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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE MECHANISM FOR THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL TOURISM SERVICES MARKET

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Abstract
The thesis substantiates the theoretical foundations of the mechanism for the strategic development of the regional tourism services market. Based on competitiveness theory and destination management models, it systematizes the structural elements of the mechanism and proposes a conceptual model linking tourism potential, instruments, outcomes and feedback.

Keywords: regional tourism, tourism services market, strategic development, development mechanism, strategic management, structural elements, destination competitiveness, competitive advantage, comparative advantage, tourism potential, tourism resources, tourism infrastructure, tourism cluster, public–private partnership, destination management, state regulation, market institutions, strategic planning, monitoring indicators, sustainable tourism.



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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamic segments of the global services economy, and its development increasingly depends not on the mere presence of attractive resources but on the quality of the strategic decisions taken at the level of individual territories. In Uzbekistan, where tourism has been declared a strategic sector of the national economy, the regions differ considerably in their natural and historical-cultural endowment, infrastructure capacity, investment attractiveness and institutional maturity. As a result, the regional tourism services market develops unevenly: a limited number of well-known destinations attract the bulk of tourist flows, while the potential of many other territories remains underused. Domestic scholars treat regional tourism as a socio-economic category whose contribution to the regional economy depends on how tourist resources are distributed across the territory and how effectively they are used [3]. This makes it necessary to move from fragmented, short-term support measures to a coherent mechanism of strategic development that integrates the goals, actors, resources and instruments of regional tourism policy.

At the same time, the category “mechanism for the strategic development of the regional tourism services market” has not yet received a unified interpretation in the economic literature, and its structural composition is described differently by different authors. The aim of this thesis is to clarify the theoretical foundations of this mechanism and to identify and systematize its structural elements. The study relies on the systemic approach, comparative analysis of theoretical concepts, the abstract-logical method and structural-functional modelling.

MAIN PART

The regional tourism services market can be defined as a system of economic relations between producers of tourism services (tour operators and travel agents,

accommodation and catering enterprises, transport and excursion organizations) and consumers (domestic and foreign tourists) that arise within a given territory in the course of creating, promoting, selling and consuming the regional tourism product. Its specific features distinguish it from commodity markets: the service is consumed at the place where it is produced, the key resources are immobile, demand is highly seasonal and price-elastic, small and medium-sized enterprises dominate the supply side, and tourist spending generates a multiplier effect in transport, trade, construction and agriculture. M.T.Aliyeva considers the structure of the tourism market and the factors of tourism development as interrelated objects of management [4]; accordingly, the market cannot be developed effectively by influencing only one of its components in isolation.

The theoretical foundations of the mechanism are formed by several complementary schools of thought. The first is the theory of competitive advantage. M. Porter demonstrated that the competitiveness of a territory is determined by the interaction of four groups of determinants – factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure and rivalry – complemented by the role of government and chance, and that competitive advantages tend to concentrate in geographically localized clusters [1]. Applied to tourism, this logic implies that accommodation, transport, guiding, crafts, gastronomy and event services in a region must reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation.

The second school is the theory of destination competitiveness. J.R.B.Ritchie and G.I.Crouch distinguish between comparative advantages, which reflect the resource endowment of a destination, and competitive advantages, which reflect its ability to deploy those resources effectively over the long run [2]. Their model covers core resources and attractors, supporting factors and resources, destination policy, planning and development, destination management, and qualifying and

amplifying determinants, all operating within the global (macro) and competitive (micro) environment [2]. The key methodological conclusion for regional policy is that rich heritage or natural assets do not by themselves guarantee market success: it is the management mechanism that transforms potential into sustainable competitive advantage.

