

UDC 316

**Tahirli Faqan Ilham**

fagantahirli@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0009-8601-8650

Doctoral Student,

Academy of Public Administration

under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan

## THE ROLE OF TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF LANKARAN-ASTARA ECONOMIC REGION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract.** Sustainable tourism development, its rules and management practices can be applied to all forms of tourism, including mass tourism and different types of it in all directions. Important achievements have been made in this field in our country. The principles of sustainability in tourism development should take into account environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects, and an appropriate balance should be created between these three factors to ensure long-term sustainability. Economic, environmental and social goals in the policy implemented by the state will play the key role to the success of tourism activities. The principles of sustainability are more relevant to the ecological, economic and socio-cultural environment in the tourism field. The balance between these three important features must be well established to provide long-term sustainability. In Astara, one of the most prosperous regions of Azerbaijan, one part of the region is covered by Talish mountains, and the other part is lowland. Tourists are attracted by the Talish Mountains, local residents' lifestyle, culture, traditions, clothing, as well as the beautiful scenery of this region. More than 400 historical monuments have been preserved in the region. Most of them are in mountain villages. In Kapichi village of the region, there are a caravanserai from the 7th century, a necropolis from the 3rd-1st centuries B.C., the debris of an old castle, a tomb, and statues from the bronze and stone ages. Coins and stone tools found in the region are stored in the City Museum of Local History. Lankaran has all conditions for a successful tourism business. Tourists are also attracted by Caspian Sea and its beach areas. Lankaran is a coastal recreation area on the Caspian coast whose healing beaches covered by black sand. There are "Istisu" sanatoriums and magical hot springs in Haftoni village of Lankaran. It is very interesting for tourists who are interested in ecotourism and sightseeing. The beaches themselves are not in the open areas and surrounded by trees provided pleasant shade on hot days.

**Key words:** development of tourism, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, sustainability principles.

**Тагірлі Факан Ільхам**

fagantahirli@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0009-8601-8650

докторант,

Академія державного управління

при Президентіві Азербайджанської Республіки, м. Баку, Азербайджан

## РОЛЬ ТУРИСТИЧНОГО ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ ЛАНКАРАНСЬКО-АСТАРІНСЬКОГО ЕКОНОМІЧНОГО РАЙОНУ ДЛЯ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ

**Анотація.** Сталій розвиток туризму, його правила та практики управління можуть бути застосовані до всіх форм туризму, включаючи масовий туризм та різні його види в усіх напрямках. У цій галузі в нашій країні досягнуто важливих досягнень. Принципи стійкості в розвитку туризму повинні враховувати екологічні, економічні та соціально-культурні аспекти, а між цими трьома факторами має бути створений відповідний баланс для забезпечення дов-

гострокової стійкості. Ключову роль в успіху туристичної діяльності відіграватимуть економічні, екологічні та соціальні цілі в політиці, яку реалізує держава. Принципи стійкості більше стосуються екологічного, економічного та соціокультурного середовища у сфері туризму. Баланс між цими трьома важливими характеристиками має бути добре встановленим, щоб забезпечити довгострокову стійкість. В Астарі, одному з найбільш процвітаючих районів Азербайджану, одна частина регіону покрита Талишськими горами, а інша – низовиною. Туристів приваблюють Талишські гори, спосіб життя, культура, традиції, одяг місцевих жителів, а також мальовничі пейзажі цього краю. В області збереглося понад 400 історичних пам'яток. Більшість із них у гірських селах. У селі Канічі району знаходяться караван-сарай VII ст., некрополь III-I ст. до н.е., уламки старого замку, гробниця, статуї бронзової та кам'яної доби. Знайдені на території області монети та кам'яні знаряддя зберігаються в міському краєзнавчому музеї. У Ленкорані є всі умови для успішного туристичного бізнесу. Також туристів приваблює Каспійське море і його пляжні зони. Ленкорань – прибережна зона відпочинку на Каспійському узбережжі, цілющі пляжі якої покриті чорним піском. У Лянкяранському селі Хафтоні є санаторії «Істису» і чарівні термальні джерела. Це дуже цікаво для туристів, які цікавляться екотуризмом та екскурсіями. Самі пляжі знаходяться не на відкритих територіях, а оточені деревами створюють приємну тінь у спекотні дні.

