

## FORMATION OF TOURIST CLUSTERS AS A TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN THE REGION

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### ABSTRACT

*Today, the cluster principles of organization of production interaction at the regional level are widely spread. In order to apply a cluster policy in tourism regions, it is necessary to understand what is a tourist cluster, its goals and objectives, essence, principles, as well as determine the subject-object structure of the tourist cluster at the regional level.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tourist Cluster, The Purpose And Objectives Of The Tourist Cluster, Principles And Functions Of The Cluster, Subjects Of The Tourist Cluster, The Core Of The Cluster, Additional Subjects Of The Cluster, Serving The Cluster Industries, Auxiliary Objects Of The Tourist Cluster.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Today, the cluster principles of the organization of production interaction at the regional level are becoming widespread. This approach provides great opportunities, both to increase the competitiveness of local businesses, and to increase the effectiveness of economic policy of the regional government. Previously, the cluster approach was used mainly in industrial production, but today it is also used in the tourism industry. In order to apply the cluster policy in tourism regions, it is necessary to understand what is a tourist cluster, its goals and objectives, essence, principles, as well as determine the subject-object structure of the tourist cluster at the regional level.

In a developing economy, the development of a regional tourist cluster can be an impetus for improving the infrastructure and increasing the competitiveness of the region's economic activity.

The Republic of Uzbekistan and its regions have a huge potential for tourism development, but inadequate use of tourist resources and opportunities, including the presence of tourist facilities that remain unclaimed due to underdeveloped infrastructure and incompetent management, creates obstacles to the effective functioning of the industry.

The emergence of clusters in the tourism market as a form of tourism organization is justified by the fact that it is a tourism cluster that brings together organizations and industries, closely related, complementary to each other and contributing to the growth of their competitiveness and, accordingly, tourism in a particular place. Tourist cluster performs the role of a "growth point" of the domestic tourism market.

The purpose of creating a tourism cluster is to increase the level of economic sustainability of the region, infrastructure development due to synergistic effects, including improving the efficiency of enterprises and organizations included in the tourism cluster, stimulating innovation and development of new areas of tourism business.

A modern tourist cluster can solve a number of important problems, including:

- Rational use of the available natural potential;
- Priority development of domestic and inbound tourism on the territory of the region;
- Creation and development of highly effective and competitive tourist complex on the territory of the region;
- Demonstration of the historical, cultural and spiritual heritage of the peoples of Uzbekistan;
- Formation of a system of state regulation of tourism activities;
- supporting the development of various types of entrepreneurship (medium and small) in the sphere of tourism;
- Development of marketing strategy for promotion of tourist products and creation of a favorable image of the region as a tourist region, etc.

The general thrust of the objectives of the cluster organization of tourism economy determines the principles of tourism cluster. The following fundamental principles can be defined for the tourism cluster:

- Mutual understanding and willingness to cooperate by all participants in the process;
- Equality and parity of all participants in a constructive dialogue;
- The voluntary choice of forms of cooperation;
- Mutual information and fulfillment of assumed obligations, according to the economic contracts concluded directly between the cluster participants.

Cluster building must be based on voluntary principles. No one has the right to coerce another to take any action or to deceive by spreading knowingly false information.

Achieving success in the development of tourism cluster is a joint task of business and government authorities of the appropriate level (national, regional and municipal - depending on the scale of the cluster and the existing objectives for its development). Only mutual understanding and willingness to cooperate between them will guarantee positive results.

The most important element of the cluster principle of regional development is the establishment of permanent dialogue between the participants in the process - small and large enterprises, relevant government agencies, service and research organizations, the system of vocational education, the media, etc.

Tourism clusters are a system of close relationships not only between firms, their suppliers and customers, but also between knowledge institutions, including major research centers and universities, which, as generators of new knowledge and innovation, provide a high educational level of the region's population. There is an opportunity to coordinate efforts and financial means to create a new product and technology and to enter the market with them. In fact, within the tourism cluster, it becomes possible to build a closed technological chain, from product creation to its production and market launch.

The essence of tourism cluster as a phenomenon is revealed through its functions. We identified economic, social and humanitarian functions of the region's tourism cluster.

