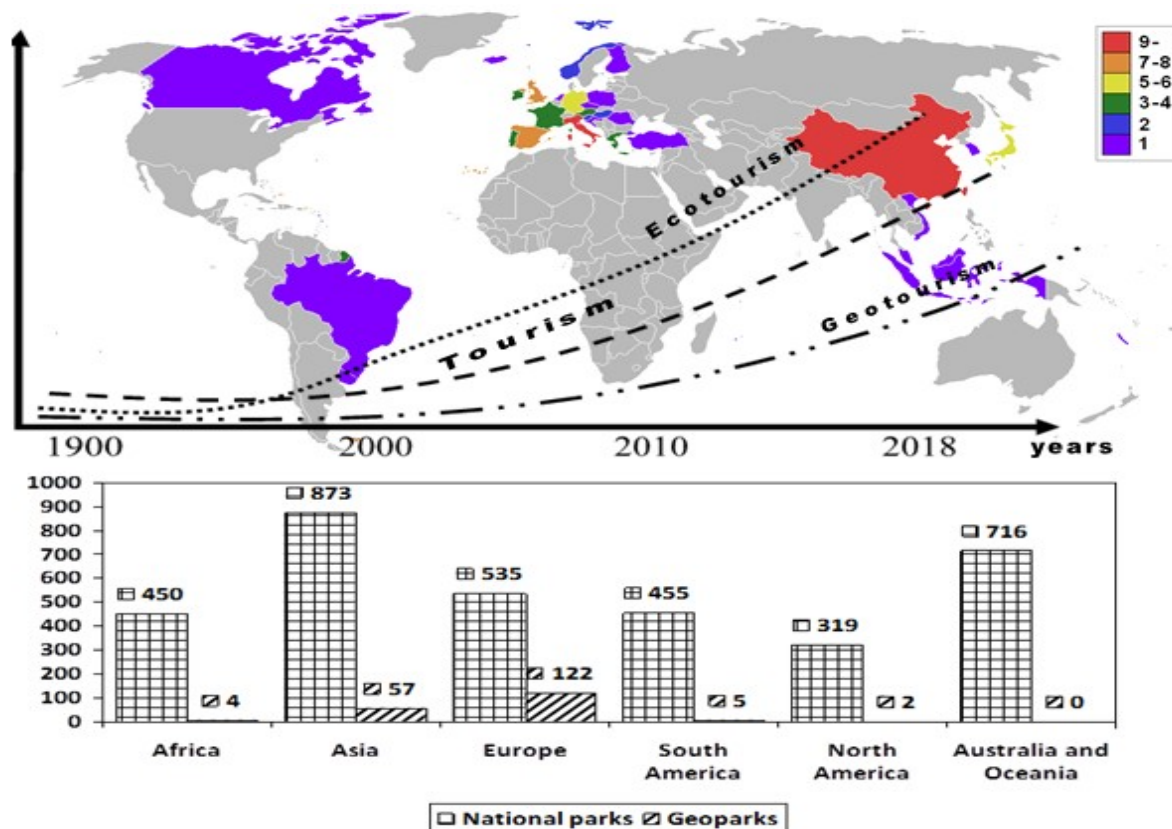


Fig 1. The trend of world tourism development, incl. eco geotourism

What is geotourism and what are its goals? If Americans consider geotourism - geographical tourism, then European and Asian scientists confirm the postulate about the geological nature of this type of tourism [5. p 138-145]. Often, geotourism is mixed with ecotourism. There is no single interpretation of its essence and content. Therefore, our research is aimed at clarifying the theoretical and practical foundations of geotourism, as a new segment of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan.

Geology - the science of the structure, composition and history of the Earth, of the earth's crust (not the planet of the

Earth, as an object of Astronomy - AN), about the methods of finding minerals [6. p 192]. And the crust covers the lower layers of the lithosphere. All those arguments of scientists about the objects of geological tourism - beautiful landscapes, bizarre landforms or man-made disturbed areas of the Earth are objects of geography or ecology. Geography is the science of territoriality, complexity, periodicity, systematic interaction of nature and society on certain geosystems [7. p 68-87]. Geosystem - a geosphere and its elements arranged in a hierarchical order, i.e. isolated areas of land, water, air and underground space, which is the place

of passage of geodynamic processes and phenomena. Ecology is the science of the laws of the relationship between organisms and the environment in certain ecosystems. The ecosystem as an object of ecology is the habitat of organisms (humans, plants and animals, micro and nano organisms) under certain conditions of the lithosphere, atmosphere, pedosphere, hydrosphere, arranged in a hierarchical sequence [8 p 34-42].