**Ключові слова:** розвиток туризму, сталий розвиток, сталий туризм, принципи сталості.

**JEL Classification:** L83, Q01

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32782/tourismhospcee-8-7>

**Formulation of the problem.** At the end of the 20th century, tourism took a leading place in international economic relations and had a significant impact on the development of the economies of individual countries and the world economy as a whole. Today, tourism is not only the largest, but also one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. In modern times, the development of tourism is of great importance, tourism brings great benefits to both individuals and the economies of countries and regions. However, tourism is different from other sectors of the economy: it is a very complex one. Tourism can influence the economy of the region, its social and humanitarian basis. As other economic sectors, tourism consumes resources and creates environmental, cultural and social costs and benefits. "The development of the tourism industry has a positive effect on the formation of historical and cultural patriotism, contributes to the establishment of harmonious, constructive and reliable relations between the different countries" [7, p. 277].

In recent years, tourism has been enriched with the ideas of sustainable development. Sustainable development problems have been investigated since the first it was voiced by Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987 [13]. At the conference held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, a large-scale international cooperation program aimed at achieving high quality of the environment and economy was signed [9, səh. 3–24]. Using the principles of sustainable development concepts, tourism can

not only overcome the difficulties, but also have a great impact on the sustainable development of other areas operating in the region. Sustainable tourism ensures the optimal use of environmental resources, supports the socio-cultural characteristics of the inhabited communities, provides the benefits for all stakeholders and the vitality of long-term economic processes. The development of sustainable tourism is closely related to the quality of tourism services [6, p. 59]. In many ways, quality of services is more important than quantity. Sustainability problems can be solved by the quality that Lankaran-Astara economic region can offer to tourists and local residents: peace and calmness, lack of traffic jams, clean water and air, untouched nature – all these are "quality labels" for tourism centers and zones.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** B. Archer [12], J. Krippendorf [16], H.V. Opashovsky [18], V. Freyer [15], D. Fletcher [14], Kh. N. Gizatullin [8] and others can be mentioned in the methodological basis of the management and operation of the tourism industry in the conditions of sustainable development. U. Alekbarov [2], H. Rajablin [7], M. Mukarramoglu [6], S. Huseynov [4], I. Huseynov [3], N. Efendiyev [3], B. Bilalov [1], Ch. Gulaliyev [1], Y. Kocherli [5], L. Kocherli [5] and others are among the scientists conducting research in this field in our country. However, the characteristics of tourism in terms of sustainable development in the mentioned region have not been sufficiently analyzed.

**Setting objectives.** The goal and objectives of the research are the development of strategic directions for the sustainable development of the touristic potential of the Lankaran-Astara economic region. The following tasks have been defined to achieve this goal:

– to look through the evolution of different approaches to the research of the category of "economic space" to systematize the main definitions of the term "region" as a sphere of life reproduced directly the development dynamics of the Lankaran-Astara economic region;

– to examine to consider the evolution of different approaches to the study of the category of "economic space", to systematize the main definitions of the term "region" as a sphere of life, reproduced the development dynamics of the Lankaran-Astara economic region;

– to provide a detailed analysis of the features and tourism potential and sustainable development factors of socio-economic trends in the territorial economies of Lankaran-Astara economic region within the framework of compliance with the established values and goals.

**Methods.** The theoretical and methodological basis of the research are presented with the results of theoretical and practical research of local and foreign scientists-economists in fields such as sustainable development, socio-economic transformations of territorial economic systems, investment activity, strategic management of the regional economy. Economic-statistical and comparative-analytical methods, mathematical modeling, expert analysis theory, systematic approach, analysis methods of statistical and mathematical materials were used in the research.

**Presentation of the main material of the study. General characteristic of Lankaran-Astara economic region.** Lankaran-Astara economic region is one of the main tourism centers of Azerbaijan. A large number of tourists visit here to travel all over beautiful landscapes, climb the mountains, relax in the forest and by the sea. If the tourism potential of the region is used completely, the number of visitors and foreign tourists will increase. This may have had a positive impact on the educational and economic levels, cultural knowledge of the local population, infrastructure of cities and various other aspects.

