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## INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNO-TOURISM IN ULYTAU

### Abstract

Kazakhstan is a multinational country where the cultural customs and traditions of its people are successfully coexisting. Having rich cultural, historical, and natural resources, Kazakhstan faces the task of developing a modern tourism industry capable of attracting domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism is one of the most profitable sectors of the world economy and generates the creation of new highly profitable jobs. The article focuses on the development of ethno-tourism, as this type of tourism allows tourists to get acquainted with their own culture and the national color of other peoples, strengthen tolerant and interethnic relations. Since the tourist product consists of tangible and intangible components, there is not enough scientific information on the study of the development of innovations in this area, including theoretical gap in the field of innovative development of ethno-tourism. This study is aimed to research innovative development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau region. In this article, were used some research methods as comparisons and SWOT analysis, statistical analysis and etc. Ulytau is a newly formed region of Kazakhstan, the innovative development of which is relevant. Possessing a rich variety of cultural, historical, and natural resources, Ulytau has a big chance to become a popular tourist destination for both domestic and foreign ethno-tourists. Analyzing the development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau, it was observed that there is no well-prepared ethno-tourist product for travelers, furthermore, considered the ways of innovative development of ethno-tourism in the region.

**Key words:** tourism industry, ethnotourism, innovation, cultural heritage, sustainable structure.

### Introduction

Nowadays development of ethno-tourism is very relevant study because it affects the increase in domestic and international tourist flows around the world, and in Kazakhstan.

Ethno-tourism is a great way to be familiar with the history, cultural heritage of tourists' and other nations, to learn about the origin of their ancestors and trace their roots [1]. Currently development of ethno-tourism requires some innovation activity because it allows tourists to find distant relatives in foreign countries. In addition, many people go to their hometowns for the purpose of traveling or exploring the land where their ancestors lived.

Modern tourists are tired of beach, sightseeing, shopping tours, especially after COVID-19 pandemic the demand to domestic tours with national coloring is becoming more popular [2]. It is noticeable between urban residents, who want to avoid hustle and bustle of big city and to spend their holidays in exotic and extreme ways in natural areas, gathering valuable information about different cultures.

Ethno-tourism is based on tourists' interest in the real life of peoples, familiarization with folk traditions, customs, creativity, and culture through direct immersion in the environment, change their scenery. Every tourist has the opportunity to see traditional residential houses, buildings, and clothes, taste national dishes, participate in traditional holidays or festivals, events, master classes.

The desire to know the traditions, culture, and way of life of ancient people determines the relevance of ethno-tourism in Kazakhstan and in the world.

There are more than 100 tourist sites in Kazakhstan, called "tourist magnets" or "tourist growth points". 10 republican destinations and 50 regional destinations were selected, which were included in the tourist map of Kazakhstan.

Ethno-tourism gives tourists access to the history and culture of the country. At the tourism forum held in Ulytau in 2019, tourism experts from different countries analyzed the historical and cultural heritage of Kazakhstan, and The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev emphasized the special importance of the Ulytau region and considered the possibilities for ethno-tourism development in Ulytau.

On June 8, 2022, a new region – Ulytau was formed. It located in the central part of Kazakhstan, before that, it was part of Karaganda region.

On June 16, 2022, the first meeting of the National Kurultay was held in Ulytau region, which is designed to become a link between the government and the people. The National Kurultay is aimed at forming a unified institutional model of public dialogue, which enables citizens to participate in the work of the state. The choice of holding the National Kurultay in Ulytau is due to the fact that this region is considered as the future direction of ethno-tourism development, since there are more than 736 registered historical and cultural monuments. It is noticeable that, 12 of them are of republican significance and more than 10 thousand are not registered by the state.

For Kazakhstan, ethno-tourism is a very promising direction of development, because ethno tours are popular among researchers, folklorists, and ordinary residents of our country.

In addition, tourists who are hungry for something new and unique can visit various places and tourist destinations of Kazakhstan in one trip, which is an important favorable factor in choosing a tour.

## **Materials and methods**

During the study, the authors considered the potential contribution of all methodological approaches that promote research and practice of ethno-tourism development. In particular, the methods used in scientific knowledge were used: general scientific and special, abstract analysis, SWOT analysis, theoretical analysis and synthesis, external direct observation method, induction, deduction, statistical analysis and etc.

The information and analytical basis of the study was the work of foreign scientists in peer-reviewed journals, published statistical and other information in Internet resources.

The study uses secondary data from two official sources: the website of Bureau of National statistics of Agency for Strategic planning and reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the website of Akimat of Karaganda region [3, 4]. This research sets out to analyze the innovative development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau region to understand the specific issues that confronted this region to achieve this goal. While great opportunity and potential to develop ethno-tourism, the culmination of these investigations present a thorough portrait of the mounting difficulties that faced Ulytau region.

A lot of work is being done to improve the range of tourist services in the Republic of Kazakhstan, but the pace of development of cultural and ethno-tourism in Kazakhstan is one of the most priority areas in this sphere. An extraordinarily rich ethnic culture and long-standing traditions have been preserved and actively used in everyday life in Kazakhstan.

It can be very interesting for tourists to see the peculiarities of the traditions and culture of Kazakh people, because national culture has a great value for domestic and foreign tourists. Foreigners are interested in the national heritage of the Kazakh people. The arrival of foreigners in Kazakhstan can give a powerful impetus to the development of the economy.

Although innovation has a significant importance in the tourism industry, the innovative development of some tourism types, including ethno-tourism, has not yet been sufficiently studied, but innovative research is used by the tourism economy and industry.

### **Main provisions**

An important direction in the development of Karaganda region's economy is the development of tourism.

According to the Map of tourism in the Karaganda region, 3 points of tourism growth have been identified – Ulytau, Karkaraly and the Balkhash resort area.

