

THE PROSPECTS OF RECREATIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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Abstract

Tourism and recreation can boost the country economy and considerably contribute to the climate for businesses. The effect of the recreational tourism sector can be beneficial for the economy in its impact on environment, economic growth and local culture. The sensitivity of tourism industry can be described as composition of four core components: nature's beauty, wild life, cultural attractions and ecology. Given article represents the initial research standpoint relating to the stabilization of the recreational tourism industry in the Kyrgyz Republic by implementing the basic mechanisms in most prioritized areas of tourism development.

Keywords: recreation, recreational tourism, tourism industry, prospects of tourism development, recreational resources.

Introduction

Recreation, sport and tourism are well-defined foundations of recreational tourism industry, which are at their best when interrelate with one another and strengthen each other's beneficial effects. This is how they can serve the needs of modern societies and potential travelers or tourists. They can be defined as parts of modern lifestyle, deriving from the somatic and psychological needs of people. In addition, they are closely related to the geographical (natural and human) environment.

The modern, universal definitions of recreation do not pose problems for us and offers new dimensions for interpretations.

Recreational tourism concept refers to the physical and intellectual rejuvenation of people as one of the main aims of international tourism. Due to financial wealth of people who paid holidays from work, the development of transport and production, increased buying power of consumers have made recreational tourism a mass phenomenon. Its driving force has determined as: to relieve civilizational stress – is active recreation, the creation of well-

being, the restoration of one's working capacity, the preservation and improvement of one's health. It included a variety of tourism activities from getting acquainted with faraway and exotic places or enjoying seaside holidays and participating in cultural programs and different forms of entertainment. Recreational tourism shares many characteristics with wellness and medical tourism as well as with health tourism.

Materials and Methods

Spending quality time during travel is important for sport tourists today. The main aims of recreational tourism include active participation in some kind of recreational activity, including the outdoor recreation as well. The recreation of tourists primarily means recreational activities done by travelers. They may use those recreational opportunities, which are offered by the natural or man-made environment of their destination to be selected.

In context of determination the prospects of recreational tourism development, first of all, it is necessary to recall the typical effects connecting with the mass tourism organizing and promoting, as of follows:

- Effect on environment,
- Effect on local economy, and
- Effect on local culture.

Especially, the environment remains a source of tourist attraction as long as it is not damaged beyond control. But it needs a greater care to protect all its components from the harmful effect of mass tourism.

The general tourists and the trekkers need to be told to keep their routes and destinations clean. An unmanageable rush of tourists to any open space in the wilderness kills the grasses. Hardier and less desirable species start replacing the original plant cover.

A good quality and sufficient quantity of water is equally essential for keeping alive the tourist industry. The use of swimming pools, and of water required for washing, drinking, sewerage and sanitation goes on increasing as the number of tourists increases. The shortage and the pollution of water adds to the prevailing insanitary conditions and the diseases in densely populated country like the Kyrgyz Republic.

How sensitive is the tourist industry to all the adverse changes in environment if it is not properly conserved is a moot question. It is aptly can be described that:

Tourism = Nature's beauty + Wild life + Cultural attractions + Ecology

All these components are parts of one single and indivisible system. They need to be conserved in order to protect the unique resource base of the outdoor recreational tourism from any kind of destruction or extensive anthropogenesis impacts.

Even after controlling the rapidly increasing number of tourists, efforts to conserve wild animals and birds are ineffective without resolving the clash of the interests of villagers and park management, including the followings:

- All components of recreational resources' environment: the soil, flora fauna and water flower besides the monuments of heritage tourism need to

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be protected from adverse impact of large-scale tourism, and

- Merely controlling the influx of tourists in isolation fails to secure sustainable measures of conservation of environment in the absence of practicing cooperative tourism with the participation of local communities.

