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Prospects of Agro-Tourism Development in Samarkand Oasis

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Abstract: ***This article reveals the essence of agrotourism, the experience of the European Union member countries in infrastructure development, as well as the possibilities and directions for the development of this type of tourism in the Zarafshan Valley.***
Keywords: ***agrotourism, "mixed" rural tourism, "pure" rural tourism, cluster, standard, agrotourism object, agrotourism product.***

I. INTRODUCTION

The large-scale reforms aimed at taking a worthy place in the world community of our country are showing their effectiveness in the economic, socio-political, and cultural-educational spheres, which are now recognized by the world community. On August 20, 1999, the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Tourism" serves as a legal basis for the integration of our country into the world tourism integration and the development of local and international tourism. To ensure the implementation of this law and several subordinate documents, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 3, 2018 "On additional organizational measures to create favorable conditions for the development of the tourism potential of the Republic of Uzbekistan" The decree was passed. Republic has a rich spiritual and cultural heritage, various historical and archeological objects, favorable natural and climatic conditions, and a multi-disciplinary social infrastructure, which provides all the necessary conditions for the rapid development of various forms of tourism. In particular, to create the infrastructure of agrotourism, which is considered one of the promising areas of tourism, that is, to ensure the implementation of "Active entrepreneurship, innovative ideas, and technologies" in 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the "Agrotourism Development Program" on April 4. and created an opportunity to promote it on a large scale in the world market.

II. THE GOAL OF THE RESEARCH

The goal is to implement road map-project programs aimed at the formation and development of agrotourism in the valleys located in the territories of Uzbekistan, including the natural geographical landscape objects located in the Zarafshan valley, which we are researching.

III. RESEARCH AS AN OBJECT

Prospective factors for the development of agrotourism infrastructure were selected in the anthropogenic landscape areas of the Zarafshan Valley.

Zarafshan valley is a transverse valley located between Turkestan, Oktov, and Zarafshan ridges in the central part of Central Asia. The eastern part of the Zarafshan valley is located in mountainous Tajikistan, and the western foothills and plains are located in Uzbekistan. The valley is 781 km², starting from the Zarafshan glacier (altitude 2775 m) and ending with Sandikli (sand) dunes (altitude 185 m) in the west, of which 480 km the distance corresponds to the territory of Uzbekistan (according to A. Abulkasimov), there are oases of Samarkand, Kattakurgan, Bukhara, and Karakul.

Zarafshan river is the “blood vessel” of Zarafshan valley. In the Avesta monuments, it is mentioned as "Daitya" - "Good water". Ravothoja dam, Dargom canal, Tuyatortar canal, the remains of the Zarafshan water bridge (1502), the Aqdarya and Karadarya watershed, Damkhuja, which attract tourists in the Zarafshan valley, Narpai, Kalkanota, Shahrud, Romitan canals, and Kattakurgan, Karatepa, Akhdaryo, Tosinsoy, Shurkol reservoirs.

Zarafshan Valley occupies an important role in the economy of Uzbekistan and neighboring Tajikistan. There is a lot of irrigated and irrigable land in the valley. There are enough natural meadows and hayfields for cattle breeding. Zarafshan Valley has been famous for its beautiful gardens and orchards since ancient times.

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Zarafshan Valley is narrow and deep in the upper mountainous part up to the city of Panjakent (at a distance of 300 km), and 6 terraces have been formed, and in the west, in the territory of Uzbekistan, its width reaches 60-70 km. Reservoirs, canals, ditches, collectors – drainage ditchs, and lakes fed by them, created by human hands in the Zarafshan river basin, together form anthropogenic hydrographic networks. According to F. Hikmatov, about 4,200 tributaries consisting of permanent snows, glaciers, streams, and springs located in the Zarafshan basin provide water.

Agrotourism is a tourist trip of people from their permanent place of residence to rural houses, fortresses, and farms. Rural tourism is considered to be recreation and meaningful recreation in rural areas, and today it is becoming the main necessity of people. The noise of the city, the intense work process, and the air pollution encourage the city dwellers to go out into the bosom of nature with calm, peaceful, and clean air. This type of recreation is close to nature, gives a person a good rest, and provides conditions for re-energizing, together with the history, culture, ethnography, customs, architectural monuments of this place, as well as pilgrimage sites and shrines, and people. Allows getting acquainted with the craft. It also provides an opportunity to get to know the local people's unique clothing culture, national cuisine, folklore, language, or dialect, take photos of exotic places in the countryside, pick fruits and engage in other interesting activities.

