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ISSUES OF DEVELOPING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN YAKKABOG DISTRICT

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Abstract. *This article examines the current state of tourism infrastructure in the Yakkabog District. While the district offers rich natural and cultural resources, it faces issues in transport, information access, and service quality. Based on global experience, the study suggests improving infrastructure, marketing, staff training, and attracting investment. It also emphasizes the role of local communities and public-private partnerships in ensuring sustainable tourism development.*

Keywords. *Yakkabog District, tourism infrastructure, agrotourism, investment climate, service quality, branding strategy*

Introduction. The rapid development of the tourism sector is currently recognized as one of the most important factors of economic growth. In particular, through the development of local tourism and the modernization of infrastructure, it is possible not only to increase economic income, but also to preserve cultural heritage, create new jobs, and reduce interregional disparities. From this point of view, improving tourism infrastructure in Yakkabag district of Kashkadarya region, as in all regions of Uzbekistan, remains an urgent issue [1].

Yakkabag district is located in the south-west of Uzbekistan and is distinguished by its natural landscape, historical monuments, and traditional culture. The district is rich in villages with ancient history, monuments of historical architecture, healing springs, and nature reserves. Unfortunately, despite the existing tourist potential, the tourism infrastructure in Yakkabag district is still not sufficiently developed. This has a significant negative impact on the economy of the district and the well-being of the population [2].

In recent years, a number of regulatory and legal documents have been adopted at the republican level to support the tourism sector. In particular, the “Concept for the Development of Tourism for 2022–2026”, adopted by the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ–60 dated January 28, 2022, identifies the



construction of regional tourism infrastructure, the creation of modern transport, accommodation and service facilities as the main priority areas [3]. Based on this document, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of the real situation on the ground, identify existing problems and develop specific proposals aimed at eliminating them.

The current state of tourism infrastructure in Yakkabagh district is manifested in the following: transport communications are limited, hotels and other accommodation facilities are insufficient, and the level of service in most cases does not meet modern requirements. This limits the flow of not only foreign, but also domestic tourists. In particular, the lack of necessary roads and guidance systems to reach natural and historical monuments located in remote areas from the district center slows down the development of tourism [4].

Also, the potential of such types of tourism as ecological, agrotourism, and ethnotourism has not been sufficiently developed. Rural areas of Yakkabagh district can attract the attention of local and foreign tourists with their unique customs, craft traditions, and methods of growing natural products. However, infrastructural preparation and targeted investments are necessary to turn this potential into an economic resource [5].

In addition, training personnel at the district level, improving the culture of service provision, and applying information and communication technologies to tourism activities are also urgent issues. The increase in the number of small business entities operating in the district, in particular, family hotels, workshops producing handmade souvenirs, and rural tourism farms, will serve the sustainable development of tourism [6].

This article analyzes the current state of tourism infrastructure in Yakkabog district, identifies existing problems, and puts forward practical proposals for their solution. At the same time, effective approaches to the development of regional tourism are recommended based on international experience. This will expand the opportunities for turning Yakkabog district into an important tourist destination not only at the regional but also at the national level.

Main part. The geostrategic location and natural and climatic conditions of Yakkabag district are of great importance for the development of tourism. The district is located in the eastern part of the Kashkadarya region, at the foot of the Gissar ridge, where the mountainous and foothill reliefs create favorable conditions for the development of certain types of tourism, in particular, ecological, extreme and health-improving directions. It is in this area that the natural landscapes and springs, clean air, medicinal



plants and mineral waters located in villages such as Sofiyon, Oktepa, Oqrabot, Gilan provide opportunities for tourism diversification [7].

Nevertheless, the existing infrastructure does not allow for the effective use of these types of resources. The state of electricity supply, clean drinking water, sewage systems and roads in many settlements is not up to standard. This reduces amenities for tourists and limits the ability of local residents to earn income from providing services. Typically, modern services (hotels, restaurants, guides, souvenir shops, etc.) should be available near tourist attractions. In Yakkabog, many links in this infrastructure chain have not yet been formed [8].

