

# 59

Presentation date: February, 2022

Date of acceptance: May, 2022

Publication date: June, 2022

## A PROBLEM

IN CREATING CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF THE TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF TOURISM IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS OF AZERBAIJAN

## UN PROBLEMA EN LA CREACIÓN DE FORMAS CONTEMPORÁNEAS DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN TERRITORIAL DEL TURISMO EN LAS REGIONES MONTAÑOSAS DE AZERBAIYÁN

Gunesh Agakishiyeva Rafiq<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [guneshagakishiyeva@gmail.com](mailto:guneshagakishiyeva@gmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8200-7278>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Geography of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Baku, Azerbaijan.

### Suggested citation (APA, 7<sup>th</sup> edition):

Agakishiyeva Rafiq, G., (2022). A problem in creating contemporary forms of the territorial (spatial) organization of tourism in the mountainous regions of Azerbaijan. *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*, 14(S3), 586-593

### ABSTRACT

The article examines the issues of creating contemporary forms of territorial (spatial) organization of tourism. Different approaches to tourism destinations, specific and general features for destinations were indicated by studying the requirements for naming the area destination. Strategies used in the development of tourism destinations in Azerbaijan, Destination Management Organizations established in the country, the areas where they are located and the districts and cities, they cover are analyzed in the research paper. The processes of formation of special economic zones and formation of the legal base in Azerbaijan were studied, as well as the possibilities of creating such zones in the country were indicated. The research was conducted to identify areas with rich tourism potential in the western, north-western and southern parts of the country as tourism and recreation zones. The segments forming the structure of the tourism-recreation cluster, methodological approaches to the experience of cluster formation and different features of tourism destinations from clusters were studied as well.

**Keywords:** tourism destination, tourism cluster, tourism-recreation type special economic zones, regional development program, tourism potential

### RESUMEN

El artículo examina los problemas de la creación de formas contemporáneas de organización territorial (espacial) del turismo. Los diferentes enfoques de los destinos turísticos, las características específicas y generales de los destinos se indicaron mediante el estudio de los requisitos para nombrar el destino del área. En el trabajo de investigación se analizan las estrategias utilizadas en el desarrollo de destinos turísticos en Azerbaiyán, las Organizaciones de Gestión de Destino establecidas en el país, las áreas donde se encuentran y los distritos y ciudades que cubren. Se estudiaron los procesos de formación de zonas económicas especiales y la formación de la base legal en Azerbaiyán, así como se indicaron las posibilidades de crear tales zonas en el país. La investigación se llevó a cabo para identificar áreas con un rico potencial turístico en las partes occidental, noroeste y sur del país como zonas de turismo y recreación. También se estudiaron los segmentos que forman la estructura del clúster de turismo-recreación, los enfoques metodológicos de la experiencia de formación de clústeres y las diferentes características de los destinos turísticos de los clústeres.

**Palabras clave:** destino turístico, clúster turístico, zonas económicas especiales de tipo turismo-recreación, programa de desarrollo regional, potencial turístico

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism generates almost 10 percent of global GDP and supports more than 270 million jobs. According to a long-term forecast by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals will reach 1.8 billion by 2030. After the economic crisis of 2008, tourism was seen as an important economic driver promoting wealth and growth, therefore, a lot has been done to develop it in cities and in rural areas (Erschbamer et al., 2020). According to Page (2019, pp. 9–11) tourism and its analysis have become a relatively recent field of study among academics, researchers and commentators. Admittedly, tourism is about pleasure and enjoyment, but its global growth and expansion are now creating serious societal problems and issues; therefore, a fundamental understanding of tourism is required if we are to manage and control the impacts and problems it can cause.

One of the key features of tourism is that it is a system which in its most basic form is comprised of travelers, the attraction (or place including the host community) and the mechanisms which support travelers moving from the home location and back. Over the past 40 years, research has enhanced this conceptualization such that the tourism system is now recognized as an organism which functions fully within a series of ecosystems or sub-ecosystems that range in scale from a room or building to much larger places such as a park, a community, city or even a country (Fesenmaier & Xiang, 2017).

