

## TOURIST RESOURCES AS A REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FACTOR

MAIA AZMAIPARASHVILI

Doctor of Agricultural Sciences

Associate Professor, European University, Georgia

maiaazmaiparashvili@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.35945/gb.2018.05.032>

**KEYWORDS:** TRAVEL, REGIONAL TOURISM, GEORGIAN MARKET, INTERNATIONAL VISITORS,  
WINE TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT

Travel and Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing service industries globally. For rapid growth, it is recognized as the economic phenomenon of the century. In many countries, tourism plays a significant role in the formation of GDP, creating new jobs, providing employment. Tourism has a huge impact on such key economic sectors as transportation, communications, construction, agriculture, as acts a catalyst for socio-economic development.

Tourism in the view of most people is associated with relaxation, new experiences, fun. It is firmly established in the life of a man with his natural desire to learn and discover uncharted territory, monuments of nature, history and culture, customs and traditions of different people.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the industry's direct contribution to world GDP in 2016 was 2.3 Trillion USD (3.1% of GDP) and it supported 109 million jobs. However, taking into account the combined direct and indirect impact of travel and tourism, the WTTC assesses the total economic contribution of this sector to be 10.2% of world GDP in 2016. It is responsible for 1 in 11 jobs, 4.4% of total economic investment and 6.6% of world exports (Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism 2017, Annual Update, WTTC).

The work refers to the opportunities of Georgia in turning into one of the leader leading players of the world's tourism market.

Georgia is known in the world, as the crossroad of the ancient civilizations. The country historically distinguishes with geographical and cultural diversity. In this small territory different landscapes are gathered, started from the humid subtropics and finished with the glaciers. Unique natural-climatic conditions, water resources, great Caucasus mountain range, mineral waters, urbanized cities pose Georgia the possibility to establish itself in the world of tourism.

Georgia is one of the most unique tourist countries in the world. We aim to help visitors discover its diversity and richness, leaving them with a lasting desire to return.

Georgia is distinguished by recreational with the diversity of resources, culture and nature monuments, the main purpose of forming motivation for tourism travel Element.

Georgia is the most important resort - travel country, the picturesque nature, landscapes, permanent snow and glaciers of the Caucasus mountain range, Subtropical zone of the Black Sea, rivers, waterfalls, karst caves, resorts and mineral springs, history, culture and natural resources contributes

to the unique sites, or recreational resort - recreational development.

Recreational resources and according to the nature several recreational areas are allocated in Georgia. Each of them is different from each other with specializations, facilities design and development potential. Among the interesting:

Mtskheta – one of the best places of Georgia is just 20 km from Tbilisi, at the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers, the town is located on an ancient trade route. Archaeologists have unearthed the evidence of Mtskheta's status as a major trading post. Glass perfume bottles, Greek and Aramaic writings, pottery, metalwork and jewelry have all been unearthed in abundance here, and many examples are on show in the town's museum. Due to its historical significance and several cultural monuments, the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta" became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994. Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (11th century) and Jvari Monastery (6th century) in Mtskheta are amongst the most significant monuments of Georgian Christian architecture. Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is the second largest church building in the country, after the recently consecrated Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi, and is listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site along with other historical monuments of Mtskheta (<https://en.unesco.org/>).

The Ushguli villages contain buildings that are part of the UNESCO Heritage site of Upper Svaneti. Preserved by its long isolation, the Upper Svaneti region of the Caucasus is an exceptional example of mountain scenery with medieval-type villages and tower-houses. The village of Chazhashi still has more than 200 of these very unusual tower-houses, which were used both as dwellings and as defensive posts against the invaders who plagued the region. Set in the topmost reaches of the Enguri valley beneath the snow-covered massif of Mt Shkhara (5193m), Georgia's highest peak, Ushguli is an unbelievably picturesque spot. With more than 20 ancient Svanetian towers, it has been on the Unesco World Heritage List since 1996. This community of four villages, a 47km, 2½-hour drive southeast from Mestia, reaches up to 2100m above sea level and has a claim to be Europe's highest permanently inhabited settlement (Katamadze, 2013:695-698).

Georgia has all the makings of the next great wine destination: the world's longest-running unbroken wine tradition, hundreds of indigenous grape varieties, stunning landscapes and a band of vintners espousing natural methods.