Sacred Ulytau (included in the TOP-50 tourist maps) is becoming increasingly popular among tourists and pilgrims. The historical uniqueness of Ulytau is well known. It is characterized by historical, cultural, pilgrimage and ecological tourism.

So, for the development of modern tourism infrastructure and a comfortable stay of tourists, the Ulytau Visitor Center was built.

As stated in construction plan, here visitors can get a full range of services, including information about the sights of the region, organization of excursions along the main tourist routes and stay in a comfortable hotel (10 rooms). But, unfortunately nowadays because of some bureaucratic problems and not compiled documentation, since it is part of the reserve museum, the activities of which do not provide for commercial activities, this complex does not provide any accommodation services for tourists. And these numbers are using as residential houses for museum workers.

There are also some tourist routes that lead to the sacred places of the region, such as Zhoshy Khan, Alasha Khan, Dombauyl, Khan Ordasy, Auliye-tau, etc.

The main place of attraction is the historical and cultural complex “Zhoshy Khan”. In 2020, the complex was built, but due to the pandemic, its opening was postponed to 2021.

It was opened on October 20, 2021, near the mausoleum of Zhoshy Khan. Its first visitor was the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev, who repeatedly emphasized that one of the important tasks of the region is to develop the ethno-tourism potential of this historical place.

The complex provides accommodation, catering, tourist, information services for visitors. Also, it provides digital services for tourists by information kiosks and navigation bars.

Until February 2022, the complex worked free of charge, now the tour costs 1,000 tenge (2\$) for adults and 500 tenge (1\$) for children.

The uniqueness of the complex lies in the fact that guests can have a good rest: there are 14 hotel rooms, a teahouse, namazkhana. Guests are traditionally met in the exhibition hall with an exposition of historical artifacts found by archaeologists on the territory of Ulytau. Each exhibition gives information about the origin of the exhibits in 3D format in three languages – Kazakh, Russian and English.

The modern historical and cultural center is equipped with the latest computer equipment for the convenience of visitors. In the center of the exposition there are touchscreens, to control them, no guide is needed, even a child can display a picture, information, video in three languages. There is the most versatile information on the history of Ulytau, videos in Kazakh with subtitles in English and Russian. There is also a mini-cinema in 3D format.

There are some yurts and tents around the historical complex, which forms ethnic village, with cultural events, national sport games and cuisine. Tourists can rent a yurt for recreation, prepare food for a picnic on his own. There are wonderful entertainments for children – horseback riding, archery, and other national games. In addition, tourists can try traditional treats – koumiss, dishes of national cuisine.

In consonance with the information from complex administration, more than 10 000 tourists visited complex since its opening, mostly domestic tourists with children, religious tourists from Mongolia, Russia, European countries.

Because of the low-quality roads, it is difficult to tourists get to the complex in winter and early spring period.

Despite on this, the historical and cultural complex of Zhoshy Khan is becoming a scientific center for studying the era of the Golden Horde. Scientific conferences and symposiums with the participation of domestic and foreign scientists will be held here. It is also expected that on-site history lessons for schoolchildren will be arranged on the basis of the complex. It is noticeable, that complex is developing in innovative way.

## Literature review

### 1 The concept of ethno-tourism.

Currently, many countries focus on the development of ethno-tourism through the use of cultural resources, that is, the potential of these destinations, in order to stimulate the development of local communities, including economic development [5]. In addition, ethno-tourism is considered as a special force not only to create conditions for the popularization of culture, traditions, languages, but also to strengthen the special characteristics and connections of different ethnic groups and communities [6].

The term “ethno-tourism” was firstly used by V. Smith (1977), she defined ethno-tourism as the major type of tourist activity, in most cases associated with the actions of residents in a certain market that characterizes exotic and other customs of peoples [7].

Currently, ethno-tourism is based on travelers’ search for exotic cultural experiences, such as visiting ethnic villages, houses of ethnic minorities and ethnic parks, participating in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances and ceremonies, or purchasing national handmade products and souvenirs [8]. In addition, ethno-tourism has particular importance as a strategy for the development of the region not only from the social, but also from the economic side [9].

Today, many parks working on ethnic themes, as well as villages dedicated to the oral creativity of different peoples are the most common attractive and visual places of ethno-tourism in the world [10]. Ethnic parks are commercial facilities that offer visiting tourists the ethnic diversity of a country or region [11].

Since the main purpose of ethnic parks is not to provide recreation for tourists, they are different from other entertainment centers. The main purpose of ethnic parks is to glorify the ethnic, cultural diversity and heritage of a nation or region, to display, preserve or restore some of their aspects [12].

Tourists make a significant contribution to the local economy by coming to the country and to a certain place for ethnic purposes, buying local goods, national souvenirs, consuming tourist services [13]. However, they do not take a direct part in the process of preserving the culture of the ethnic group [14]. Income from ethno-tourism depends on the number of tourists.

As specified by Weiermair (2006) tourism product appears as tourist’s impression and his travel experience [15]. Furthermore, the simultaneous production and consumption of tourist product can cause a number of difficulties in the innovation process.

Mass tourists use local cultural resources and can also cause landscape changes and environmental pollution [16].

Regarding this, ethno-tourism requires careful planning in order to provide services to visiting tourists at a prominent level and not have a negative impact on tourist sites of cultural, natural, and historical value. In addition, it is particularly important to monitor social and cultural changes in communities, to create a plan for the preservation of culture. And in this case innovative development of ethno-tourism can be the wonderful way in promotion of regional tourism.

Most authors considered the basis of ethno-tourists’ interest in the real life of peoples. Modern society considers the study of the lifestyle of various ethnic groups living in the present and in the distant past, the study of their culture and lifestyle, history of their ancestors, the recognition of their traditions and customs.