In this sense, currently, there are several forms of territorial (spatial) organization of tourism. At the end of the twentieth century, thanks to the World Tourism Organization, the term “tourism destinations” was approved in the scientific, practical and normative-legal spheres, and this term is determined as part of a tourism space consisting of products and services for tourists, forming on the basis of tourism-recreational potential, and having continuous attraction and borders (Cooper, 2008). Additionally, the twentieth century is also characterized by new theories and principles of governance, which are reflected in the territorial (spatial) organization of tourism. In the twentieth century, a plethora of research was conducted on the emergence of centralized and technologically integrated enterprises in the area, their competitiveness, the introduction of the concept of “cluster” in science, its use in tourism, the relationship between “tourism destination” and “tourism cluster”, as well as the formation of special economic zones.

As a term, clusters are tourism-recreation enterprises that are geographically and functionally interconnected, complement each other in the realization of the sphere

of production, tourism-recreation products and services, concentrated in a specific area (Kruzhalin et al., 2014).

Although neoteric forms of territorial (spatial) organization of tourism - destination, tourism-recreation cluster, and special economic zones of tourism-recreation type have several common features, there are significant differences in the field of geography and organization-management. Since the novel forms of territorial (spatial) organization of tourism have a great role in the development of modern tourism, a scientific analysis of the principles of their formation, management and development should be carried out, which will be the main goal of this work.

In this regard, The Destination Management Organization established by the joint decision of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau, have established tourism-recreation special economic zones formed by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On the establishment of special economic zones in the Republic of Azerbaijan”. Then, the Baku-Gobustan-Mud volcanoes tourism cluster established within the implementation of the State Program on Socio-Economic Development of Regions (2019-2023) will be the object of this research.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Tourism destination

“Destination” is derived from the Latin word “settlement”. There are two approaches to defining the concept of “destination” in external sources. The term “destination” was first included in the dictionary of tourism as the term “a place to go”. The first tourist destination of the tour, organized by Thomas Cook in 1840, was Loughborough, which is also considered the world’s first tourist destination (Rassokhina, 2014).

According to the second approach, a destination is a geographical area that is attractive to tourists. Thus, the category of “attractiveness” may come to the fore and create inconveniences for different tourists. For example, tourists of different ages and interests vacationing in the same area may have different travel purposes. Some are attracted to the beach and the sea, some to historical sites and museums, and the third group to active recreation and entertainment. The concept of tourism destination was first scientifically substantiated by N. Leiper, a professor at Massey University (Auckland, New Zealand). Then tourism was considered a system consisting of the following main elements: geographical component, tourists, and tourism economy (Leiper, 1979).

Although there are complex approaches to the tourism destination, such as social, geographical, and economic, there is no single concept that defines it. However, in order to an area to be called a destination, it should meet the following basic requirements:

- Certain services required for the reception of tourists (pre-destination and back delivery (transport), accommodation (hotels, holiday homes, camping) and food (restaurant, cafe)).
- Sightseeings call tourists' attention
- Also, information systems factored importantly for product distribution and development in the tourism market (Dracheva, 2013).

Taking into account the scientific views of the experts of the World Tourism Organization on the definition of tourism destination, the following approach to tourism destination is the more widespread: *Tourism destination, being an area with a certain attractiveness for tourists, is distinguished by a number of features: geographical and administrative boundaries, tourism and recreation products and services, attractiveness of resources, affordability (economic, transport terms), image and reputation which ultimately affect the competitiveness of the tourism market.*

Even though each tourist destination has its own specific features, however, there are also common features such as:

- Destination has a high potential for tourism and recreation.
- Contemporary tourism destination is a managed system with a system of public and government administration that determines the development policy, forms the investment climate, and regulates the flow of tourists.
- As the destination is considered a cultural treasure, tourists should make the area more attractive.
- Destination should be indivisible and consumed where tourism products are produced.
- Since the services and conditions of the destination are used not only by tourists but also by the local population and employees of the destination, destination establishments should cover a wide audience.
- Tourism is taken into consideration as an important economic factor in the regional economy, as the product of the destination plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of the region.

There are several approaches to the classification of tourism destinations in research.