Focus on Georgian Wines and the Traditional Method of Winemaking Georgia, a land of 520 grape varieties and an 8000 year history of winemaking, proudly maintains its status as the birthplace of wine. Millennia of viticulture in Georgia and entrenched traditions that have grown up around wine and winemaking have made it inseparable from the country's national identity. Some remarkable facts about Georgian wines – including the fact that many are still made in clay pots called qvevri, buried in the ground as they were in Neolithic times – have begun to spark curiosity amongst destination tourists (Janxoteli, 2005: 54-58).

The main function of protected areas is to protect the natural heritage of Georgia. In addition, they have other functions, one of which is to contribute to ecotourism development. Over time, it has become clear to Georgian society that protected areas aren't banned territories, but can also be used for tourist purposes.

There are 88 different categories of protected areas in Georgia: 14 Strict Nature Reserves, 11 National Parks, 42 Natural Monuments, 19 Managed Natural Reserves and 2 Protected Landscapes. The total size of all protected areas is 597,556 ha, which comprises 8.57% of the total territory of the country. The number of visitors registered in protected areas in 2016 was 734,874. Compared to the previous year, this was a growth rate of 41.8%. Out of the total number of visitors, 42% were foreigners (<http://apa.gov.ge/>).

The tourism development in the Protected Areas in Georgia is very intensive. It brings recognition of natural attractions of Georgia, but also a pressure to develop new infrastructure, products and services, to offer more information and interpretation about nature, biodiversity, wilderness and also cultural heritage as well as to manage better challenges of increasing visitation such as bad access roads to PAs, problems with water, electricity or IT, or problems with waste management. Thus APA and PAs administrations are all the time balancing their primary activities related to nature conservation, protection and management, and activities that should meet the demand and expected experiences of visitors. This relates also to budget and its allocation.

The number of international arrivals in Georgia reached a record number of 6,350,825 in 2016, which are 449,731 more than the previous year representing annual growth of 7.6%. The greatest number of visitors hailed from Azerbaijan (1,523,075, an increase of 9.3%), followed by Armenia (1,496,246, an increase of 1.9%) and Turkey (1,254,089 – a decrease of 9.9% from last year). 1,037,564 Russian visitors visited Georgia in 2016, which is a full 12% more than in 2015, while visits from Ukraine increased by 21.8%, amounting to 172,631 people.

The year-on-year statistics for visitors from Europe also show positive signs. The total number of travelers from Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Germany has all significantly increased. An exceptional increase in arrivals was observed from the following countries: Iran (+485%), India (+199%), Saudi Arabia (+116%), the Philippines (+89%), Oman (+75%), and China (+46%). The income from international tourism has also increased, amounting to USD

1.7 billion in three quarters of 2016. That represents USD 177 million more than figures from the previous year.

In January – April, 2018 the number of international arrivals in Georgia amounted to 2,060,264, showing an increase of 15.9% compared to the same period of previous year. Out of the total number of visits, 937,370 lasted longer than 24 hours (+27.2%). The majority of foreign travelers were Azerbaijani (-0.5%), Armenian (+8.7%), Turkish (+23.9%), Russian (+31.2%) and Iranian (+69.3%).

A positive trend in arrivals was also observed among citizens of the European Union countries. A notable increase was registered of Estonian +83.1%, Latvian +55.8%, British +46.6%, Spanish +43.9%, Dutch +38.4% and French +24.4% travelers. Exceptional growth in arrivals was recorded of citizens of the following countries: Kuwait +111.4%, Iran +69.3%, China +58.2%, Saudi Arabia +57.9% and Israel +49.7% ([www.gnta.ge/](http://www.gnta.ge/)).

Georgian market is small with the volume and therefore the domestic market is not enough for the development of the tourism with the high temps. And outdoor tourist market is difficult to be assimilated for the tour-products of Georgia. Therefore, domestic market saturation with the local tour-goods and then its mass export is the first line problem of the macro-economic for our country. And tourism, compared with the other branches, distinguishes with the high level in solving this problem, because both the export and the local use of the touristic production is directly oriented on the extension of the domestic market. Therefore, it can be said with conviction that it is necessary determination of the real role of the tourism and of the resorts branch in the world economy (Berishvili, 2012:345).