Sustainability in tourism refers to the general positive balance of its environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts, as well as the positive influence of visitors on each other. Accord-

ing to modern world statistics, tourism is one of the prospective and actively developing sectors of the world economy. Tourism also plays an important role in providing employment and income [8, p. 124–130].

The development of a relevant structural-functional model for the implementation of the cultural-educational potential of tourism is possible under the condition of integrating a number of theoretical and practical developments in the proper fields, more precisely, in the history and theory of cultural-entertainment and organization. The priority directions of cultural and educational activity in tourism provide the following components of national education:

– formation of national consciousness;  
– education of moral culture of personality, acceptance of universal moral principles;  
– development of individual abilities, provision of conditions for self-realization;  
– formation of ecological culture; establishing conditions for young people to acquire knowledge and skills about comprehensive physical development, health and healthy lifestyle.

In the policy implemented by the state, economic, environmental and social goals act as the key to the success of tourism activities. The principles of sustainability are relevant to the ecological, economic and socio-cultural environment in the tourism space. The balance between these three important features must be well established to ensure long-term sustainability. These features are the followings:

1. Ecological aspects – the optimal use of ecological resources is the main element of tourism development, it contributes to the maintenance of ecological processes, natural heritage and biodiversity in the tourism area.

2. Economic aspects – characterized by providing economic activity, as well as assisting to reduce poverty.

3. Socio-economic aspects – respecting the local socio-cultural originality, preserving the values of cultural heritage and traditions, contributing to increase the sense of tolerance and intercultural understanding [17].

The principles of sustainable development management apply to all types of tourism, including its various segments and all forms of mass tourism. The abundance of cold springs and hot mineral waters, colorful natural scenery, favorable humid climate, as well as the existence of a good transport network have led to the development of resorts and tourism centers in the

southern region . At present, a number of tourism centers had necessary conditions for tourists to rest in southern region. The Baku-Astara railway and international highway to it play an important role in the transportation of goods and passengers. In addition, there is an airport in Lankaran. In September 2008, the international terminal of Lankaran International Airport was opened.

Table 1

**Length of public highways in 2021, km**

Districts	Total
Astara district	222
Jalilabad district	363
Lerik district	494
Lankaran district	290
Masalli district	274
Yardimli district	336
<b>Lankaran-Astara economic region</b>	<b>1 979</b>

Source: [20]

As it is known, the development of tourism in the modern world accompanies the process of globalization along with local and foreign tourists participate in various trips and excursions in the southern region. Travels are important in terms of the form of self-awareness as a theoretical-methodological basis [10].

Table 2

**The number of employees working in hotels and hotel-type facilities in the southern region**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>On Southern region</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>623</b>
Astara district	34	25	28	21	19
Jalilabad district	9	9	10	10	10
Lerik district	12	42	42	–	39
Lankaran district	137	277	505	463	399
Masalli district	125	121	136	62	156
Yardimli district	2	–	–	–	–

Source: [20]

The system of sustainable development of tourism in the southern region conduces to the important tasks of the social sphere – improving the living standards of the population, increasing the employment rate , and protecting the natural and cultural heritage. The successful development of regional tourism depends the existing factors increased or slowed down the development rate of domestic tourism and gives

an opporyunity of being part of the international tourism services market. Thus, as it is noticed, "sustainable tourism" is a scientific resource with a whole set of problems at the global, national and regional levels.

12 goals to achieve sustainable tourism:

1. Economic sustainability – To ensure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of tourism enterprises.

2. Local welfare – To maximize the contribution of tourism to the host appointment, including increasing the amount of expenses by tourists.

3. Quality of employment – To enhance the number and quality of local employment generated by tourism, including wages and quality of services.

4. Social Equity – To consider the equitable distribution of economic and social benefits derived from tourism, including the improvement of opportunities, incomes and services offered to the poor.

5. Visitor satisfaction – To ensure a safe and satisfying experience for all visitors, regardless of their gender or disability.

6. Local control – To involve local self-government bodies in the processes and increasing their powers in planning, management and development of tourism in the region on the basis of consultations with other interested parties of tourism.