Morozov (2005) allocated 3 types of destinations. The first type, being large capital cities or equivalent centers, attracts tourists with their sights (perceptual tourism), favorable opportunities for solving business problems (congress, business tourism, seminar, exhibition). In order to see relatives and friends, tourism, as well as administrative centers, play a key role in solving management issues. That is why large cities have historical, administrative, trade, business centers and recreation areas. The second type is divided into 2 subgroups. Centers aimed at the development of tourism in villages and towns where traditions, historical and cultural samples are preserved, form the 1<sup>st</sup> subgroup, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> subgroup of cities with its level of attraction for tourists with its history, culture and science. The third type is centers built specifically for tourists (Disneyland in California (USA) and France, for example).

Expanding the approach to the classification of tourism destinations, T.V. Rassokhina takes the scale, importance, genesis, specialization, long-distance, stage of the life cycle, and age as the primary classification features. Scale – is defined by the boundaries of the territorial system of destination, characterized by an established management system and total reserve potential. Significance – is determined by the location of destined tourist flows in the regions. Genesis - is formed on the basis of natural resources or specially created reserves. Specialization - is determined by the reserve potential of the destination, which provides one or another tourist purpose. Long-distance - is determined by the choice of tourists for each region. The stage of the life cycle - is characterized by periods of formation, developing, developed, depletion and recovery. Age - is determined by the period of continuous reception of tourist flows (Rassokhina, 2014).

Several strategies are used in the development of tourist destinations. The first strategy is to expand popular places and regions, to form the basis of tourism destinations of existing tourism organizations. Considering that Strategy 2 begins with the development of tourism destinations, a clear list of measures for tourism development plans in the area is important. Strategy 3, called "Centralization Strategy", is related to centralization in the territory of tourist destinations with socio-economic (infrastructure, financial, personnel, etc.) tourism and recreation services. Based on a comprehensive approach, Strategy 4 forms several tourism destinations simultaneously within the administrative boundary (Khair, 2013).

In order to form a foundation of tourism destination and create a tourism destination, it is first necessary to select a territory, identify tourism products, inventory resources, analyze the market, organize work, improve international

relations, create sources of information, prepare advertising materials, and enter into the international market. Subsequently, after selecting a favorable economic and geographical position, it is important to exploit the historical and cultural heritage and its centralization, tourism facilities belonging to popular tourist routes as the conceptual basis for the development of tourism in the region. It is also important the sustainable development of hotel infrastructure, to enhance the traditions of hospitality and service experience as a benign condition for the development of various tourism, the creation of conditions for increasing the living standards of the population maintaining stable social and cultural conditions in the destination. This should be done taking into account the intersection of rivers, railways, roads and airways in the area, etc.

In the 1980s, a novel model of the life cycle of destination was developed by Richard Butler. By constructing his S-shaped model, the author goes through 5 stages in his evolution in the conditions of a free market and constant supply and demand: exploration, attraction, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline, and renewal. The essential indicators of the transition from one stage to another are changes in the number of tourist flows, as well as the state of the environment and tourism infrastructure, and the attitude of the local population to arrivals (Butler, 1980).

The development of a tourist destination is a difficult and gradual process, ranging from the identification of the area as a potential tourism destination to the formation depending on various factors of the internal and external environment. Tourism destination goes through several stages in their development:

- **Pre-tourism stage** due to non-specialization of the area in terms of tourism.
- **Increase in the number of tourists.** With the beauty of intact nature and cultural heritage attracting tourists, business activities in the area expand, resulting in the formation of the basis of tourism infrastructure.
- **Development.** Efforts of local authorities to create high-quality products and services that are more preferred by tourists expand the tourism potential of the area; there is a steady flow of tourist flows resulting in the formation of a tourism market.
- **Investment and tourism.** There is a discrepancy between the number of tourists flows and the infrastructure, as a result of which the objects that can change the state of destination - shops, pubs, bars, hotels, casinos, etc. service facilities increase.
- **Creation of novel business opportunities.** The destination is the influx of tourists from other regions and

even countries to work and stay there, and the influx of tourists who bring traditions and culture with them, resulting in conflicts between locals and immigrants over social, environmental and economic issues.