Economic functions include the following:

- The formation and development of the tourist cluster provides an inflow of money to the treasury of the region;

- Tourism cluster stimulates a significant increase in labor productivity and introduction of innovations in the tourism enterprises of the region;
- Development of a regional tourism cluster contributes to the development of all local infrastructures (roads, communication lines, consumer services, stores, hotels, cafes, restaurants, clubs, etc.);
- Tourism cluster activities stimulate the development of industries related to the production of souvenirs.

The main social functions of a tourism cluster are the following:

- The tourist cluster contributes to the restoration of human strength and ability to work;
- Tourism cluster activity is an environmentally safe sphere of human activity;
- Tourism cluster promotes the rational use of people's free time;
- Tourism cluster enriches interregional cooperation of countries and peoples.

Among the humanitarian functions of the region's tourism cluster are the following:

- The tourism cluster provides recreation of tourists with knowledge of life, life, history, culture, traditions of other nations, which broadens the outlook of a person, develops his intellect;
- the sector of the economy, in which the cluster operates, plays a significant role in the education of the younger generation, which is manifested in the transfer of previously accumulated values to young people.

Thus, the region's tourism cluster performs important social, economic and humanitarian functions, which are a condition and factor in the development of the region's economy and society as a whole.

The study of processes of development of tourism cluster organization in the countries of the world allowed us to form the subject structure of tourism cluster participants.

The core of a tourist cluster can be a large tourist firm (travel agency) or a community of similar firms, which through vertical (supplier-consumer) as well as horizontal cooperative and other economic relations (common base of consumption of production and other resources, joint technology, etc.) interact with other organizations participating in the tourist cluster. It is in the core of tourism cluster that standards of customer service, production of high-quality tourist services are born, the issues of unification, creation of a common brand and service, communication strategies of interaction with customers, partners, government organizations, competitors are solved.

An important role in the development of tourism and potential tourism cluster in the region is played by travel agencies (tour operators, travel agents), whose main task is to create attractive and sometimes unique tourist products that meet the needs of tourists.

When traveling, a tourist, first of all, needs services to maintain his/her livelihood - accommodation, food, transportation, leisure. Therefore, the main subjects of the tourist cluster will be the suppliers of specialized tourist services. The cross-sectoral nature of tourism implies the presence in the network of suppliers of collective accommodation facilities, catering enterprises, leisure centers, medical and recreational facilities and other services. The services of these organizations are the essence of the tourist product. Without these enterprises, the existence of the cluster is impossible.

Complementary entities are institutions and organizations whose activities directly ensure the functioning of the cluster entities. Complementary subjects of the tourism cluster include

professional educational institutions, research centers and laboratories, public (non-profit organizations).

Service industries are those whose activity consists in providing tourists with related services. They include financial and medical services, local retail trade (sale of souvenirs, tourist equipment), engineering infrastructure, security, etc. These enterprises and organizations operate in the market of goods and services regardless of tourism, but their involvement in the cluster creates more attractive conditions for their development and increase in sales. Sustainable development of service industries and their active interaction with tourist organizations is the key to the successful functioning of the entire cluster, ensuring maximum satisfaction of the needs of customers of the tourism market in the region. The presence of service enterprises and organizations in the tourism cluster encourages tourists to spend more money on recreation. The income of these enterprises remains in the region and contributes to the increase in local budgets.

Auxiliary entities are cluster entities whose presence is desirable, but not necessary for the functioning of other cluster entities. These include:

- Legal and auditing companies (consulting, amending statutory documents, obtaining permits, bookkeeping, auditing, assistance in resolving conflicts, legal representation, etc.);
- Consulting companies (assistance in raising employees' qualification, seminars, corporate trainings, consulting on new or problematic areas of tourism business, etc.);
- Passport and visa agencies (issuing visas and foreign passports for tourists);
- Insurance companies (insurance of Russians traveling abroad and other types of insurance);
- Internet agencies (support and hosting of the tourist cluster site);
- Computer firms (services for setting up computer and telephone equipment, the Internet);
- Advertising agencies (services for advertising in the media);
- Publishing houses (printing promotional materials, preparation and printing of guides and magazines for tourists, purchase or free order of press for sale (distribution) in the enterprises that are part of the cluster).