7. Social welfare – To improve local people's life standart and the social structure, to ensure their access to resources, development and life support systems without allowing social exploitation.

8. Cultural richness – To acquaintance with the culture, tradition and historical heritage of the countries.

9. Physical integrity – To maintenance the quality of urban and rural areas and prevent physical and visual deterioration of the environment.

10. Biodiversity – To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize potential harm.

11. Resource efficiency – To minimize the use of limited and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism companies and services.

12. Environmental cleaning – To minimize air, water and land pollution, wastes derived from the activities of tourism establishments and visitors [19].

**Characteristics of sustainable tourism development in the southern region.** The development of sustainable tourism, its rules and management practices in the southern region



can be applied to all forms of tourism, including mass tourism and different types of tourism in all directions. Necessary achievements have been made in this field in our country. "Sustainable development of tourism creates new opportunities in Azerbaijan as a result of the intensification of globalization" [7, p. 266]. Endemic species are preserved in the national parks and reserves in the southern region, this factor also affects the increase in the flow of tourists to the region.

Tourism builds a foundation significantly for regional, national and global progress, establishment of new jobs and enterprises, export earnings and infrastructure development. The rich history, cultural and natural resources of the region contribute to the development of tourism, but the lack of maintenance, restoration, and poor condition of many tourist facilities negatively affects the attraction of tourists. In this regard, it is very important to invest in the development of the tourism industry. The development of regional tourism is closely related to the following activities:

- the characteristics of tourism in this region: seasonal rhythms, predominant types and forms of tourism, main goals of the trip, etc.;
- the attitude of governmental and local tourism bodies to tourism problems, the characteristics of their tourism policy;
- the economic role of tourism in the economic structure of the region;
- development prospects of tourism in the region.

Effective operation of the tourism system in the region is impossible without planning, regulating and coordinating the activities of the structures responsible for its development. This makes necessary the development of a complex mechanism for the stimulation of tourism activities at the regional level. Determined and grouped conditions for the development of regional tourism were specific factors influencing the formation of the incentive mechanism. It can be represented by functional groups made up the system of resource, economic, organizational and administrative methods of this purposeful impact.

Historical and cultural monuments and museums located in the region also have an important impact on the development of tourism. The museums are the main institutions ensured the preservation and study of historical and cultural values, and at the same time defined the possibilities for the implementation of one of the most important types of socio-cultural services to the population – tourism and excursion activities.

Lighthouse, Kichik Bazar Mosque, Boyuk Bazar Mosque, Round Castle (Zindan qala), Khan's House, Lam(open shed) in Boladi Village, Mir Ahmed Khan's house, Isa Bey's house, Tombs such as Sheikh Zahid, Imamzadeh, Babagil , Abidarda in the region are the most visited places by tourists.

The historical heritage of the region should be displayed in the tourism market. Therefore, national tourism organizations should disseminate information about the history of the district and region. Based on this, there are problems related to pollution, restoration, protection of natural complexes from harmful effects of activities of tourists and tourism infrastructures. However, tourism cannot develop without interaction with the environment and it makes important to manage the development of tourism and plan it accurately. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the results of tourism in a timely and comprehensive manner, prevent the destructive impact of tourism and take maximum benefits from it, increase its positive impact, including the protection and restoration of historical monuments, the establishment of national parks and reserves, the preservation of forests and the development of cultural heritage.

Local history museums in the southern region also have very great impact on the development of tourism. Several national folk singers and a national dance collective operate in Lankaran. Culinary variety also has an important position in the development of tourism. Cuisine of southern region has a rich history and a wide variety of dishes. The unique cuisine of this region includes lavangi, Kulcha(pie), lentil pilaf, white pilaf, pumpkin pilaf and pickled kebab.