- **Reduction of tourists flows.** Tourists want to travel to more interesting, unusual and non-typical destinations.
- **Practical non-use of service facilities** (empty condition of hotels) results in their loss.
- **Discounts.** Appears a new pricing policy or a new development idea of destination (the basic issue is to look for and create new factors of attraction) creates conditions for the revival of tourist flows.

Thus, a tourism destination is an area with certain tourism-recreation products and services, formed on the basis of tourism-recreation resources, providing continuous tourist flows, passing through several stages in its evolutionary development, with geographical boundaries.

#### *Tourism-recreation type special economic zones*

In 2019, the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (STA) and the Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau (ATB) jointly decided to establish new bodies for the development, promotion and management of tourism in the regions of the country, which are also called Destination Management Organizations. It should be noted that the Destination Management Organizations operating under the Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau are working to identify tourism opportunities in the regions they cover. Destination Management Organizations, which aim to guide the sustainable development of tourism in the country's regions and coordinate the activities of various parties, represent the leading regional tourism regions and unite several regions. The activities of Destination Management Organizations are organized in accordance with 3 main bases: tourism marketing and communications, development of tourism business and products, development of human resources in tourism and standards. Destination Management Organizations in Azerbaijan cover the following regions, districts and cities:

- Ganja DMO for the western Region - Ganja, Shamkir, Tovuz, Gadabay, Goygol, Dashkasan, Naftalan and Mingachevir
- Guba DMO for the northeastern region - Guba and Gusar
- Lankaran DMO for the southern region - Lankaran, Astara, Lerik and Masalli
- Shaki DMO for the northwestern region - Shaki, Gakh, Balakan and Zagatala.

The fundamental purpose of creating tourism-recreation type special economic zones is to increase the



competitiveness of tourism activities in the country. For this, the mechanism of formation of tourism-recreation type special economic zones should be applied in any country.

Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2017 "On accelerating the establishment of free economic zones" and Decree dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 "On the establishment of special economic zones in the Republic of Azerbaijan" regulates the legal and economic relationships, as well as accelerates this activity. It should be noted that the formed normative-legal base creates the basis for the creation of special economic zones in Azerbaijan.

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Special Economic Zones, adopted on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, which entered into force on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, consists of 21 articles and defines the rules for organizing entrepreneurial activity in special economic zones. The law also stipulates the issues such as the purpose of establishing special economic zones, defining the territory of the special zone, its financing and liquidation, management and development of the special economic zone, functions of the authorized body, functions of the special economic zone administration, operator's rights and responsibilities, activities of special economic zone residents, carrying out entrepreneurial activities by them, allocation and use of land plots in the territory, state control over the activities of the special economic zone, customs and tax regime, regulation of currency and labour relations, and liability for violation of the law.

While studying the current state of the processes of formation of special economic zones and the formation of the legal framework in Azerbaijan, several ideas and considerations were attracted in this direction paying attention to examples of international experience. Regardless of the name and special status of special economic zones, the problem of in-depth study of international-legal and national-legal aspects of such zones remains a necessity. Thus, if the legislative framework is imperfect, there is a mismatch between international law and national legal elements, and serious problems can arise for the effective and organized operation of special economic zones. It is no coincidence that in several countries after the adoption of laws on special economic zones, the practical application of such zones has not been possible for a long time. In some cases, laws in this category have not been implemented and need to be improved (S. Aliyev, 2012).

Problems and prospects of development and application of optimal modification of tourism-recreation special economic zones in Azerbaijan should not be overlooked.

Thus, although serious measures have been taken in the country for several years in connection with tourism, there is still a serious need to intensify measures to identify the real potential of this sector and its implementation in practical processes (S. Aliyev, 2012).

The Azerbaijani government is already implementing a winter sports complex project in the northern region of the country, and an infrastructure network is being put into operation. However, it is noteworthy that there is a strong potential and prospects for the application of special economic zones for tourism and recreation on the northern shores of the Caspian Sea, in the western and southern regions of the country. In our opinion, Azerbaijan already has political and economic stability and financial resources for the practical implementation of one or two of these economic zones. The acceptance of the tourism sector in Azerbaijan as one of the priority non-oil sectors of the country, the creation and application of specific tourism-recreation special economic zones in the context of numerous measures in this area are important to achieve more diversified economy, to attract local investors' capital but at the same time it would encourage the attraction of investors with large foreign capital (S. Aliyev, 2012).