According to the new Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Tourism” dated 07/18/2019, Tourism - departures

(trips) of an individual from a permanent place of residence without engaging in activities related to obtaining income from sources in the country (place) of temporary residence. Based on this, geologically oriented tourism, based on an abiotic nature [9. R.27-37, 10. p 345], is education, replenishment and expansion of knowledge for people of various categories and a wide range. This does not take into account the fact that the object of geology is not atmospheric layers, the upper parts of the biosphere and hydrosphere or the soil shell of the Earth - the pedosphere (Table 1).

Table 1. The concept and purpose of geographic and geological tourism

How geographic tourism (American version)	How geological tourism (European and Asian version)
In the narrow sense. Geotourism - trips (trips) of the population to geographical objects.	In the narrow sense. Geotourism - trips (trips) of the population to geological objects.
In a broad sense. Geotourism - departures (trips) of the population (physical persons) from a permanent place of residence without engaging in activities related to the receipt of income from sources of geographical objects for a period of twenty-four hours to twelve consecutive months or at least one night.	In a broad sense. Geotourism - departures (trips) of the population (individual) from a permanent place of residence without engaging in activities related to generating income from sources of geological objects for a period of twenty-four hours to twelve consecutive months or at least one overnight stay.
The geographical objects of tourism are the geosphere and its elements, i.e. aboveground land, water, airspace, processes and phenomena of an exogenous nature.	The geological objects of tourism are the crust of the Earth and its elements, i.e. underground space, processes and phenomena of an endogenous nature.
The purpose of geographic tourism is trips (travel) of the population (individual) to geography objects for recreation, entertainment, etc. types of tourism activities.	The purpose of geological tourism is trips (trips) of the population (individual) to geological objects for recreation, entertainment, etc. types of tourism activities.

Orientation to geoconservation gives geological tourism some similarities with environmental, natural, mountain and cave. Many people mix geotourism with geoparks. Although geoparks can be one of the objects of this type of tourism. In Italy (Garofano and Gowoni), Brazil (Moreira), Scotland (Gordon), waterfalls are considered as an object of geotourism [9, p 57-60] T.A. Hose (2010) considers volcanic tourism as an object of geotourism.

Geographically oriented geotourism emphasizes the preservation of the geographical meaning of the place as a whole, in addition to simple landscape and geomorphological features, as a new charter and concept of sustainable tourism [9,p 451–457]. We also hold this view,

as territory and space is an object (Fig. 2), and the state, processes and phenomena on the surface of the Earth are the subject of geographical sciences, and in the Earth's crust - geological [10, p 27-37]. With this in mind, it is necessary to revise all national and international laws relating to geotourism [11]. In addition, an understanding of geotourism sometimes appears in international literature, which largely equates it with ecotourism. This thinking was initiated at the initiative of the American magazine (and society) National Geographic. However, this view of geotourism did not prevail even in English-speaking countries.