The above-mentioned potential participants of the tourism cluster in the form of enterprises, organizations, institutions, firms are in different interaction with each other. In some cases, their cooperation in the cluster forms the main activity of enterprises, and in other cases it is a secondary matter. All participants in the regional tourism cluster should be interested in the development of the cluster as a whole, the consistency of their actions in decision-making, not causing harm to other participants and making a significant contribution to the development of regional tourism.

All enterprises, organizations, institutions included in the tourism cluster should form a highly efficient production, aimed at meeting the needs of customers in the field of tourism. Performing the role of one or another production or service area in the chain of business processes of the tourism cluster, the enterprises included in it, do not lose their legal independence and bear civil liability to consumers, as an ordinary legal entity. Participation in the cluster should be a beneficial partnership, but not a prerequisite for existence. Restricting the freedoms and opportunities of tourism cluster members will lead to monopolization of the tourist market and the destruction of healthy competition, without which it is impossible to develop and improve relationships with customers.

The object of the regional tourist cluster is the tourist service. Tourist services. General requirements", tourist service is a result of tourist enterprise activities to meet the corresponding

needs of tourists. The service itself is an invisible commodity of a special kind. Service arises in the process of its consumption and does not exist separately, by itself. This is the main difference between a service and a commodity.

Based on the analysis of various approaches to the concept of tourist services, we conclude that a tourist service is an integral part of the tourist product, created by enterprises in the field of tourism and aimed at meeting the needs of tourists.

Tourism services have the following main properties: intangibility, inseparability from the source and the object of service, variability (inconstancy of quality) and inability to be stored.

Intangibility manifests itself in the fact that tourist services cannot be tasted, touched, seen or heard before they are rendered. Before the tourist arrives at the place of rest, he has only a description of the route and the accompanying documents for its implementation. He gets rest and impressions of it only at the moment of being at the tourist site and in the process of interaction with the environment.

The inseparability from the source and the object of the service is manifested in the fact that, first, the provision of tourist services requires, as a rule, the presence of the one who provides it, or the one to whom it is provided. Secondly, the provision of tourism services is always tied to the place of travel, that is

to a specific geographical area, territory. Thirdly, consumers act as if they are a part of the service being sold, creating a climate, an atmosphere of using the service. Fourthly, not only the employees of the travel agency, but also customers should know the mandatory conditions under which the service can be provided.

The inconstancy of quality, the variability of tourist services is manifested in the fact that their quality depends on who provides them and under what conditions. There are several reasons for this variability. First, services of this kind are rendered and accepted simultaneously or with a small interval of time, which limits the possibility of their control. Second, the temporal volatility of demand makes it problematic to maintain quality of service during periods of high demand. Third, the human factor has a huge impact on quality.

The inability to store manifests itself in the fact that tourist services cannot be stored. Recreation takes place during the period, which is paid for, and at the resort, where the voucher is paid for.

However, tourism services, along with their specific characteristics, have distinctive features:

- The creation of tourism services by the efforts of many organizations;
- Dependence of tourist services on such variables as time and space. The factor of seasonality is of great importance. The marketing activities of a tourism organization will be different in the peak season and the off-season. In the off-season, additional measures to stimulate demand (low prices, various additional services) are necessary;
- overcoming the distance separating the customer from the tourist service and the place of its consumption;
- The sales of tourist services require a systematic approach to the strategic development of destinations based on trends in tourist demand and taking into account the existing competition;
- The complexity of tourist services stipulates the provision of a whole set of services, in which the main core service is provided in conjunction with additional and related services. The complex nature of tourist services has a direct impact on the quality of service;
- The uniqueness of the tourist service means that it cannot be repeated in all aspects because of the different composition of holidaymakers, weather conditions, political events in the host

country;

- External factors of force majeure nature: weather, natural conditions, politics, international events have a significant impact on the quality of tourist services.

As a rule, tourist services are activities to meet the needs of tourists for travel, recreation or excursions, and a package of services (tour package) is a comprehensive tourist service. A tourist package includes four mandatory elements:

- 1) Tourist center - a tourist's place of rest, including all its recreational opportunities (natural, environmental, cultural-historical, socio-demographic, infrastructural, ethnic);
- 2) Transport - a means of transportation by which one can get to the tourist center;
- 3) Accommodation services - a specific hotel that is offered to the tourist center for the duration of the trip.
- 4) Transfer - any transportation of the tourist within the boundaries of the tourist center.