In the Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur economic regions, the task of creating a tourism-recreation special economic zone is to create conditions for the development of tourism in the area, raise the level of tourism services, and improve the investment climate in the region, as well as to improve employment. Once the Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur economic regions are cleared of mines and the area is fully restored, the increase in the flow of tourists will allow the development of other sectors of the economy and the expansion of entrepreneurial activity.

One of the strategic goals of the Strategic Roadmap for the development of the tourism industry is to create a favorable environment for the development of the tourism sector in the country. Five essential mechanisms have been developed, which will be the basis for the implementation of the country's tourism priorities. One of the priorities is the creation of tourism and recreation zones. In accordance with the rapid development of the regions, taking into account their geographical location, within the framework of the need for special measures, tourism and recreation zones should be created in areas with rich tourism potential.

The establishment of tourism and recreation zones will allow to protect the environment and cultural heritage in the relevant areas, comprehensive and efficient use of the region's tourism potential, create favorable conditions for investment, create novel job opportunities in the regions,

and to improve the quality of services. For this it will be important to increase product range, collect tourism statistics allows for more efficient implementation of management, regulatory and coordination measures, the creation of a diverse and high-quality infrastructure that meets state-of-the-art standards (I. Aliyev, 2016).

Activities in tourism and recreation zones should be organized in accordance with the tourism cluster. The establishment of tourism and recreation zones in accordance with the tourism cluster is an important condition and requires investment. The management structure should develop a development plan for tourism and recreation zones, which should include, along with government agencies, the development of the private sector and the allocated funds. For the implementation of these development programs, the Tourism Agency intends to conduct inspections through a monitoring mechanism.

The Tourism Agency will ensure the development of a strategic plan that identifies a tourism cluster at the macro level for each zone to ensure more efficient use of tourism potential in the area of tourism and recreation zones. According to the tourism cluster, general and current plans of the zones will be prepared, and the proposals of partners interested in tourism development will be taken into account. The creation of tourism service infrastructure in accordance with the tourism cluster in tourism and recreation zones is likely to increase the sustainable operation, efficient management, quality service and attractiveness for tourists in this area (I. Aliyev, 2016).

The Tourism Agency will conduct a study to identify areas with high tourism potential in the western, north-western and southern parts of Azerbaijan as tourism and recreation zones. As a result of these studies, the strategic goals of the zone will be determined, and the exact geographical coverage and functional direction of tourism and recreation zones will be described in accordance with the goals reflected in the Strategic Roadmap for the development of tourism in the regions. At the initial stage, 1,8 million manats are required for the development of action plans, design planning and project management of the tourist centre with 4,000 beds in the Khizi-Khachmaz, Guba and Gusar tourism and recreation zones in the northern region. 1 million manats are required for the identification of areas for the announcement of novel tourism and recreation zones in the western, northwestern and southern regions, topographic maps at a scale of 1: 25000, cadastral maps with property data, the economic feasibility of land management maps and zones, as well as a macro development plan (I. Aliyev, 2016).

### Tourism and recreation clusters

The use of clusters in the tourism industry is inevitable. Thus, the tourism product is associated with local resources and requires interaction between enterprises and the administrative bodies of the region. As a result, a chain of interconnected economic entities is formed in a certain area.

Tourism-recreation cluster is a group of enterprises, scientific-educational and public organizations, and public administration bodies that form and implement tourism products and services based on the use of the tourism-recreation potential of the area, geographically interconnected with the principle of neighbourly and public-private partnership (Kruzhalin et al., 2014). The cluster is related to a number of factors affecting the development of regional and national economies. The cluster covers industry, agriculture, tourism, transport, trade, social infrastructure, etc. Being one of the forms of cooperation in various fields, it ensures the economic development of the region (Imrani, 2015).

Compared to industrial clusters, tourism-recreation clusters have a number of features. Thus, tourism-recreation clusters have unique tourism-recreation resources, on the basis of which unique products and services are formed through tour operators. While the services in the tourism-recreation cluster are not accurate, continuous and consistent, the services included in each tourism product are different and depend on the choice of the specific tourist. The quality of services considered to be the result of tourism-recreation cluster enterprises is assessed by tourists and varies depending on numerous factors.