Ethno-tourism is the main direction of cultural and cognitive tourism, which allows combining education and recreation. Only by getting acquainted with another culture, tourist can learn the history of a certain state and imagine himself as an indigenous resident living in a certain territory. One of the promising directions of ethno-tourism is visiting ethnic or folklore villages, where the way of life, foundations and culture of the ethnic group are represented. Thus, today’s highly globalized countries

can acquaint tourists not only with the history of the country, but also with the way of life of ethnic groups living on its territory.

## 2 Innovative development of ethno-tourism.

Currently, innovation is a crucial factor in the development of many industries. The study of innovation in the service sector has not yet received wide development, since the first studies appeared only in the late 1990s, and it is difficult to find a reliable theoretical basis for studying innovation in this area [17]. Currently, tourism is one of the most promising destinations in the world, and there is an urgent need for a deeper study of innovations in this area.

The economic concept of innovation was introduced by Schumpeter in 1934 and describes them as new products, new processes, new markets, and new sources of raw materials, that is, a new formation of production organization, and links innovation with economic growth [18].

Innovation is the engine of economic growth and prosperity in a number of countries. In addition, innovation is a major source of competitive advantage and service productivity improvement for an enterprise.

European Commission (2004) considered the use of innovation to update and expand the range of products and services and related markets; is described as the process of introducing new methods of production, delivery, and distribution, making changes in management, work organization and personnel qualifications [19].

Since productivity in the tourism industry depends on the quality and efficiency of production, enterprises focused on product quality and diversification will be more competitive. In addition, a change in quality may contribute to a more favorable pricing strategy. Therefore, innovation in the tourism industry is especially important to reduce the cost of production, improve marketing and increase the value of the product.

In this regard, we can consider the development of the term innovation (Table 1).

Table 1 – Timeline of developing a definition of innovation

Authors	Definition	Key words
Schumpeter (1934)	the theory of production, economic category, quantitative change in the product, changes in the totality of influencing factors	production, quantitative change
Cowan and van de Paal (2000)	create, adapt, or introduce new products, processes, or improved services	new products, processes, services
Lundvall (2005)	providing high-quality new ideas and new knowledge	high-quality, new ideas
Divisekera (2018)	implementation of a new idea or a new application of an existing idea leading to a new type of product or new and efficient process for the production of an existing product	new type of product, efficient process
Bowie (2018)	implementation of latest ideas that create value	latest ideas, value
Wikhamn (2019)	creativity related to creating the value and economic growth	creativity, economic growth
Shin J., Kim Y. J., Jung S., & Kim C. (2022)	the process which efficiency is measured by the ratio of performance to inputs	performance, input
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the sources [18–25].		

Innovation is an important catalyst for the survival and growth of tourism, and thanks to it, financial and economic performance can be improved (Wikhamn, 2019) [24].



The tourism industry is one of the most innovative industries in the world because new business can be started in this industry thanks to modern technologies and social advances. Tourism innovation is a fluid and dynamic concept.

Key elements of innovation include a new way of thinking that includes creativity and problem solving (Bertella, 2019) [26]. Innovation in the travel industry requires the use of the imagination to see new opportunities.

Innovation in the tourism industry develops in a universal environment involving various stakeholders, organizations, and systems. Innovation is a source of increasing the competitiveness of tourism firms through social and technological advances (Martínez-Perez et al., 2019) [27].

Diversified innovations are aimed at attracting new tourist destinations and tourists, creating tourism infrastructure, and directly developing tourism. It can be used in destinations where ethno-tourism is not developed but has the potential for development.

Tourism innovation can be defined based on five categories (Table 2).

Table 2 – Categories of innovations in tourism

Categories of innovation in tourism	Description
Product or service innovation	Changes perceived as a new product or service for the tourist
Process innovations	The use of new or significantly improved production or delivery methods aimed at improving efficiency, productivity, and tourist flow
Management or organizational innovations	New or significantly improved methods of organizing internal communication related to the business practices of the enterprise, the organization of the workplace of personnel or external relations
Marketing innovations	New or improved marketing methods such as co-branding
Institutional innovations	A new or joint/organizational structure and legal framework that changes or expands the direction of the tourism business.
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the source [28].	

Drivers of innovation in the tourism industry include entrepreneurial characteristics, networking, technological development, and the environment (Figure 1).

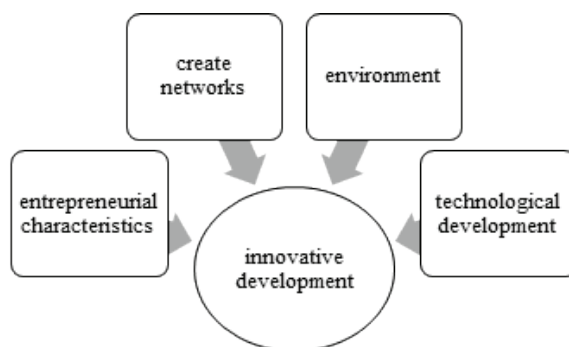


Figure 1 – The main factors of tourism industry's innovative development

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the source [29].

Entrepreneurial characteristics include identifying market opportunities, introducing a new product or service, a new policy or innovative approach to solving a problem, and solving a problem of adapting to the market.

Building networks. The network provides access to resources, information, advice, support, encouragement, and new opportunities for tourism entrepreneurship. It is important to establish cooperation with stakeholders, suppliers, customers, competitors in the tourism sector.

Environmental factors also influence innovative development. These include external factors (environment, taxes, receipt of innovation subsidies from the state, contacts with universities or research institutes, etc.) and internal factors (staff in the enterprise, share of employees, etc.).

## Results and discussion

According to the Border Service of the NSC of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in January-April 2022, the number of inbound tourism visitors decreased by 61.3% compared to the corresponding period last year [3]. Therefore, a selective survey of visitors was conducted with a smaller number of respondents compared to previous accounting periods.

By gender, 39% of women and 61% of men from the total number of non-residents took part in the study. At the same time, the main group of visitors was from 35 to 44 years old – 36.1%, from 45 to 54 years old – 21.8%, from 25 to 34 years old – 20.2%. The majority of visitors came for personal purposes – 73.6%, while the remaining 26.4% came for business and professional purposes.