The third school comprises strategic management and strategic marketing, which provide the tools for goal setting, segmentation, positioning and the evaluation of strategic alternatives; the specific features of strategic marketing in the tourism market are examined by M.T.Aliyeva [4]. Regional economics complements these approaches by explaining the territorial specialization of tourism and the uneven placement of tourist resources across the regions of Uzbekistan [3]. A synthesis of these approaches allows us to propose the following author's definition: the mechanism for the strategic development of the regional tourism services market is a purposeful system of interrelated subjects, principles, methods and instruments through which the tourism potential of a region is transformed into sustainable competitive advantages and long-term market growth, with strategic decisions continuously adjusted on the basis of monitoring results.

The mechanism performs five interrelated functions: planning (setting long-term goals and target indicators), organizational (distributing responsibilities among authorities, businesses and the community), stimulating (creating incentives for investment in infrastructure and new tourism products), coordinating (aligning the interests of the region, districts and enterprises) and control-analytical (monitoring targets and initiating corrective action). Weakness of any one function reduces the effectiveness of the whole: incentives without coordination lead to duplication of similar tourism products, while plans without monitoring

remain declarative. Taking these functions into account, eight structural elements of the mechanism can be distinguished (Table 1).

Table 1 Structural elements of the mechanism for the strategic development of the regional tourism services market

№	Structural element	Content	Instruments / indicators
1	**Subjects**	Actors that formulate and implement the strategy	regional khokimiyat, tourism administration, tourism enterprises, local community, universities, investors
2	**Object**	The regional tourism services market	supply, demand, prices, infrastructure, regional tourism product
3	**Goal and principles**	Desired long-term state of the market and the rules for achieving it	competitiveness and sustainable growth; systemic approach, territorial specialization, sustainability, partnership, adaptivity
4	**Resource base**	Regional tourism potential	natural, historical-cultural, human, infrastructural and investment resources
5	**Regulatory–institutional block**	Rules shaping the behaviour of market participants	laws, regional programmes, service standards, classification and certification
6	**Economic–financial block**	Incentives that change the return on tourism investment	subsidies, tax preferences, preferential credit, public–private partnership
7	**Organizational–marketing block**	Coordination of actors and promotion of the region	tourism clusters, coordination councils, regional brand, digital promotion, new routes and events
8	**Monitoring and feedback**	Assessment of results and adjustment of the strategy	tourist arrivals, average length of stay, occupancy rate, export of tourism services, employment, visitor satisfaction

Source: developed by the author.

The elements listed in Table 1 do not function as a simple sum; their effect arises from interaction. The subjects use regulatory, economic and organizational instruments to act on the object – the regional market – while the resource base defines the limits and specialization of feasible strategies. The monitoring block closes the loop: deviations of actual indicators from target values serve as a signal for revising goals, priorities or instruments. It is precisely this feedback loop that distinguishes a strategic mechanism from a set of one-off administrative measures. The interaction of the elements is shown in Figure 1.