For the increasing the competitiveness of the tourism in Georgia and in order to take its place in the world market especially great importance is given to the advertising of the country's touristic sights, Georgia's active presentation as the new country and its introduction for the rest of the world. Tourism is the image of our world. Its development is impossible without taking into account the number of factors affecting on it: 1. Tourism will not develop, if the country is not stable politically and economically; 2. Development of the tourism is impossible without the country's overall socio-economic prosperity; 3. Tourism needs the developed infrastructure of the hydropower complex, railway and motorways line with the international standards, vehicles of high standards; 4. For the development international tourism in Georgia it is also needed the regulated banking and insurance system, public order and democratic relationships based on the rule of law inside the country; 5. Developing Georgia's brand and positioning its tourism industry on the international market; 6. Increasing Georgia's competitiveness with similar tourist markets; 7. market share growth; infrastructure development; 8. Improvement of the service sphere; 9. Education quality enhancement; 10. Attracting investors and promoting the local private sector through effective partnership and cooperative development.

State has the leading role in planning the development of the tourism. Exactly it regulates the priorities of the branch development, in order to avoid the sharp economic

fluctuations - crisis or natural development, especially in the regions having the fragile eco-systems. In this sphere it is impossible the growth of the role of the state without elaborating the state program of the complex development of the tourism.

Georgia has the great possibilities in order to develop the touristic business successfully. The great efforts are needed to turn the perspective from possibility into work.

Georgia has the great possibilities to become the recipient country of the tourists. However, the tourists visiting from the civilized countries need the high-class services and infrastructure. From this point of view, it is important to enact such policies of the tourism, which will be based on internationally approbated requirements, on the provision of the touristic service quality and standard. Reaching to the mentioned international standards is simplified in the conditions of the active cooperation with the world's tourism organization.

In XXI century's Georgia tourism must be formatted as the economic branch of the sustainable development, because it can bring many positive results for our country. Namely these are the following: 1. Employment (among them in alternative branches and regions); 2. The Fight against the poverty; 3.To

get incomes by the state, in the form of taxes and foreign currency; 4.Development of infrastructure; 5. Multiplication effects; 6.Diversification Of the Economy; 7.Development of the local Culture and art; 8.Promotion of the environment protection and 9.Formation of the international peace and understanding. Exactly for this, for its social-economical importance the tourism is considered as the phenomenon of XXI century.

Thus, in the strategic directions of the economical development of Georgia tourism seems as an important priority. Georgia has the great potential opportunities to obtain the status of the tourist recipient country, however, the tourists visiting from the civilized countries need the high-class services and infrastructure. From this point of view, it is important to enact such policies of the tourism, which will be based on the provision of the touristic service quality and standard, it is very actual the active cooperation with the world's tourism organization, within which must be occur the determination of the directions of the international regulation of the tourism, because in the conditions of the international collaboration during the development of the tourism happen getting of the experience and assistance.

---

#### REFERENCES:

- 1.Katamadze D., Katamadze G., (2013).International Tourism ,Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, P. 695-698.
2. <https://en.unesco.org/>
3. Janxoteli G. (2005).Megvineoba, Tbilisi, P.54-58.
4. Berishvili X.(2012). International Tourizm Buzineses, T.: Universal, P. 345.
5. Albrecht D. Christoph, „Tourismus 2025 Fit fur die Zukunft?“ [http://issuu.com/stephantiefenthaler/docs/tourismus2025\\_fitfuerdiezuku](http://issuu.com/stephantiefenthaler/docs/tourismus2025_fitfuerdiezuku)
6. Sirse J., Kharstishvili L., (2015). Strategy for tourism development in protected areas in Georgia, P 41-42
7. D. Styles, H. Schönberger, J.L. Galvez Martos, ( 2013). Tourism Sector.
- 8.[www.gnta.ge](http://www.gnta.ge)
9. [www.caucasustravel.com](http://www.caucasustravel.com)
10. WTTC Travel and Tourism. (2015). World economic impact
11. <http://apa.gov.ge/ge/>
12. [www.geostat.ge](http://www.geostat.ge)
13. <http://www.nationalgeographic.de/>
14. <http://georgianwine.gov.ge/>

## TOURIST RESOURCES AS A REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FACTOR

---

**MAIA AZMAIPARASHVILI**

Doctor of Agricultural Sciences

Associate Professor, European University, Georgia

maiaazmaiparashvili@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.35945/gb.2018.05.032>

**KEYWORDS:** TRAVEL, REGIONAL TOURISM, GEORGIAN MARKET, INTERNATIONAL VISITORS, WINE TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT

### SUMMARY

The work refers to the opportunities of Georgia in turning into the one of the leading players of the world's tourism market. The development of tourism in Georgia is of great importance both to the socio-economic point of view,

and promotion in the world of centuries-old indigenous of Georgian nation, its history and cultural heritage. However, tourism can become a major source of replenishment of the Georgian budget and monetary resources.