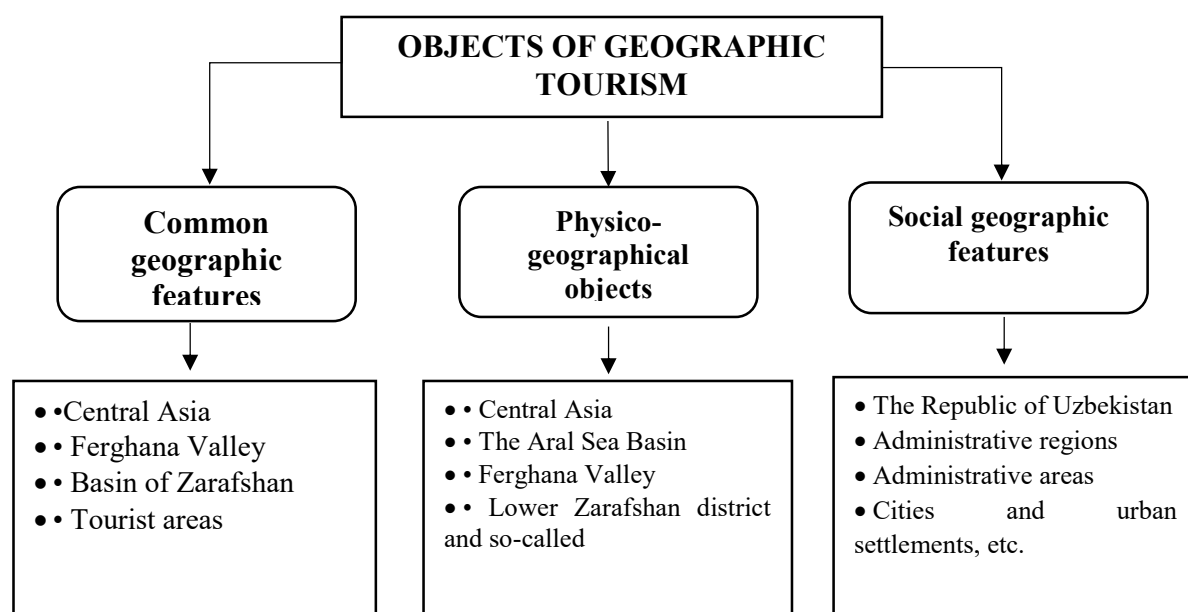


Figure 2. Classification of geographic tourism objects

There is a need to classify geographic tourism by geotour, in which it is advisable to use the following hierarchical steps: form ® class ® type ® type ® group ® degree, shown in table 2.

The next stage of the practical implementation of geotourism in Uzbekistan is the registration and registration

of geotourism objects, at least in the context of regions as social geographic tourism. For example, our studies in the Namangan region on accounting and cadastre of tourist facilities took into account 10 types of tourism most popular for foreign tourists [12]. But among them there are no objects of geotourism.

Table 2. Experience in the classification of geographical tourism by geotours

Hierarchical steps	The form	Class	Type of	Form	Group	Degree
I	Subject geotour					
II		By geotour object				
III			By type of geotour			
IV				By the method of geotour		
V					By geotour participants	
VI						By economic opportunities geotour

Accordingly, after identifying the objects of geotourism, you can replenish this list without breaking the balance by 420 units (Table 3). If new tourist sites are specified, taking into account geotours, they can be supplemented. Here there

is an urgent need and scientific justification for the transfer of any objects to the field of geotourism. Given that one of the subjects of geographical research is complexity.

Table 3. Register of tourist sites of Namangan region excluding objects of geotourism

№	City and areas of	Types of tourism											Total
		Historical tourism	Religious tourism	Agritourism	Ecotourism	Extreme tourism	Recreational tourism	Shopourism	Nosotourism	Mountain tourism	Рафтинг	Rafting	
1	Namangan city	8	6	-	-	-	6	3	4	-	3	?	30
2	Kasansai	3	4	2	5	-	4	2	4	10	4	?	38
3	Mingbulak	1	6	2	3	1	-	-	2	-	1	?	16
4	Namangan	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	?	5
5	Narin	1	4	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	?	10
6	Pop	1	6	2	6	8	25	8	2	20	5	?	83
7	Turakurgan	8	4	5	1	1	2	2	1	-	1	?	25
8	Uychi	2	6	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	?	11
9	Uchkurgan	2	4	2	2	1	2	-	1	-	2	?	16
10	Chartak	4	5	1	8	5	10	4	5	-	1	?	40
11	Chust	4	6	5	5	4	15	10	1	15	5	?	70
12	Yangikurgan	1	2	3	11	5	25	5	2	15	4	?	73
Total:		36	55	24	43	26	91	34	22	60	29		420

Geographical tourism can be considered the weight of a complex of tourist sites. The latter should be located in the objects of geography, i.e. geosystems. Then table 3 will look like in table 4. Without taking into account the objects of geological tourism, the abbreviated version of the name will be designated - geoLtourism. And geographical tourism will

simply remain geotourism, because geoGtourism, unlike geoltourism, does not sound for pronunciation and for advertising. In table 3, rafting, as a way of geotour, rather than a type of tourism, is combined into physical and geographical tourism - mountain tourism.