The largest number of visitors came from Russia – 44%, Uzbekistan – 23.7%, Kyrgyzstan – 9.5%, Turkey – 9.4% and Azerbaijan – 2.4%. According to the results of the study, 51.5% of visitors stayed at the homes of relatives or friends, while 24.5% of them – in hotels and 19.7% – in rented apartments. The average length of stay for visitors was 5 nights.

The total expenses of arrived visitors, depending on the purpose of the trip, were follows for personal purposes – 68.6%, for business and professional purposes – 31.4%. The main items of visitors' expenses are transport costs for international transportation – 58.6% and transport costs for food – 10.5%, purchase of goods – 13%. An insignificant part of the expenses falls on accommodation – 10.7%, on medical and rehabilitation procedures – 1.6%.

According to statistical data of Official site of Agency for Strategic planning and reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bureau of National statistics, the distribution of incoming visitors by type of activity is given in next figure (Figure 2).

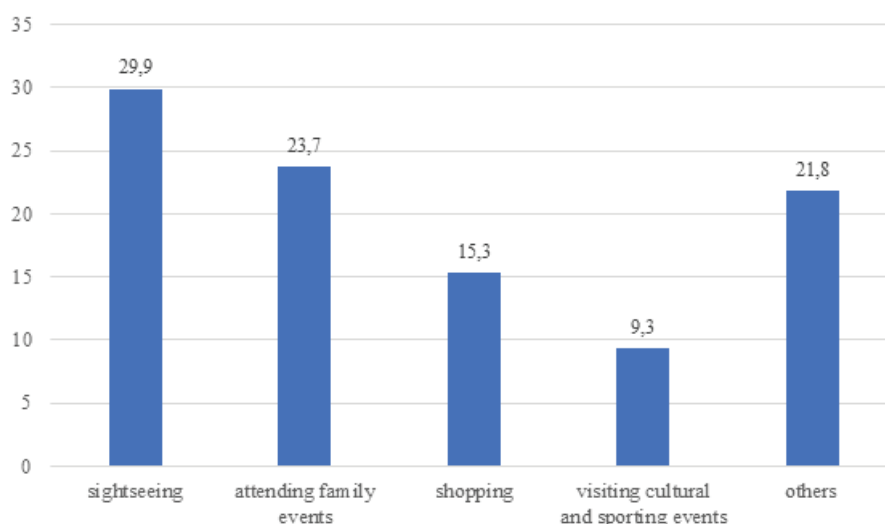


Figure 2 – Distribution of incoming visitors by type of activity, %

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the source [3].

Based on the previous data, it can be seen that the purpose of travel as ethno-tourism is not singled out separately in the statistics of Kazakhstan, but it is obvious that some tourists visiting cultural and family events, sightseeing travelled for this purpose.

According to analyze data it can be seen that ethno-tourism is extremely popular among both domestic and international tourists. Considering the development of tourism in Kazakhstan, it is necessary to analyze the number of accommodation in Kazakhstan in 2021 (Figure 3, p. 151).

According to information from figure above, the number of accommodation in Kazakhstan in 2021 amounted to 3 686 (2 096- city, 1590- villages). According to the data the leaders of the total number of accommodation were following: East Kazakhstan – 587(153-city, 434-villages), Almaty city- 350 and in Almaty region – 567 (160-city, 407- village), Akmola region – 341 (157- city, 184-village), Karaganda – 247 (181-city, 66-village). The lowest number of accommodation was in West Kazakhstan -76 (56-city, 20-village) and Mangystau region-97 (69-city, 28-village).

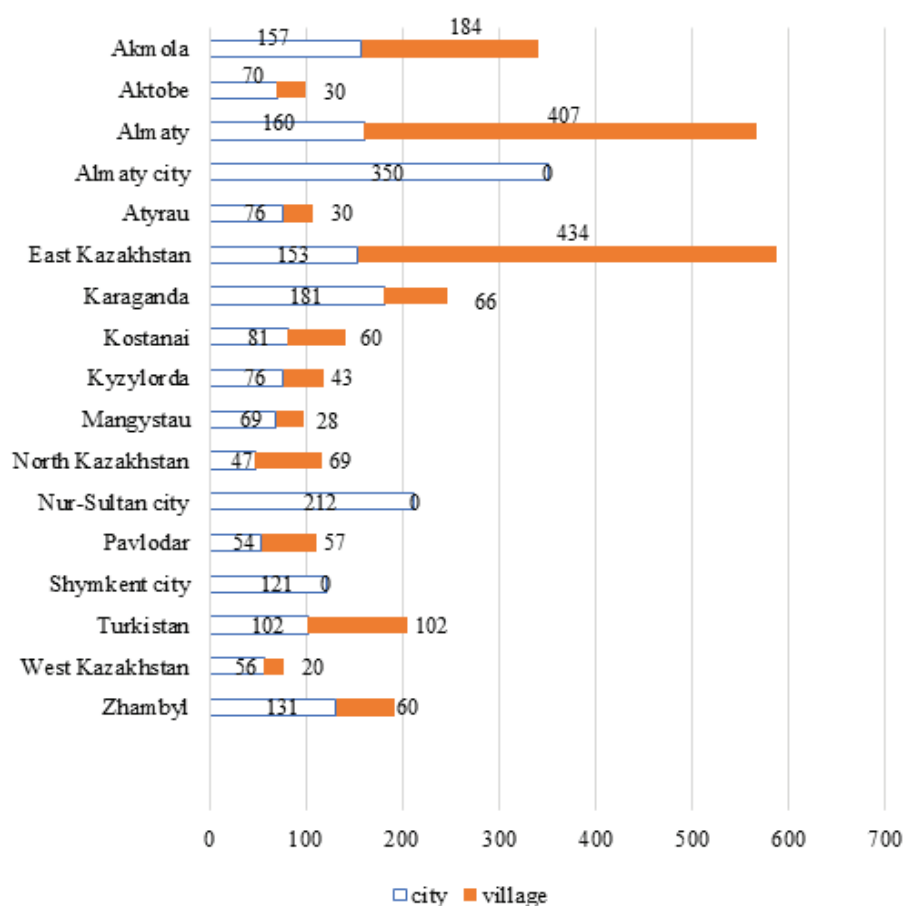


Figure 3 – The number of accommodation in Kazakhstan in 2021

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the source [3].