The established mechanism for stimulating the development of tourism in the region should be implemented through following main measures:

- providing the development program of competitive tourism;
- determination of the reasons why not effectively using tourism and recreation potentials;
- stimulation of the investment flow to the industry;
- promotion of the region in the market;
- implementation of the selected program and management of tourism development in the region.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research in this area.** To analyze a complex phenomenon like tourism, it is of particular importance to determine its place and importance in the

country's economy. At the same time, the entire complex of socio-economic activities defined by tourism should be considered as an object of analysis. In modern times, tourism is considered as a socio-economic event had a direct and indirect impact on the development of relevant infrastructure. Modern tourism is based on the high level of development of transport, social and service sectors made it a highly profitable sector of the economy. Some touristic zones offer a fairly high standard of service. The management of many countries is seriously involved in tourism development programs; serious investments are made in the construction of amusement parks and new attractions. At the beginning of the 21st century, the world tourism industry faced the problem of preserving and developing recreational resources are an invaluable gift of nature. This factor needs to be carefully considered in order to maintain sustainable development. It is necessary to achieve a balance between the increasing demand for recreational resources and the creation of the most favorable conditions to maximize the use of recreational resources.

## REFERENCES

1. Bilalov B.Ə., Güllaliev Ç.G. (2015) Turizmin əsasları: dərslik / müəllif kollektivi; dosent B.Ə. Bilalov və dosent Ç.G.Güllaliev redaktəsi ilə. Bakı: "QHT Nəşriyyatı", 496 s.
2. Ələkbərov U. (2017) Davamlı inkişaf və ekoloji sivilizasiyanın idarə edilməsinin əsasları. Ali məktəblər üçün dərslik. Bakı: "Təhsil", 176 s.
3. Hüseynov İ., Əfəndiyeva N. (2007) Turizmin əsasları. Dərslik. Bakı: "Mars-Print" nəşriyyat-poliqrafiya müəssisəsi, 442 səh.
4. Hüseynov S. (2009) Davamlı İnsan İnkişafı. "Azərbaycan Dövlət Aqrar Universiteti" nəşriyyatı Ali məktəblər üçün dərslik. Bakı, 494 s.
5. Köçərli Y., Köçərli L. (3-4 May 2019) Azərbaycanda turizmin dayanıqlı inkişafının sosial-iqtisadi rolu və qiymətləndirilməsi turizm və rekreasiya XXI əsrdə: problemlər və perspektivlər. Bakı, 292 səh.
6. Mükərrəmoğlu M. (7 yanvar 2018) Turizmin davamlı inkişaf ili. "Xalq qəzeti", s. 4.
7. Rəcəbli H. (2022) Sosial sahələrin idarə edilməsi. Bakı, 395 s.
8. Clark, William; Harley, Alicia (2020) "Sustainability Science: Toward a Synthesis". *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 45 (1), 331–86.
9. Geographical indicators of sustainable development and assessment of the impact on the environment. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, available at: <https://iopscience.iop.org/>
10. Jacobus A. Du Pisani P. (June, 2006) Sustainable development historical roots of the concept. *Environmental Sciences*, 3(2), pp. 83–96
11. Randall, A. (1987) Resource economics (Second ed.). New York, USA: John Wiley & Sons.
12. Brundtland report. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: not /by the Secretary-General. UN. Secretary-General; World Commission on Environment and Development. New York: UN, 4 Aug. 1987. 374 p.
13. Fletcher J., Gilbert D. (1993) Tourism. Principles & Practice. G.B., McGraw-Hill Companies. 466 p.
14. Freyer W. (1995) Tourismus. Einführung in die Fremdenverkehrökonomie. München, 422 p.
15. Krippendorf J. (1986) The Holiday Makers. Understanding the impact of ecisure & travel. Disenhofen, 386 p.
16. Muhamad, Anugrah G. P. Implementation Of Sustainable Tourism Destination Development Achievements. Asia Tourism Forum 2016 – The 12th Biennial Conference of Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Asia (ATF-16) 2016. The authors – Published by Atlantis Press, 604 p. (1 Vol).
17. Opaschowski H. (1991) Der Fremdenverkehr in der oekonomischen Theorie. Opladen, 340 p.
18. UNEP&WTO. (2005) Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers. Paris, United Nations Environment Programme.
19. Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, 222 p.
20. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Statistika Komitəsinin məlumatı, available at: [tps://stat.gov.az/](https://stat.gov.az/)
21. Archer B. (1996) Economic Impact Analysis. Annals of Tourism Research. L.: IBD Ltd., 560 p.

*The article has been sent to the editors  
March 7, 2023*