Table 4. Register of geographical (geotourism) and geological (geoltourism) tourist sites of Namangan region

№	City and areas of	Geographical tourism (geotourism)									Geoltourism			Total Geotourism
		Historical tourism	Religious tourism	Agritourism	Ecotourism	Extreme tourism	Recreational tourism	Shopourism	Nosotourism	Mountain tourism	Speleotourism	Volcano tourism	Mine Tourism и т.п.	
1	Namangan city	8	6	-	-	-	6	3	4	3	?			30
2	Kasansai	3	4	2	5	-	4	2	4	14	?			38
3	Mingbulak	1	6	2	3	1	-	-	2	1	?			16
4	Namangan	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	?			5

5	Narin	1	4	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	?	10
6	Pop	1	6	2	6	8	25	8	2	25	?	83
7	Turakurgan	8	4	5	1	1	2	2	1	1	?	25
8	Uychi	2	6	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	?	11
9	Uchkurgan	2	4	2	2	1	2	-	1	2	?	16
10	Chartak	4	5	1	8	5	10	4	5	1	?	40
11	Chust	4	6	5	5	4	15	10	1	20	?	70
12	Yangikurgan	1	2	3	11	5	25	5	2	19	?	73
Total:		Итого :	55	24	43	26	91	34	22	89	?	420

Speleotourism - visiting the caves with sports or educational goal [13]. A kind of sports or extreme tourism (Fig.3), the meaning is traveling through natural underground cavities (caves) and overcoming various obstacles (siphons, wells) in them using various special equipment (scuba gear, carbines, ropes, hooks, individual safety belts systems, etc.). Volcano tourism - to provide and share information on the tourism sector, which focuses on

active and inactive volcanic areas on a global scale [14]. Tourism in the mines - a trip to the underground objects of the mining industry. For example, in Ukraine, recreation for cultural and recreational purposes in a salt mine in the city of Soledar with a depth of 280 meters. Opera and symphonic concerts are held in the mine; Mertsalov's palm made of rock salt is installed [15].

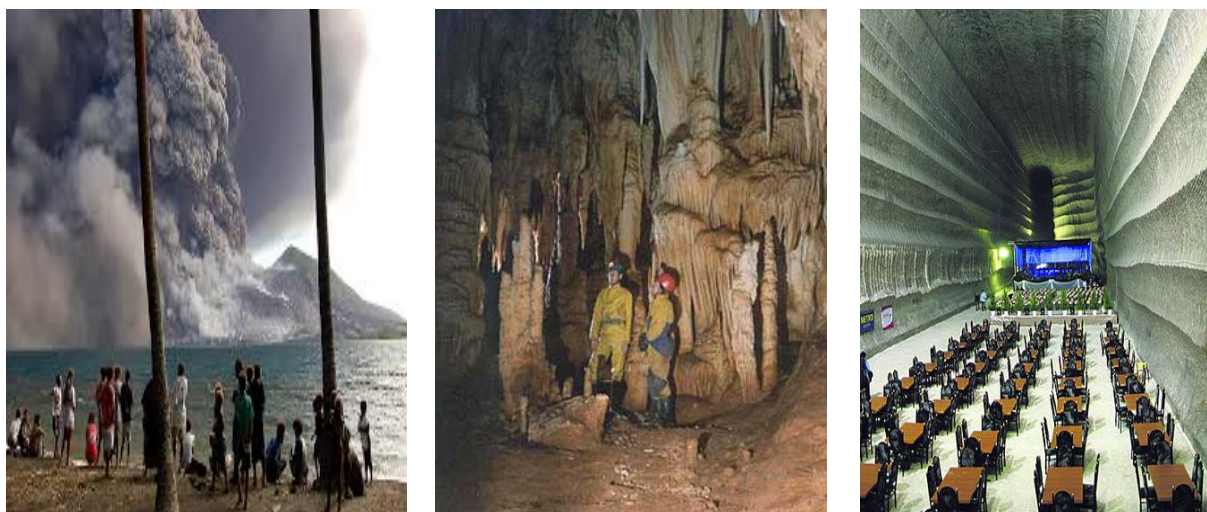


Fig. 3. Types of geological tourism– geolturism

For a more detailed viewing, accounting and conducting of tourist routes, it is necessary to draw up a map of geotourism sites of the Namangan region on a scale of 1: 200 000 as it was developed for ecotourism. The next stage in the implementation of the geotouristic potential of Uzbekistan using the example of the Namangan region is the compilation of medium-scale maps of geotourism areas and routes for practical purposes.