In Akmola region the number of accommodation units in village was more than in the cities to 27 units, 17% (184 and 157 respectively), Almaty region 154%. Because, till June 2022 Ulytau region was a part of Karaganda region, it is vital to analyze statistical data of Karaganda region for detailed consideration of ethno-tourism development in analyzed region.

According to the administration of the Karaganda region, the main tourist flow falls on the domestic markets of the Karaganda region, the cities of Nur-Sultan and Almaty, as well as other border regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the share of which is 70-80%, the entry markets are represented by the Russian Federation, mainly Omsk, Orenburg, Tyumen regions [4].

Within the framework of the “National Project for the Development of Entrepreneurship for 2021-2025” in the 3rd direction “Formation of new niches” – the Ministry of Culture and Sports established 8 targets, which are decomposed for the project management of the Karaganda region [4].

Indicator 1. Increase in the number of domestic tourists – at the end of 2021, this indicator was achieved.

The fact of 2021 amounted to 317.2 thousand people or 111.3% of the plan (Plan – 285.0 thousand people);

The growth of the actual indicator by 2020 amounted to 19.8% (264.7 thousand people)

For 2022, a growth rate of 3.2% or 323.0 thousand people is planned.

Indicator 2. The number of inbound tourists in 2021 amounted to 9,432 people or 141.2% by 2020.

For 2022, in connection with the lifting of quarantine restrictions, it is planned to increase the number of inbound tourists by 2.5 times and is expected to reach 23.81 thousand people.

Indicator 3. Increase in the number of rooms.



According to this indicator, the performance was 96.8% or 11,760 beds, with a plan of 12,150 beds.

The decrease in the indicator was influenced by the fact that during the pandemic, some hotels repurposed their facilities.

For example, in the city of Karaganda, the Merey hotel (40 beds) refocused its activities on the Tulpar cardio-rehabilitation center, the Zere hotel (20 beds) on a business center.

Also in Temirtau, the hotel “Asega” (128 beds), with a change in the purpose of the object to a hostel.

In 2022, it is planned to increase beds to 12340 units. and this year it is planned to put into operation 8 accommodation facilities with more than 250 rooms for 610 beds.

The statistical data from Bureau of National statistics gives information about underdevelopment of tourism infrastructure in Ulytau. For example, in 2021 the number of accommodation in Ulytau was only 5 [3].

Indicator 4. At the end of 2021, the volume of investment in the tourism industry amounted to 27.0 billion tenge, or 117.4% of the plan (23.0 billion tenge).

For 4 months of this year the volume of investment in the industry amounted to 7.9 billion tenge, or 2.1 times more than the same period in 2021 (3.8 billion tenge).

In total, this year it is planned to attract 27.8 billion tenge of investment to the industry.

Indicator 5. At the end of 2021, the number of accommodation using the eQonaq information system amounted to 64 units or 25.9% of the total, with a coverage plan of 17% (247 placements) with this system. It is noticeable that, there is no accommodation using eQonaq system in Ulytau.

Indicator 6. This is an increase in the digitalization of the activities of tour guides.

To date, 1 entrepreneur has been registered in the state electronic register of tour guides and tourism instructors. Work is also underway to digitalize 2 guides registered in the city of Karaganda. To date, the execution has amounted to 33.3% against the plan of 10%, but there is not any registered tour guide or tourism instructor in Ulytau.

Indicator 7. “Increasing the coverage of tourism market entities in the digital Marketplace module for the implementation of travel services”.

In consonance with the results of 2021, tourism products of 6 tour operators or 40.0% of the total number (15 tour operators) were placed in digital modules with a coverage plan of 30%.

Indicator 8. “Increase in exports of services classified as “Trips”.

In accordance with this indicator, the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan is calculating the indicator, which is supposed to be formed at the level of the republic.

Considering all the indicators, the plan for creating jobs in the industry is 801 people and the data will be entered into the integration map for creating jobs of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

At the end of 2021, 1,408 jobs or 108.3% were created in the tourism sector, whereas the number of employees in accommodation in Ulytau was only 14 (6-male, 8- female).

At the end of 2021, the costs of product and process innovations increased by 1.1% compared to the previous year and amounted to 785705.0 million tenge (in 2020 – 777173.5 million tenge). At the same time, the costs of product and process innovations from the enterprises’ own funds amounted to 608891.7 million tenge, which is 77.5% of the total costs of product and process innovations, and the share of innovative products, goods, services in relation to GDP in Kazakhstan was 1.71%.

During the analyzed period, the costs of marketing innovations amounted to 3303.3 million tenge, while spending on organizational innovation was 11 081.2 million tenge in whole country. Considering Karaganda region, it is obvious that the most spending was on process innovation 70 937.6 million tenge, while the tiny minority of expenses were on marketing (459.0 million tenge) and organizational innovations (1 344.6 million tenge) (Figure 4, p. 154).

In considered period the innovative activity of enterprises in product, process, organizational and marketing innovations amounted to 10.5%, including 6.4% in product and process innovations in Kazakhstan. The highest activity in the field of innovations for all types of innovations was observed among large enterprises and amounted to 38.9% (out of 1821 reported large enterprises, 709 conducted innovative activities). These indicators show that enterprises of Kazakhstan are included in

the innovation activity, mostly use product and process innovations. Because of this Ulytau region has a wonderful opportunity to innovative and sustainable development of ethno-tourism.

