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ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNOTOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article examines the organizational and legal foundations for the development of ethnocultural tourism (ethnotourism) in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the existing national legal framework and compares it with international practices to identify key institutional and regulatory gaps. Using comparative, systemic, and analytical methods, the research evaluates the effectiveness of tourism governance mechanisms and legal instruments. The findings indicate that Uzbekistan's tourism legislation remains generalized and lacks specific provisions for ethnotourism development, which limits the efficient utilization of ethnocultural resources. Comparative analysis with countries such as Spain and Japan demonstrates that specialized legal frameworks and strong community participation significantly enhance tourism performance. The paper proposes evidence-based recommendations, including the adoption of a dedicated law on ethnotourism, strengthening local governance, and introducing financial incentives. The results contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of tourism policy and provide a basis for improving the legal environment for sustainable ethnotourism development in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: ethnotourism, tourism law, cultural heritage, Uzbekistan, tourism policy, comparative analysis



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1. Introduction

Tourism has become one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, contributing significantly to economic growth, employment, and cultural exchange. In recent years, ethnocultural tourism has gained increasing attention due to its role in preserving cultural identity and supporting local communities. According to World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism development requires a balance between economic, social, and cultural dimensions [1]. In this context, ethnotourism represents a strategic direction for countries rich in cultural heritage.

Uzbekistan possesses significant ethnocultural resources, including traditional crafts, folklore, and historical heritage. However, the development of this sector largely depends on effective organizational and legal frameworks.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical foundations of tourism and ethnotourism have been widely studied by scholars such as Richards (2018), Sharpley (2014), and Timothy (2002). These studies emphasize the role of tourism in cultural preservation and socio-economic development.

Uzbek researchers (Amonboyev, Khalilov, Umarov) highlight the importance of tourism diversification and sustainable development. However, limited attention has been paid to the **legal regulation of ethnotourism as a separate sector**, which creates a research gap addressed in this study.

3. Methodology

This study employs the following methods:

1. **Comparative analysis** – comparison of Uzbekistan’s legal framework with international models



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2. **System approach** – analysis of tourism as an integrated system
3. **Analytical method** – evaluation of legal documents and institutional mechanisms

4. Legal Framework of Tourism in Uzbekistan

Table 1. Core Legal Documents

Legal Act	Year	Scope	Relevance
Law “On Tourism”	2019	General regulation	Indirect
Presidential Decrees	2016–2025	Strategy	Partial
Cabinet Resolutions	Various	Implementation	Limited

Analysis:

The legal framework is **broad but not specialized**. Ethnotourism is not defined as an independent legal category, which weakens regulatory effectiveness.

Example:

Traditional craft centers operate under general business law rather than targeted tourism regulation.

5. Comparative Legal Analysis

Table 2. International Comparison

Criteria	Spain	Japan	Uzbekistan
Special laws	Yes	Yes	No
Heritage protection	Strong	Very strong	Moderate
Community role	High	Institutionalized	Emerging
Incentives	Developed	Developed	Limited



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Analysis:

Countries with specialized legislation demonstrate higher tourism efficiency.

Example:

Japan integrates traditional cultural practices into tourism through legal protection mechanisms, while Uzbekistan lacks such structured integration.

6. Institutional Framework

Table 3. Governance Models

Indicator	Developed Countries	Uzbekistan
Governance	Decentralized	Centralized
Private sector	Strong	Growing
Flexibility	High	Moderate

Analysis:

Centralized governance ensures coordination but limits regional innovation.

7. SWOT Analysis

Table 4. SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
Rich heritage	Lack of specific laws
State support	Weak coordination
Opportunities	Threats
Global demand	Cultural commodification
Investments	Loss of authenticity



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Analysis:

There is a clear imbalance between **resource potential and legal support mechanisms**.

8. Discussion

The findings show that ethnotourism development in Uzbekistan is constrained by:

- absence of specialized legislation
- weak community involvement
- limited financial incentives

Comparative analysis confirms that countries with targeted legal frameworks achieve better outcomes.

9. Conclusion

Uzbekistan has strong potential for ethnotourism development, but its legal and organizational frameworks require significant improvement.

Key recommendations:

- adoption of a dedicated ethnotourism law
- strengthening local governance
- introducing financial incentives

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