On the map, it is necessary to provide routes separately for geotours, geotours with ecotours and integrated geotourism with the most popular types of travel in this area, taking into account both internal and external tourist

flows. Namangan region of Uzbekistan is an underdeveloped region of the tourism industry. Therefore, to conduct scientific and practical research in this administrative region is most appropriate.

For the practical implementation of geotourism in Uzbekistan, it is advisable to work not on creating geoparks, as it is planned to do in solidarity between Uzbektourism and Uzbekgeology, without scientifically based approaches to resolving the issue, but by highlighting “FREE TURITIC ZONES” in the republic with all the ensuing sequence of essence and content . In this example, the law and relevant practical measures for the implementation of the “FREE

ECONOMIC ZONES” Uzbekistan with 10 years of experience in 20 objects throughout its territory [16].

Long-term studies conducted in Uzbekistan and an analysis of the geotourism potential of leading countries (China, Australia, Indonesia) and world regions (Europe, Southeast Asia) show that for the development of geotourism in Uzbekistan it is necessary:

- ✓ A more detailed conduct of tourist routes, followed by mapping of areas and routes for practical purposes. On the map, it is necessary to provide routes separately for geotours with integrated geotourism with the most popular types of travel in this area, taking into account both internal and external tourist flows.

- ✓ Long-term studies conducted in Uzbekistan and an analysis of the geographical tourism potential of leading countries (China, Australia, Indonesia) and regions of the world (Europe, Southeast Asia) show that for the development of geotourism in Uzbekistan there is a need to develop tactical and strategic action plans and determine the roadmap in the following sequence:

- ✓ Expanding the scope of scientific research, based on the generally recognized theoretical foundations of tourism, including geotourism;

- ✓ The direction of international, national and local investments in projects implemented in the tourism industry;

- ✓ Creating a concept for the development of geotourism;

- ✓ Development of strategic and tactical plans of measures and programs of perspective social and economic development;

- ✓ Drawing up national and local regulatory frameworks and establishing mechanisms for their implementation in practice;

- ✓ The creation of a training system for the geotourism industry with varying degrees of competence and their monitoring;

- ✓ Development of proposals and recommendations for the development of geotouristic advertisements, means and methods of disseminating information;

- ✓ Development and distribution, based on infographics, videos, booklets, maps, souvenirs, audiovisual electronic and information materials of programs demonstrating the attractiveness of geotourism sites and routes.

- ✓ Creation of websites and portals in the global ramified Internet system, demonstrating the geotourism capabilities, facilities and service areas of the region;

- ✓ Study of traditional and non-traditional geotourism education and training in accordance with modern requirements;

- ✓ Advanced training and retraining of personnel of all subjects of the tourism industry, taking into account geotourism;

- ✓ Determination of local and local features of tourism, including geotourism marketing and management with the aim of forming a particularly motivated management system;

- ✓ The search for ways to achieve geotouristic spirituality and enlightenment of all ages of the population, especially youth, to the level of tourist culture;

- ✓ Creation of a system and a mechanism for their implementation of surveys, cadastre, monitoring, control, examination and audit of geotourism sites at the local level of districts and regions;

- ✓ Organizing and conducting on an ongoing basis contests, exhibitions, quizzes, seminars, trainings and conferences on photo and video materials, posters, booklets, cartographic and graphic works at the local level on geotourism;

- ✓ Achievements of regional and dual tourism to the level of independent management;

- ✓ The development of travel agencies involved in the organization, maintenance, statistical accounting and entrepreneurial activities, providing services and services according to special plans and programs to increase tourism, including geotourism, to the level of industry.

- ✓ In general, the development of geotourism both on a global scale and in Uzbekistan will contribute to increasing the level of environmental culture, protecting inanimate nature and solving the socio-economic problems of the country as a whole, as well as the local population.

- ✓ In general, the development of geographical tourism, both globally and in Uzbekistan, increases the level of the geographical culture of the population, nature conservation and the solution of environmental, social and economic problems of sustainable development of countries.

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