Agrotourism is well-developed in Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Greece, and France. Tourists who go to these countries live in rural areas for a certain period, get acquainted with the culture, traditions, and lifestyle of the local people, and participate in traditional agricultural work. In these countries, rural agrotourism is second only to sea tourism. Statistics show that 35 percent of European Union residents prefer to spend their holidays in rural areas. In the Netherlands, its share is considered much higher and is 49 percent.

Italy takes one of the leading places in Europe in terms of the creation of new jobs and actual income in rural agrotourism, earning an average of 350 US dollar million per year from this type of activity. Also, rural agrotourism plays an important role in environmental protection and nature conservation. In many countries, this type of tourism is important in creating and maintaining national rural landscapes. For example, the role of rural tourism in preserving the beautiful Alpine pastures of Switzerland, the mills and canals of the Netherlands, and the old parks and villas of Italy are increasing.

Political and economic reforms aimed at the development of rural tourism by the European Union have borne fruit in recent years. Several countries have adopted laws on agrotourism for the rapid growth of this branch of the tourism industry. In Italy, the Law on "Agritourism" was adopted in 1985, creating a solid foundation for state support of rural tourism in the country. In 10 years after the adoption of the law, the number of tourists vacationing in the Italian countryside has tripled.

One of the important factors for the development of agrotourism is explained by the fact that agrotourism products satisfy the demand of middle-income consumers. Today, these consumers make up a very large share of the European agrotourism segment. The products created in this area require a relatively little cost. That is, agrotourism can easily compete with other tourism products in terms of "price quality".

Special recommendations for the standardization and classification of services and means of accommodation provided in rural tourism in developed European countries, norms recognized at the international level, not only in terms of state or national institutions but also within the framework of international programs of the European Union, i.e. subjects of agrotourism activity is being implemented with the active participation of the association.

Currently, to implement the "Prosperous village" and "Prosperous makhalla" programs adopted in the republic, rural tourism is gaining importance in the development of domestic and foreign (international) tourism of the country as one of the new and promising directions of tourism. The development of tourism in rural areas based on these programs serves to ensure the sustainable development of rural areas as one of the priority directions of entrepreneurship of socio-economic importance, especially family entrepreneurship. In particular, rural agrotourism is important in the development of infrastructures in rural areas, raising the standard of living of rural residents, increasing the income of residents, creating new jobs, restoring cultural traditions and national traditions, as well as protecting the environment.

Among the Central Asian countries, the multi-sectoral cluster enterprises belonging to the prestigious "Sharq sanoati" concern, established in 1997, produce 11 types of fruit and grape products (apples, peaches, plums, pears, grapes, and raisins) grown in the gardens of the Zarafshan valley by Euro standard requirements and processed and exported to foreign countries.

At present, 5 of our Republic's "Sharq sanoati" concern; in Samarkand, Jizzakh, Navoi, Namangan, and Surkhandarya regions; 18 intensive orchards and vineyards have been created, which are multi-branch enterprises belonging to the concern, i.e. 51 enterprises, including 4 factories for the processing of agricultural products (fruits and vegetables) and preparation of raisins, poultry factory, sewing production 7,000 people work there, 4,000 of which are in Samarkand region.

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Modern rural infrastructure that attracts agro-tourists is being created in Urgut, Koshrabad, Poyarik, Khatirchi, Ishtikhon, Taylok, Samarkand, Nurabad, Karmana, Gijdivon districts located in the foothills of the valley and the plains of the Zarafshan River. As an example, in Ishtikhon district alone, 1187 farms on 4297 hectares of land produce an average of 50,000 tons of grapes every year, of which 5,000 tons are black raisins, which are exported to foreign investors by the entrepreneurs of the district. It is worth noting that in rural areas of Samarkand, Navoi, and Bukhara regions, which are located in the valley, silkworms are reared in the cluster method, silk cocoons are processed and ready-made products are exported to foreign countries. Also, in the Karakol district of the Bukhara region, the production of ready-made Karakol products, which are popular in the world market, has been launched on a cluster basis.

Our country has all the opportunities to implement each of the directions mentioned above. It is desirable to attract large investors in our country to invest in other forms of agrotourism, first of all, in large private agrotourism facilities. Such objects include cultural-historical parks, ethnocultural complexes, scientific research centers, etc. The implementation of these projects is not only economically effective, but also socially important, in particular, to help today's youth to know the history and culture of their homeland, to understand national values, and in a word, to love their homeland plays an important role in forming a sense of patriotism. The development of rural tourism in our country is economically and socially important and has a positive effect.

A. In particular, for our country

1) tax revenues regularly increase;
2) interest in learning national customs and traditions increases;
3) the unique way of life and traditional values of the villagers are widely promoted;
4) national folk crafts will further develop;
5) the historical and cultural heritage of the regions is preserved;
6) the modern production sector will develop further in rural areas.