Transport infrastructure - especially the quality of roads leading to villages within the district - is an important factor in the development of tourism. Many villages with tourist potential in Yakkabog district have difficulty attracting tourists due to the lack of proper roads and signposts. Many settlements can only be reached using special technical means, which limits the convenience of transport and increases the time to reach tourist attractions [9].

The state of the residential infrastructure within the district is also noteworthy. At present, the number of registered hotels in Yakkabag district is insufficient [10]. The homes of most rural residents are not ready to receive tourists, and the houses do not have conditions that meet sanitary and hygienic requirements. Therefore, it is necessary to allocate subsidies from the state for the establishment of family hotels, and to conduct trainings for the local population in this regard [11].

The tourism potential of Yakkabag district is directly related not only to the natural landscape and climate, but also to cultural heritage sites. There are ancient tombs, shrines, mosques and mausoleums, architectural monuments here, which can serve the development of pilgrimage tourism. However, many of them are in need of restoration, are not documented or are not registered as tourist sites. The population itself does not have sufficient knowledge about the role of these sites in tourism. This situation leads to the formation of a passive attitude towards tourism in society [12].

The potential for agrotourism in Yakkabog is also noteworthy. The district's population is mainly engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, and gardening. This is a good opportunity to show tourists the local way of life, traditional crafts, and food production processes in an experimental way. Local brands – for example, Yakkabog viticulture, beekeeping products, vine shoots, dried fruits, and handicrafts – can strengthen the tourism economic sector. However, the necessary logistics chains and marketing infrastructure for marketing, certification, and convenient presentation of these products to tourists are insufficient [13]. In addition, the level of digitalization of



tourism in Yakkabog district is also low. There is not enough information on the Internet about tourist facilities, destinations, accommodation facilities, and services in the district. Many facilities are not marked on Google Maps or other platforms. Modern technologies such as QR codes, audio guides, electronic maps, and online booking systems have not been implemented. This situation is a serious obstacle to choosing Yakkabog, especially for foreign tourists [14].

Also, the lack of information centers, stands marking tourist destinations, indicators, information booklets, and a unified branding concept developed at the district level, which are important for tourism development, indicates the underdevelopment of the marketing infrastructure. There is little advertising activity at the district level, and content on social networks is almost non-existent. A separate content marketing strategy should be developed to promote Yakkabog tourism [15].

One of the problems is the lack of qualified personnel for the tourism sector at the district level. There are few specialists specializing in guiding, tourism management, hotel services, restaurant services, guide preparation and other service sectors. At the same time, the existing personnel are often not fully prepared, their knowledge of foreign languages, and service culture are insufficient. In this regard, it is necessary to open training centers in the district, and strengthen cooperation with educational institutions in the field of tourism at the regional and republican levels [16].

The lack of clear and open information on the development of tourism in the district for entrepreneurs and investors, the chaotic process of tourist zoning and land allocation limit the investment climate. As a result of the lack of widespread information on state benefits, subsidies, and tax breaks, many entrepreneurs do not include this sector in their business plans. This situation indicates the weakness of government-business-society cooperation at the district level [17].

Territorial social infrastructure – namely, medical, security, communication, cleaning services – also directly affects tourism development. There may be problems with the availability of medical facilities in some mountainous areas within the district, the presence of zones where mobile communication does not work, and the availability of rescue services in case of emergencies. These situations create serious risks in terms of tourist safety and reduce the tourist attractiveness of the Yakkabag district [18].

To eliminate the above problems, an integrated approach to the development of tourism infrastructure in the Yakkabag district is necessary. This approach primarily includes a complete registration of tourist resources located in the district, their condition assessment, analysis, and the creation of an open database on digital platforms. After that, the formation of tourism clusters based on territorial planning, i.e., the joint



planning of several tourist facilities in one area, the roads connecting them, the service chain, transport, information, and security systems [19].