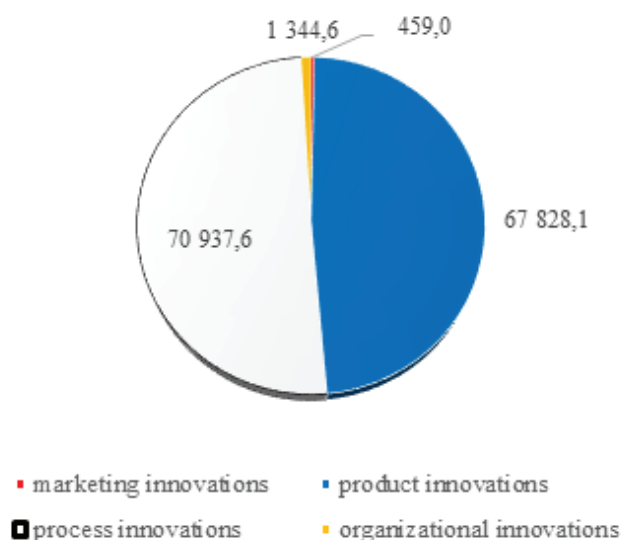


Figure 4 – Innovation spending in Karaganda region in 2021 (million tenge)

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the source [3].

Ulytau region, located in the heart of the boundless Kazakh steppe, is a land with a rich history, past and present. Thousands of historical and cultural monuments testify that culture has developed, and political life has flourished in this region since ancient times.

It is known that Ulytau district has a great tourist potential for tourism development.

One of the most popular tourist attractions in the region is the mausoleum of Genghis Khan's eldest son Zhoshy Khan. The mausoleum of Alasha Khan and Dombauyl, the peak of Aulietau, Khan Ordasy, Terekti Auliye, Baskamyr, Ayakkamyr are also popular among tourists.

Annual cultural events, such as Zhezkiyik, Kokmaysa, Tau Samaly do not only increase the number of tourists, but also play a huge role in popularizing the national culture and art of the Kazakh people.

For example, on 18 June 2022 a special sport event was held in Ulytau, dedicated to the creation of new region, which attracts local citizens, domestic and foreign tourists.

A SWOT analysis of development of ethno-tourism was conducted in Ulytau (Table 3, p. 155).

First of all, if we focus on the strengths of the district, then we can note the attractive geographical location of the region. That is, Ulytau is located in the navel of Kazakhstan, right in the middle. This means effective access to domestic tourism from any territory of Kazakhstan. In addition, the region is one of the regions rich in natural and historical heritage. Currently, it attracts the attention of tourists. Nature is beautiful and clean. Agriculture also shows a high indicator.

Of the weak points, first of all, the tourist infrastructure is not developed, including the poor condition of the roads leading to attractive sites. Every traveler should get to their destination without any problems. Secondly, as mentioned above, there are not enough special routes for tourists. Thirdly, despite the substantial number of historical attractions, the quality of tourist service is low, there are not enough personnel. Fourth, there are not enough public places in the area, that is, places to eat and sleep. In addition, there is low population and the lack of navigation, advertising services, and a lot of tourists do not know about analyzed region. The territory of Ulytau district is 122.9 thousand sq. km. and the population is 12,5 thousand people (2021) [4].

Table 3 – SWOT analysis of development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attractive geographical position</li> <li>- rich historical and cultural heritage;</li> <li>- high indicator of agriculture;</li> <li>- clean and untouched protected area;</li> <li>- tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including objects of international importance;</li> <li>- special attention from the government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- insufficient development of engineering and transport infrastructure in places of tourism;</li> <li>- difficulties with access to tourist sites;</li> <li>- low level of service in tourist recreation areas;</li> <li>- lack of qualified personnel in the field of tourism;</li> <li>- low level of awareness about the tourism potential of Ulytau in the domestic and international markets;</li> <li>- unaffordable prices for accommodation and air transportation;</li> <li>- the lack of living conditions and food;</li> <li>- the lack of navigation;</li> <li>- there is no integration between tourist service providers in Ulytau;</li> <li>- lack of cellular communication in remote villages;</li> <li>- low population (12,5 thousand people in 2021);</li> <li>- insufficient number of tour routes for tourists;</li> <li>- lack of advertising and marketing promotion;</li> <li>- there is no DMO in tourism in region, tourism is regulated by the department of entrepreneurship of the local executive body;</li> <li>- statistic data about tourists is not provided;</li> <li>- unorganized type of tourism prevails</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- development of unique local tourist products;</li> <li>- innovative development of ethno-tourism;</li> <li>- the use of modern technologies in the field of communication and product distribution;</li> <li>- entering the international tourism arena;</li> <li>- increase in the population and its standard of living;</li> <li>- ensuring employment of the population;</li> <li>- an increase in the flow of tourists and budget revenues;</li> <li>- increasing the investment potential of the region, attracting foreign investors;</li> <li>- attracting the descendants of Genghis Khan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low-quality release of current works;</li> <li>- poor material and technical equipment;</li> <li>- services provided and services</li> <li>- mismatch of service price levels</li> <li>- similar tourist products of neighboring countries (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia);</li> <li>- slow development of transport:</li> <li>- global and regional crises;</li> <li>- over tourism in perspective</li> </ul>
Note: Compiled by the authors.	

In terms of tourism development, a big disadvantage for Kazakhstan is the lack of information about Kazakhstan in foreign languages. There are few high-quality, travel-inspiring projects on the Internet that provide comprehensive, up-to-date, and useful information about Kazakhstan. And it is noticeable that Ulytau region has the same situation in domestic and international tourism market. Another point worth mentioning is that Kazakhstan is represented at international exhibitions by three different organizations – Astana Convention Bureau, Visit Almaty, and Kazakh Tourism. In many cases, the marketing messages of these organizations are often contradictory, and the stands are located in different corners of the exhibition space.