The organization of the cluster in the tourism sector has administrative, business, and social significance for the country's economy. By increasing the number of taxpayers and the tax base for administrative bodies, the authorities can effectively use new market trends in the socio-economic development of the region through the cluster. By entering the consumer market, a cluster for business can also remove barriers to the supply of raw materials and labor force. In terms of social significance, the cluster stimulates the improvement of living conditions, infrastructure development and unemployment reduction.

The structure of the tourism-recreation cluster is formed by 4 segments: cluster core, cluster base, serving mixed cluster enterprises, and cluster infrastructure. At the core of the cluster are tour operators and travel agents, who are also involved in the creation, development and sale of tourism products. The basis of the cluster is enterprises that provide transport, food, accommodation (hotel), recreation, medical and entertainment services to tourists.

The mixed cluster enterprises serving include organizations providing additional services to tourists: household services, rent, exhibition complexes, souvenir enterprises, insurance companies, and financial institutions. They provide operation of all parts of the cluster infrastructure: general infrastructure (engineering, transport, communications, energy vehicles and facilities), special tourism infrastructure (pedestrian crossings in tourist facilities, roads, sewerage system, energy network), information infrastructure (tourism information centers), sites, information objects located in settlements). Then, the created cluster must contain at least 2 blocks: the core of the cluster and the base of the cluster (Pidgurskaya, 2006).

As a result of the study of methodological approaches to the experience of cluster formation, a number of factors have been identified for the realization of this process. Enterprises that use the competitive advantages of the area and focus on a dynamically developing market, high entrepreneurship, scientific organizations with a professional workforce, infrastructure that supports the creation of novel enterprises with innovative development, chambers of commerce and industry and professional associations, tourism support and development, as well as the policies of regional governments and administrations aimed at reducing administrative barriers in general, are among the factors listed above.

The formation of tourism and recreation clusters must go through several stages in order to make decisions at the level of executive bodies of the region and implement cluster policy. The mentioned stages include administrative-management, research, design, engineering, management, and personnel stages (Kruzhalin et al., 2014).

The administrative phase includes decision-making on the development of tourism and recreational activities in the region, the development of science-based concepts and programs for tourism development, establishment of a coordination council on tourism with the participation of representatives of business, public and specialized research institutions. The research phase includes a sociological survey of local residents and visitors on the development of the area in terms of tourism and recreation, the creation of a passport of the area, and the assessment of the tourism and recreation potential of the area.

The project phase is related to the creation of a project of tourism and recreation clusters, conducting tourism and recreation expertise, and identifying sources of funding for the project. The engineering phase covers the use of normative approaches to the spatial location of tourist and recreational complexes and the organization of construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and other facilities

in the field of tourism on the basis of cooperation with the state and private property. The management phase includes the establishment of a unit for the development of the tourism industry, a tourism information center in the structure of the administration, and the organization of the work of the coordination council for the development of tourism in the region. The personnel phase covers the establishment of a regional training system for the designed and established tourism and recreation clusters.

Distinguished as a special spatial-organizational form of tourism development, the cluster has common and different features that are characteristic of a tourist destination. Unlike tourism destinations, the geographical boundaries of a cluster are not permanent and depend on the number and location of participants. Apart from geographical boundaries, the difference between a cluster and a tourism destination is the nature of the participants and the relationships between them. Management functions in tourism and recreation clusters are performed by a public-private partnership, and in tourism destinations by management bodies.

The foundation of the Mud Volcanoes Tourism Complex was laid on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, in the territory of Gobustan village in the Absheron region. This complex will be located 59 km southwest of Baku, about 17 km northwest of Gobustan settlement, on the main road to Shamakhi, at an altitude of 235 m above sea level. After assessing the tourism potential of this place, known as the territory of "Gilinj (Sword)" mud volcanoes, it was decided to create a tourist complex here. The project on the creation of tourism infrastructure is being implemented within the State Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Regions (2019-2023).