**Key issues and proposals based on an integrated approach to tourism
infrastructure in Yakkabag district**

№	Problem area	Problem description	Proposed solutions
1	Transport infrastructure	Roads are of poor quality, mountainous areas are difficult to reach, there are no signs	Repair of main roads, opening of new routes, installation of road signs
2	Accommodation and hotel sector	There are few hotels, there is no infrastructure for family accommodation	Establishment of family hotels, allocation of subsidies and grants
3	Information and digital services	There are no online services, facilities are not listed on the Internet	Creation of QR code maps, mobile applications, online booking systems
4	Human resources	There are few qualified guides and service staff, language skills are lacking	Establishment of training centers, short-term certificate courses
5	Marketing and advertising	There is no single brand, promotion on the Internet is weak	Creation of a brand concept for the district, development of a content marketing strategy
6	Investment environment	There is no information on land allocation and benefits	Creation of an open geoinformation system for investors, simplified permit system
7	Territorial resource planning	There is no register of tourism facilities and territorial analysis	Mapping of tourism resources based on GIS, cluster-based planning

In Yakkabagh district, it is important to study international experiences in depth and use them in accordance with regional conditions as a solution to the development of tourism infrastructure. For example, in countries such as Georgia, Turkey or Hungary,

tourism infrastructure in mountainous or rural areas has been developed precisely by involving the local community. Through the “community-based tourism” model, residents offer their accommodation, traditional products and services to tourists. This model can also be successfully applied in many villages of Yakkabagh district [20]. In particular, in villages such as Sofiyon or Oqrabot, economic and cultural development can be achieved by establishing family hotels, introducing tourists to traditional cuisine, ecotourism marshals, beekeeping or gardening. To regulate this process, local khokimiyats, tourism committees, public education and employment agencies must work together [21].

In addition, small infrastructure projects can be initiated in cooperation with international donor organizations, in particular, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union, and the Asian Development Bank. For example, grants can be attracted for eco-camps, mountain tourism centers, bicycle paths, souvenir centers, and other facilities designed for tourism. Such a practice has been effective in Georgia or Kazakhstan and has helped modernize rural infrastructure [22].

The concept of “green tourism” - that is, services based on environmental safety and sustainability, which is an integral element of tourism infrastructure in developed countries - is also relevant for the Yakkabag district . Elements such as the use of renewable energy sources (solar panels, biofuels), waste recycling, environmentally friendly vehicles, and the cultivation of organic food products can raise agrotourism and ecotourism in Yakkabag to an international level [23].

Issues of branding and regional identity are also inextricably linked with infrastructural development. Since the tourism potential of the district is not sufficiently represented on the Internet, a special brand concept should be developed to promote it. For example, a website, mobile application, videos, QR maps, and tourist brochures can be prepared based on the slogan “Yakkabog is a land of ancient villages in the mountains.” It is advisable to prepare these products in foreign languages and present them at international exhibitions and tourism fairs [24].

The quality of tourism services should be controlled through a continuous monitoring and evaluation system. For this, a “tourism services quality index” can be developed at the district level, which will be evaluated based on a point system for hotels, restaurants, transport, hygiene, safety, communication and information. The rating of entities participating in this system should be announced every quarter, and those who show the highest results should be given awards and privileges. This mechanism will provide an incentive to improve the level of service [25].



It is also very important to develop a map of existing resources when planning tourism infrastructure in Yakkabag district. Tourism resources related to each village, mountain range, river basin or historical site should be digitized based on modern GIS technologies, and a single geoinformation system should be formed. Through this system, all tourism services, opportunities and existing problems can be monitored online, and an open information space can be created for investors and entrepreneurs [26].

The success of the proposals for the development of tourism infrastructure at the district level depends, first of all, on political will, financial resources and social activity of the population. A separate master plan for tourism issues should be developed by local authorities, which should include annual roadmaps, phased investment programs, a security system and monitoring mechanisms. In this way, sustainable infrastructural development will be established based on a systematic approach, the participation of local stakeholders and public-private partnerships [27]. Tourism infrastructure based on the principles of sustainability will ensure not only economic growth in Yakkabag district, but also environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage, and social stability. In this model, tourism is considered not as a temporary source of income, but as the basis for long-term socio-economic development. Each infrastructural element – road, hotel, catering point, service facility – simultaneously benefits the local economy and strengthens the social potential of the community [28]. Gender equality and the role of youth should also be given special attention. In many villages of Yakkabag district, women can actively participate in the areas of crafts, cooking, and service. By involving them in the tourism ecosystem, economic activity, social stability, and family income can be achieved. Similarly, creating tourism startups for young people, using innovative technologies (AR/VR tours, mobile applications, content creation) can increase their employment and reduce migration [29].