There are some threats of ethno-tourism development in Ulytau. First of all, there may be a risk of a poor-quality result of the work performed. For example, a lot of work has been done so far, but it has not yielded results intensively. Secondly, the material and technical equipment may be poor. Thirdly, the risk of inconsistency between the service and its level.

Nowadays Ulytau region does not have well prepared ethno-tourist product for consumers. Because of this a lot of tourists travel to Ulytau with religious, cognitive, cultural, ethno, rural, ecological, and other purposes as amateurs. As far as they travel on their own and without a tour guide or travel agencies, there is no official statistical data about the real number of tourists travelling to Ulytau.

It is possible to consider sustainable livelihoods framework for ethno-tourism development in Ulytau. It consisted of vulnerability context, livelihood assets, structures, processes, livelihood strategies and outcome (Figure 5, p. 156).

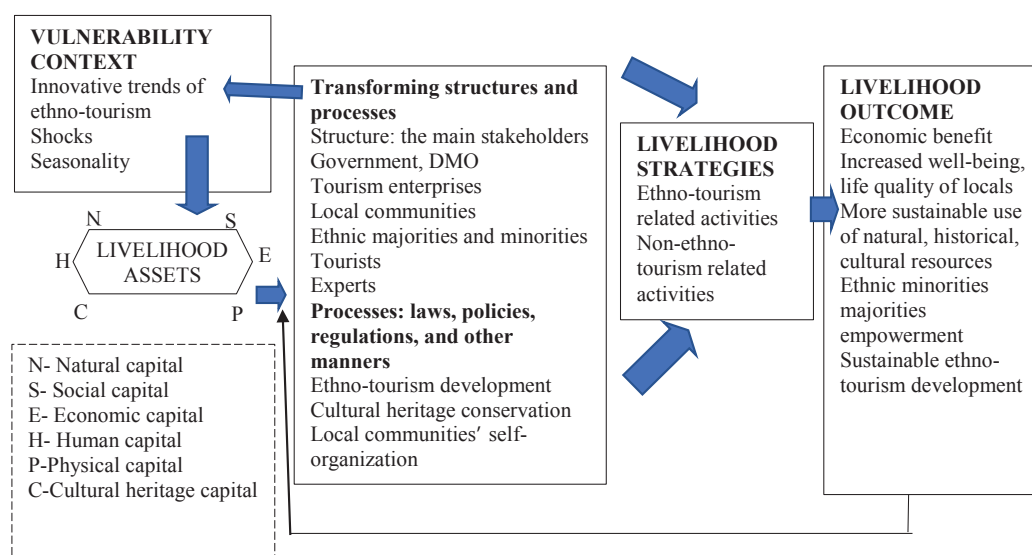


Figure 5 – Sustainable livelihoods framework for ethno-tourism

Note: Adopted from the source [30].

In the ethno-tourism context, structures are stakeholders such as DMO, government and non-government organizations, tourism enterprises, local communities, tourists, and experts who join cultural, historical, and natural resources conservation and ethno-tourism development. This adapted structure also involves ethnic majorities and minorities self-organization and aimed to some outcomes, including economical, socio-cultural, ecological, and demographical.

The adoption of ethno-tourism as an especially important and serious type of tourism is gaining momentum in Kazakhstan only in recent years. Some years ago, there was an opinion that ethno-tourism has no interest and attraction of tourists. However, the growing demand and great attention to ethno-tourism in neighboring countries, such as Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, have given a new impetus to ethno-tourism in Kazakhstan. Since the role of the importance and necessity of the general tourism industry in the tourist market of Kazakhstan has increased, critical opinions among the population that ethno-tourism is not a way to attract tourists disappeared. Interest in ethno-tourism is not only among domestic tourists, but also among foreign tourists. Despite the sufficiency of ethno-cultural and historical resources of Kazakhstan, it is obvious that there are a number of problems.

Factors hindering the development of ethno-tourism:

- ♦ low degree of development of tourist infrastructure, low quality of main and country roads, accommodation, catering services;

- ♦ lack of an effective strategy for the development of ethno-tourism;

- ♦ the objects of ethno-tourism are presented individually, and not as a specific product;

- ♦ outdated material and technical base;

lack of navigation in tourist areas.

To develop business in the field of tourism, the Government approved measures to stimulate tourism activities since 2021. As part of state support, the Department provides for measures to reimburse part of the costs:

- ♦ to subsidize part of the costs of business entities for the maintenance of sanitary facilities.

Measures are also provided to reimburse part of the costs of:

- ♦ construction, reconstruction of objects of tourist activity 10% of the invested funds;

- ♦ construction of roadside service facilities also 10% of the invested funds.

Roadside service facilities – buildings and structures (motels, hotels, campsites, service stations, gas stations, food, trade, communications, medical care, outdoor (visual) advertising and other service facilities) located on the roadside and intended for service for road users along the way

- ♦ purchase of automobile vehicles with a capacity of more than eight seats (for tour operators, travel agents and guides), 25% of the cost of the vehicle.

To date, in order to apply measures to support tourism activities, work is underway with the regions to form a pool of potential projects.

In addition, the Ministry of Culture and Sports and JSC NC “Kazakh Tourism” will provide state support in the field of tourism for:

- ♦ Subsidizing tour operators 15 thousand tenge for each foreign tourist.
- ♦ 100% subsidy for children’s air ticket (Kids Go Free).

The issue of quality service cannot be effectively solved not only in the training of employees of the hotel and tourism business, but also in the training of specialists in the field of tourist services. The innovative development of ethno-tourism considers the involvement of local communities. Since it is unknown how many historical, cultural, natural heritage or tourist sites there are in the republic, travel agencies and individual tourists are not informed about the resources. With a shortage of qualified personnel for the tourism industry, graduates of specialized universities often remain in demand due to a lack of skills and knowledge in specific specialties.