B. For the people of rural areas

1) for young people, it means the historical and cultural significance of the "small Motherland", increases the sense of pride in its popularity in the country and the world;
2) new jobs will be created and the employment problem of the local population will be solved;
3) the income of rural residents will increase;
4) the structure of the housing fund in rural areas will develop further;
5) the sales volume of agricultural products will increase.

C. For tourists

1) there is an opportunity to get acquainted with the unique history, traditions, customs, gastronomy, cultural and spiritual development of the local population;
2) there will be an opportunity to rest and restore health in the heart of beautiful nature.

In conclusion, it should be noted that our country has all the possibilities for the sustainable development of rural tourism. If these opportunities are effectively used, the villages of our country will become more prosperous, most of the young people will be provided with new jobs, and the livelihood of the rural people will increase.

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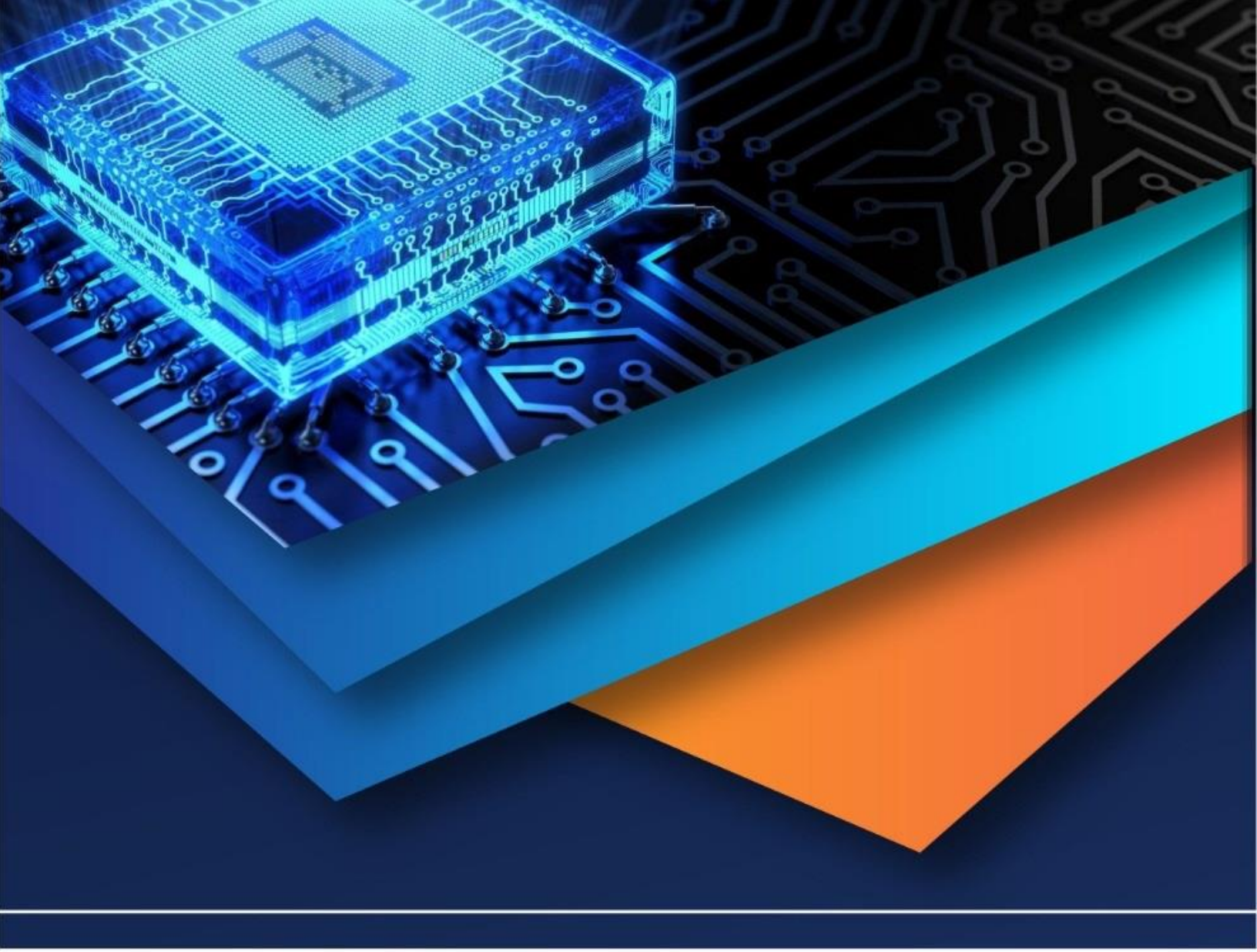

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