In general, the issue of developing tourism infrastructure in Yakkabog district requires a comprehensive approach, adaptation to local conditions taking into account international experience, integration of public and state resources, and widespread implementation of information technologies. Through active branding, modern management, social inclusion, and infrastructural clarity, Yakkabog district can be achieved to take a worthy place not only on the domestic but also on the international tourism map [30].

Conclusion. The analysis of the issues of developing the tourism infrastructure of the Yakkabag district shows that, although the natural, cultural and architectural resources



available in this region have high tourism potential, the current infrastructural situation does not allow for the full use of these opportunities. The geographical location of the district, the rich natural landscape, ancient villages, traditional lifestyle and craft heritage - all this makes Yakkabag a unique place in the areas of ecological, ethnographic, agro-cultural tourism. However, in order to build a competitive tourism system based on these resources, it is necessary, first of all, to form a modern, sustainable and integrated tourism infrastructure.

At the forefront of the existing problems is the weakness of the transport and communication infrastructure. The roads leading to many tourist sites within the district are of poor quality, transport services are not systematic, and the lack of road signs does not create convenience for visitors. Accommodation and catering infrastructure is concentrated only in central areas, and there are very few facilities ready to receive tourists in mountainous or remote villages. Also, the lack of information technologies and digital services, i.e. the lack of online booking, interactive maps, mobile applications and other electronic services, limits the integration of Yakkabag district into the global tourism market.

At the same time, the lack of qualified personnel required for the tourism sector, the low level of service culture and the low level of economic interest of the population in this area negatively affect the pace of infrastructural development. In particular, the need to encourage the participation of small businesses and local residents in the tourism ecosystem, to provide them with benefits and training programs is becoming urgent.

Based on the above, the following concluding proposals can be put forward:

Improvement of transport and road infrastructure: It is necessary to overhaul the roads leading to the main tourist facilities in the district, install indicators, direction signs, and establish tourist transport services within the district.

Expansion of accommodation and service infrastructure: State grants and subsidy programs should be introduced for the establishment of family hotels, rural tourism-based accommodation, ecological camps, and local catering establishments.

Introduction of information technologies: A single web platform for Yakkabog tourism, a mobile application, QR-code maps and audio guide systems for tourists should be developed and implemented.

Development of a marketing and branding strategy: A visual identity, brand slogan, logo, content marketing (photo, video, blogs) strategy specific to Yakkabog district should be developed and actively promoted on social networks.

Increasing human resources capacity: Short-term training courses and seminars should be organized for guides, hotel employees, and service providers; attention should be paid to foreign language skills and service culture.

Localization of international experiences: Concepts such as community-based tourism and green tourism should be implemented in the Yakkabog region as an experiment, and joint projects with donors should be involved.

Improvement of the investment climate: Incentives, land plots, tax breaks, and administrative conveniences should be offered to entities investing in tourism infrastructure; investors should be provided with clear, transparent information in this regard.

Ensuring environmental sustainability: To ensure that tourism infrastructure projects do not harm the environment, it is necessary to conduct an environmental examination, create a waste management, water and air pollution control system.

Creating an infrastructure map based on GIS: A geoinformation system should be introduced to assist management by digitally mapping all tourism resources, infrastructure facilities and potential zones of the district.

If the above proposals are implemented, it is possible to form a sustainable, socially inclusive and economically efficient tourism infrastructure in Yakkabag district. This, in turn, will serve to diversify the district's economy, increase employment, preserve cultural heritage and ensure ecological balance.

Fully utilizing the tourism potential of Yakkabag district is an important means of not only increasing regional income, but also strengthening the international image of the entire region, expanding the flow of foreign tourists and improving the country's tourism potential at a global level.

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