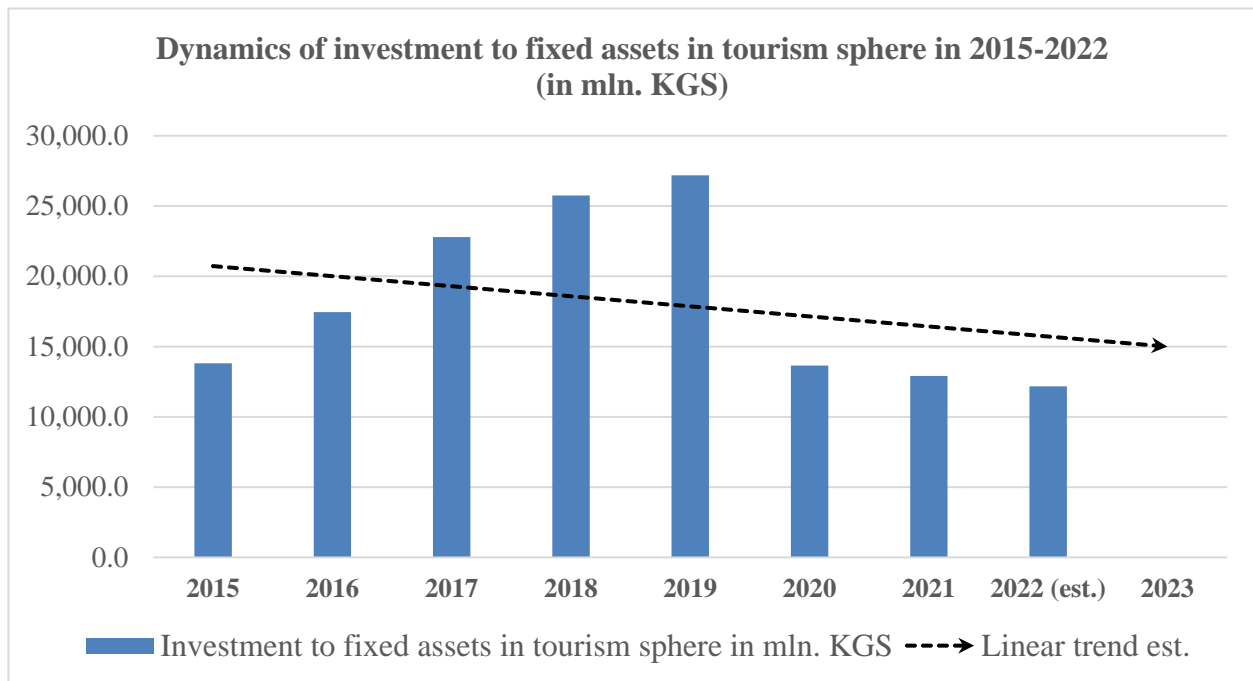
Results and Discussions

Tourism is one of prioritized sectors of the Kyrgyz Republic's economy. Our country has a rich natural, recreational and ecological potential for the development of domestic and international tourism, including such famous mountain peaks as the Peak of Victory (7,439 m), the peak of Lenin (7,134 m), Khan Tengri (6,995 m).

One of the longest glaciers "Enylchek" is also a landmark in the worldwide scale of outdoor recreational resources. There are 14 resort and recreational zones, 10 mountain tourist and mountaineering zones [1,2022].

As a whole, the importance of recreational resources of the country is conditioned by the presence of large reserves of medicinal mud, the richness of mineral and thermal sources, environmentally friendly and almost untouched by civilization landscapes. All this creates a really unique environment for tourism and resort holidays in the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition to natural attractions, the country has a rich historical past, first of all, the history of Silk Road passed through it. There are more than 5,000 historical and cultural monuments on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Figure 1