In addition, Kazakhstan lacks popularity to increase the flow of foreign tourists. However, considering that Kazakhstan is a young country, it can be understood that the pace of development is much higher. However, in order to increase the flow of tourists, Kazakhstan should take a position showing that it is a favorable country for tourism in international tourism markets.

The development of ethno-tourism gives the region a possibility to increase the flow of tourists and become a source of income for the state budget. At the same time, it contributes to the growth of population, emergence new working areas, preservation of cultural heritage, sustainable development and improving community welfare. The investment potential of the region will also enhance, and it will be possible to attract investments from abroad.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Ulytau has a great tourist potential for innovative ethno-tourism development. Historical monuments, cultural heritage and natural landscape are the main factors and make it possible to organize various ethno-tours around the region. In this regard, it is necessary to apply fundamental systemic and comprehensive measures to increase the attractiveness of domestic tourist destinations for tourists and investors.

However, until now, ethno-tourist trips to Ulytau have been made by amateurs. That is, due to the lack of travel packages and well-developed tour product for travelers, many tourists travel independently with a lot of purposes, including ethno-tourist purposes to Ulytau.

Based on the analysis of the state of the ethno-tourism industry in Ulytau, some strengths and weaknesses, development opportunities and threats to the industry were identified.

In addition, some analytical data of realizing effect of “National Project for the Development of Entrepreneurship for 2021–2025” by the Ministry of Culture and Sports was considered. Furthermore, sustainable livelihoods framework for ethno-tourism development in Ulytau and measures to stimulate tourism activities were analyzed.

In forecast, provided SWOT-analyze and determined factors, as strengths of the district, which can be seen from the attractive geographical location of the region, rich natural and historical heritage, furthermore the improvement of weak points, like the tourist infrastructure, low quality of service, lack of navigation, personnel and advertising services, avoiding some threats and using some opportunities, as the creation of unique local tourist products can help to develop ethno-tourism in Ulytau region in innovative ways.

The innovative development of ethno-tourism in Ulytau helps Kazakhstan to enter the international tourism arena, increase population well-being, raise the employment, and provide economic growth. In addition, it helps to preserve historical, natural, and cultural resources, and popularize national customs and traditions among local and foreign tourists.



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## ҰЛЫТАУДАҒЫ ЭТНОТУРИЗМДІ ИННОВАЦИЯЛЫҚ ДАМУЫ

### Аңдатпа

Қазақстан – өз халқының мәдени салттары мен дәстүрлерін дәріптеп сақтайтын көпұлтты мемлекет. Мәдени-тарихи және табиғи ресурстарға бай Қазақстанның алдында отандық және шетелдік туристерді тартатын туризм индустриясын дамыту міндеті тұр. Туризм әлемдік экономикада жоғары табысты жаңа жұмыс орындарын құрайтын ең тиімді салаларының бірі болып табылады. Мақалада туризмнің өзекті түрі – этнотуризмді дамытуға баса назар аударылады, себебі этнотуризм туристерге өз мәдениетімен және басқа халықтардың ұлттық ерекшеліктерімен танысуға, этносаралық қатынастарды нығайтуға мүмкіндік береді. Туристік өнім материалдық және материалдық емес компоненттерден тұратындықтан, қазіргі таңда этнотуризмнің инновациялық дамуы саласында ғылыми ақпарат жеткіліксіз және теориялық олқылықтар байқалады. Жұмыстың мақсаты Ұлытаудағы этнотуризмнің инновациялық дамуын зерттеуге бағытталған. Мақалада ғылыми зерттеудің әртүрлі әдістері қолданылды, соның ішінде салыстыру, SWOT-талдау, статистикалық талдау және т.б. Ұлытау – инновациялық дамуы өзекті болып табылатын Қазақстанның жаңадан құрылған облысы. Мәдени-тарихи және табиғи ресурстардың алуан түрлілігіне ие, Ұлытаудың отандық, сондай-ақ шетелдік этнотуристер үшін танымал туристік дестинацияға айналу мүмкіндігі бар. Ұлытаудағы этнотуризмнің дамуын талдай келе дайын этнотуристік өнімнің жоқтығы анықталды және өңірдегі этнотуризмді инновациялық дамыту жолдары қарастырылды.

**Тірек сөздер:** туризм индустриясы, этнотуризм, инновация, мәдени мұра, тұрақты құрылым.

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## ИННОВАЦИОННОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ЭТНОТУРИЗМА В УЛЫТАУ

### Аннотация

Казахстан – многонациональная страна, где успешно соблюдаются культурные обычаи и традиции ее народа. Перед Казахстаном, обладающим богатыми культурно-историческими и природными ресурсами, стоит задача по развитию современной индустрии туризма, способной привлекать отечественных и иностранных туристов. Туризм является одной из самых прибыльных отраслей мировой экономики и генерирует создание новых высокодоходных рабочих мест. В статье делается акцент на развитие актуального вида туризма – этнотуризма, так как этнотуры позволяют туристам познакомиться с культурой и национальным колоритом других народов, укрепить толерантные и межэтнические отношения. Поскольку туристский продукт состоит из материальных и нематериальных компонентов, в настоящее время недостаточно научной информации и имеется теоретический пробел в области инновационного развития этнотуризма. Основная цель работы направлена на исследование инновационного развития этнотуризма в Улытау. В статье были использованы различные методы научного исследования, в их числе сравнение, SWOT-анализ, статистический анализ и др. Улытау – новообразованная область Казахстана, инновационное развитие которой является актуальным. Обладая богатым разнообразием культурно-исторических и природных ресурсов, Улытау имеет большие шансы стать популярной туристской дестинацией как для отечественных, так и для зарубежных этнотуристов. При анализе развития этнотуризма в Улытау было отмечено отсутствие готового этнотуристского продукта, рассмотрены пути инновационного развития этнотуризма в регионе.

**Ключевые слова:** индустрия туризма, этнотуризм, инновации, культурное наследие, устойчивая структура.