The package of services for a tour is formed according to the purpose of the trip and the needs of tourists, according to the type of tourist recreation they choose. The services chosen by the tourist are included in the tour program. The price a tourist pays when buying a tour package (tour package) is calculated. Usually such orders are formed in travel agencies and then go to the tour operator for implementation.

The services provided by travel agencies are divided into basic and auxiliary. The main tourist services are target services included in the tour, i.e. services that are purchased in a package that guarantees their compulsory consumption at the place of rest. Additional tourist services - targeted and infrastructure services that can be obtained for an additional fee (not included in the price of the tour), specific to the given tourist center.

The basic tourist services include:

- Selection of the type of tourism and the route of the tour (vacation destination);
- Specification of the number of days of the tour;
- The choice of the hotel (its criteria, location);
- Organization of catering;
- The choice of transfer;
- Cultural program;
- Specification of the price of the tour with a discount system.

The auxiliary (additional) tourist services include:

- Visa support (execution of visas for tourists);
- Accompanying (optional) tourists;
- Registration of travel documents and baggage;
- Transportation of tourists to the transfer and back on arrival;
- Insurance of tourists and luggage.

According to Professor M.P. Voynarenko, for a cluster to succeed as a viable, self-sufficient, successful, and effective organization, five conditions ("5Is") are necessary:

- Initiative - initiative and influential people from entrepreneurs, government representatives,

public organizations, educational institutions, able with their authority, intelligence, organizational abilities and knowledge to rally, interest and in practice prove the usefulness of clusters both for their members themselves and for the region;

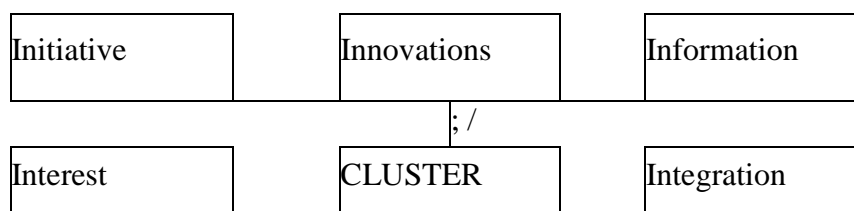
- Innovations - new technologies in the organization of production, sales, management, financing, capable of opening up new opportunities in the competitive struggle;

- Information - accessibility, openness, knowledge exchange, creation of databases and web-pages, which allow to get advantages in access to the markets of supply of labor objects, sale of products, qualified labor, etc.;

- Integration - provides use of new technologies of cooperation of firms at the branch and territorial levels with support of science and authorities;

- Interest - the main condition for the vital activity of entrepreneurial or social structure.

The presence of interest of participants of cluster associations and receipt of economic benefits by them is obligatory (see Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1. Prerequisites for cluster creation**

The process of tourism cluster formation begins, first of all, with the emergence of the initiative of different subjects of the region.

Practical application of the cluster concept is expressed in the implementation of cluster policy or cluster initiatives at the level of groups of companies, individual regions, countries, or even associations of several states.

Without initiative, it is impossible to implement even the most primitive project or attract investment. Only new, original, non-standard innovative ideas can interest an investor, only the integration of the efforts of government, business and institutions (scientific, educational, public organizations) can be a condition for successfully attracting investment to a given territory (city, district, region).

The initiative to create a cluster can belong to both government and business. The government's efforts are usually aimed not at supporting individual enterprises and industries, no matter how significant their contribution to the economy, but at creating conditions for the development of the cluster and the relationships within it.

Cluster initiatives are characterized by a focus on the active involvement of representatives of the public and private sectors in the implementation process, beginning with the definition of the cluster to the design and further implementation of its economic development strategy. In addition, cluster initiatives contribute to the development of institutional capital (i.e. trust and cooperation) in order to change the mentality of representatives of both the public sector and business. Cluster approach changes the direction of dialogue between companies and state bodies: from position based on confrontation of unattainable requirements, they move to positions of cooperation and joint actions for increasing competitiveness.

Currently, the application of the cluster approach is becoming one of the key directions in the

Russian regional economy. Clusters act as the basis for the effective development of regions individually and the state as a whole.

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