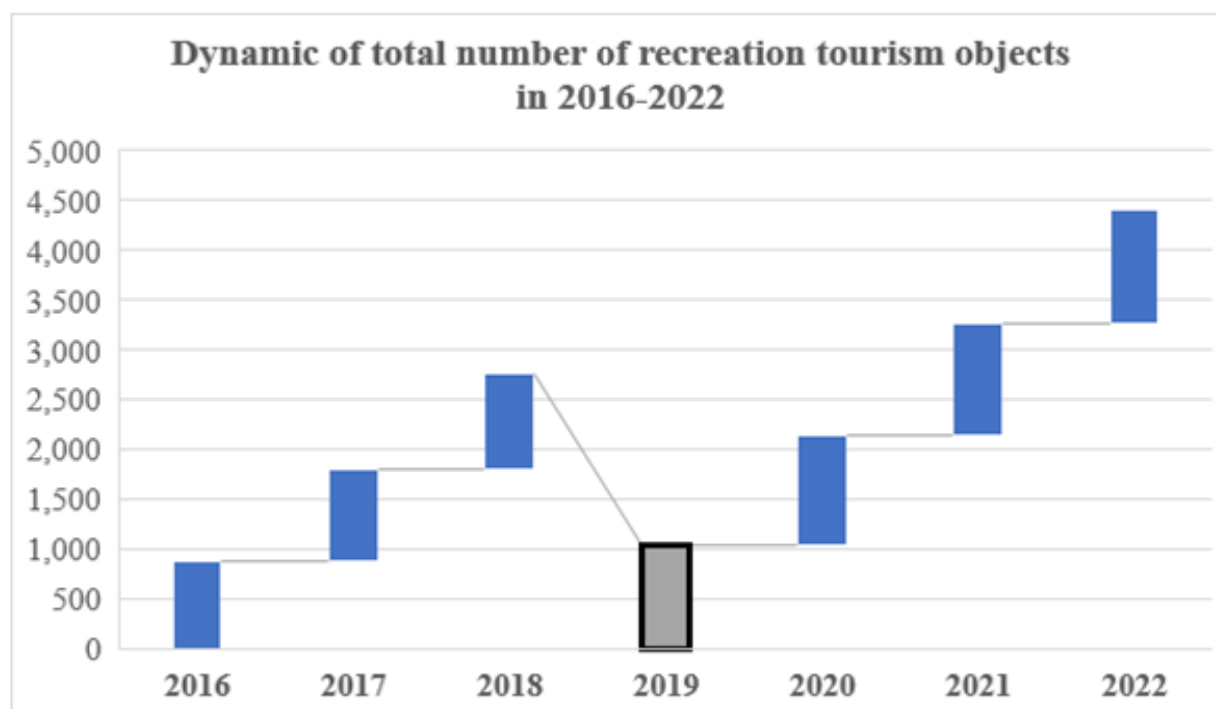


Source: "Tourism in the Kyrgyz Republic", Report 10.2, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2022.

According to the official statistical data, the total volume of investment to tourism has made at 12,914.9 mln. Kyrgyz Som in 2021 (USD 152.5 mln.) [2,2022], and according to the estimated data still has a negative dynamic about 13,000 mln. Kyrgyz Som (USD 142.1 mln.) by the end of the 2022 (figure 1).

Basic factors affected such declining was a coronavirus pandemic, but despite of that especially the number of the recreational tourism's objects has been increased from 1,036 in 2019 till 1,151 in 2022 (figure 2).

Figure 2.



Source: “Tourism in the Kyrgyz Republic”, Report 1.1, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2022.

This fact confirms the assumption that the recreational tourism is still demanded and its prospects need to be considered enough in details.

Therefore, the stabilization of the recreational tourism industry and the further challenges of its development will be achieved by implementing the basic mechanisms in the following prioritized areas:

- Legal framework: to develop and propose the changes to tax regulation in terms of providing special benefits and tax preferences for entities and individuals engaged in recreation tourism activities,
- Investment attractiveness: to designing the technical proposals to create a favorable environment for attracting

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foreign direct investment to recreational tourism objects and clusters, and

- Tourism safety: to creating a strong insurance system for the both inbound and outbound tourists to be arrived with the purpose of visiting the recreational tourism areas.

Conclusion

As for the prospects of recreation tourism's development, it can be represented as of follows:

- 1) Improvement the tourism infrastructure of the Kyrgyz Republic: especially in context of the outdoor recreation and leisure.
- 2) Promotion of overseas tourism for publicizing the tourist attractions through advertisements under the country and/or regional brand such as, for example, "The Kyrgyz Republic as a World Nomad Country" when the outdoor recreational tourism will be highly attractive for the foreign direct investment.
- 3) Promotion the domestic recreational tourism under the publicity tag called "Wild Nomad Environment", when the natural landscapes will open the cultural heritage's awareness for international tourists.

4) Improvement the additional supporting tourist services like taxies, coaches, guides, tour operators, drivers and other human resource development in order to create new jobs in conditions of attracting the foreign direct investments.

5) Recreational Tourism industry has expecting to started contributing about 5% of GDP of the Kyrgyz Republic withing the forthcoming 3-5 years, because of the needs of potential international tourists in recovering and rehabilitation their health after the negative effects of coronavirus pandemic in conditions of the mountain regions of given country.

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