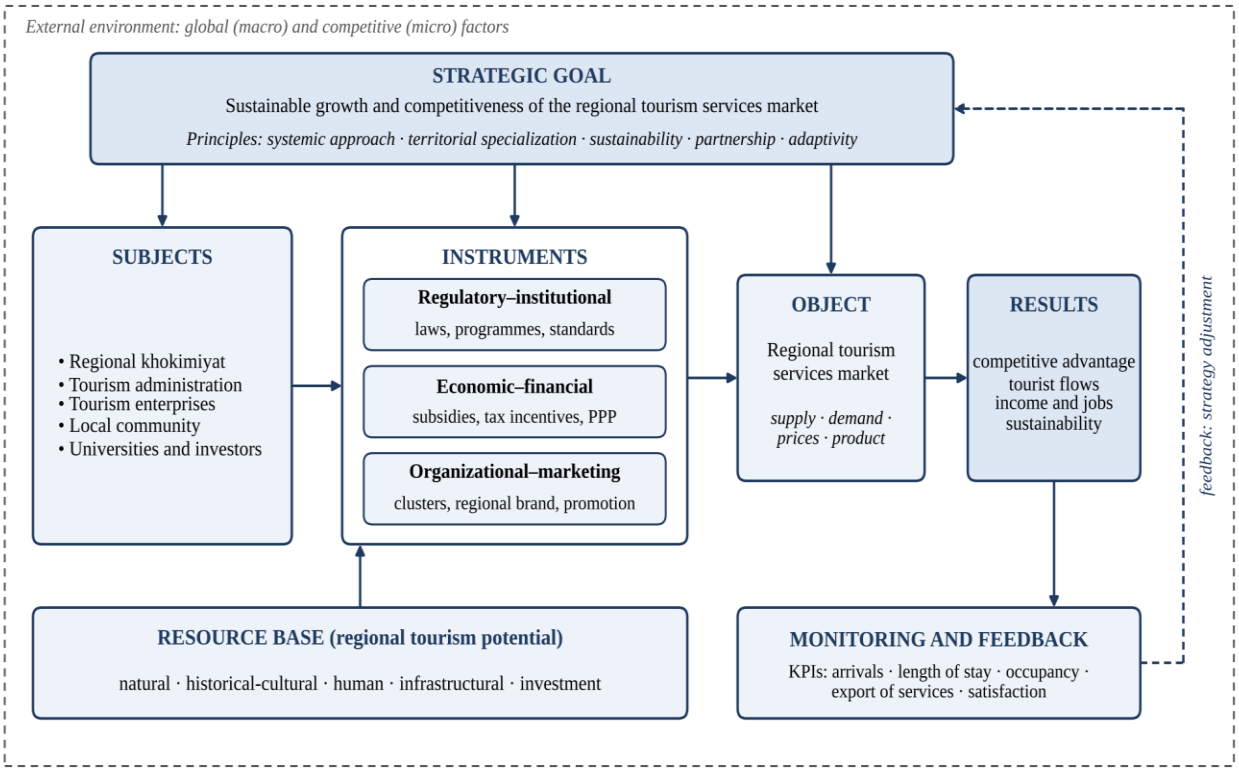


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the mechanism for the strategic development of the regional tourism services market

Source: developed by the author on the basis of [1; 2].

The proposed model has three levels. At the resource level, the regional tourism potential is assessed and the specialization of the territory is determined – for example, historical-cultural tourism in regions with a dense heritage base, and ecological, mountain or rural tourism in regions with a valuable natural environment. At the institutional-instrumental level, the subjects choose a combination of instruments appropriate to this specialization; the cluster form of organization is particularly effective here, because it combines competition and cooperation among local firms [1]. At the outcome level, results are measured not only by tourist flows but also by indicators of competitiveness, income, employment and sustainability, which corresponds to the long-term, sustainability-oriented interpretation of destination competitiveness [2]. The external environment – macroeconomic dynamics, transport accessibility and the policies of competing destinations – affects every level of the model and must be considered whenever strategies are revised.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study leads to the following conclusions. First, the regional tourism services market is a specific system of economic relations characterized by immobile resources, simultaneous production and consumption, seasonality and a strong multiplier effect, which requires a territorially differentiated approach. Second, the theoretical foundations of the mechanism for its strategic development are formed by the synthesis of competitive advantage theory, the destination competitiveness model, strategic management and regional economics. Third, the mechanism consists of eight interrelated structural elements, and its effectiveness depends on their coherence and on a functioning feedback loop rather than on any single element.

On this basis, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. to compile a passport of tourism potential for each region and use it to determine the tourism specialization of the region in its development strategy;
2. to establish regional tourism coordination councils on a public–private partnership basis, bringing together the khokimiyat, businesses, universities and local communities;
3. to form tourism clusters around anchor destinations and integrate local producers of crafts, gastronomy and transport services into their value chains;
4. to introduce a unified system of regional key performance indicators (tourist arrivals, average length of stay, occupancy rate, export of tourism services, employment, visitor satisfaction) and to review regional strategies annually on the basis of these indicators;
5. to develop regional destination brands and promote them through coordinated digital marketing.

Implementation of these measures will make it possible to convert the comparative advantages of the regions into sustainable competitive advantages and to ensure a more balanced territorial development of the tourism services market.

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