According to the concept, the building of the complex will look like a crater from above, and there will be a workshop, an exhibition hall and a cafe in the area. There are a number of advantages of establishing a tourist complex in the area of "Gilinj" mud volcanoes, including the view of the nearby Toraghay and other volcanoes, the presence of 3 different groups of volcanoes, the location of Gobustan reserve and others. The 12-hectare complex will include a quad bike area, footpaths, a zipline and observation tower, a parking lot, a souvenir shop and medical baths. To solve the transport problem, it is planned to build a 20-kilometre road from the Gobustan reserve to the Gilinj and surrounding volcanoes, as well as the Baku-Gobustan-Mud volcanoes, which will result in the formation of a tourism cluster.

As established by Shamilova (2016) one of the priorities of Azerbaijan's non-oil sector is tourism. That is why,

large-scale measures aimed at bringing the country's tourism potential is fully realized in action in Baku, as well as modern tourist facilities have been built which are gradually improving service levels. Full use of the country's tourism sector, the share of non-oil gross domestic product will increase. Thus, the rich tourism potential of Azerbaijan in recent years, the rapid development of the tourism infrastructure in the country's non-oil sector of the country in this direction is promising huge returns.

## CONCLUSION

Studying contemporary forms of territorial (spatial) organization of tourism - destination, tourism-recreation cluster, tourism-recreation type special economic zones it was found that there are different approaches as well as research trends to modern forms of territorial organization. The normative-legal bases for the creation of modern forms of territorial organization of tourism in the territory of Azerbaijan were studied arriving at the conclusion that there is a well-established framework for the establishment of tourism clusters in the region. Similarities and differences in modern forms of territorial organization of tourism were identified presenting itself as one of the most interesting alternatives for the economic development of the country, not based on oil resources. Given its importance, the development of the tourism industry is one of the economic activities that Azerbaijan is committed to, given that the economic, political and human resource conditions for its development exist in the country, although work must still be continued on strengthening the infrastructure of the sector as well as international marketing.

## REFERENCES

- Aliyev, I. (2016). *Strategic Roadmap for the Development of Specialized Tourism Industry in the Republic of Azerbaijan*. Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. <https://monitoring.az/assets/upload/files/d53a6f3606f2ec987a4084ee6664380e.pdf>
- Aliyev, S. (2012). *Problems of applying special economic zones*. Science Development Foundation.
- Butler, R. (Ed.). (1980). The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources. *Canadian Geographer*, 24(1), 5–12.
- Cooper, K. (2008). *Tourism Economics: Theory and Practice*. Omega.
- Dracheva, E. (2013). *Basic concepts of international tourism as a system*. KNORUS.
- Erschbamer, G., Innerhofer, E., & Pechlaner, H. (2020). *Overtourism: Tourism management and solutions*. Routledge.
- Fesenmaier, D. R., & Xiang, Z. (2017). Introduction to Tourism Design and Design Science in Tourism. In D. R. Fesenmaier & Z. Xiang (Eds.), *Design Science in Tourism: Foundations of Destination Management* (pp. 3–16). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42773-7\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42773-7_1)
- Imrani, Z. (2015). Cluster method for sustainable development of production areas in Azerbaijan. *Journal of Geography*, 4(3), 235–240.
- Khair, F. (2013). *Management of tourist destinations*. <http://test.belarustourism.by/>
- Kruzhalin, V., Shabalina, N., Aigina, E., & Novikov, V. (2014). *Management and self-regulation processes in tourism*. Dialogue of Cultures.
- Leiper, N. (1979). The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), 390–407. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(79\)90003-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(79)90003-3)
- Morozov, M. (2005). *Tourist destinations and patterns of their development*. Monograph.
- Page, S. J. (2019). *Tourism Management* (6th ed.). Routledge.
- Pidgurskaya, N. (2006). *Cluster Approach to Tourism Regulation in the Region* [Dissertation to obtain the degree of Doctor in Economical Sciences]. Irkutsk State University.
- Rassokhina, T. (2014). Tourism destination management. *Journal of "Soviet Sport"*, 3(9).
- Shamilova, B. Q. (2016). The development of tourism in Azerbaijan. *Actual Problems of the Humanities and Natural Sciences*, 3(2), 14–16. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/the-development-of-tourism-in-azerbaijan>