

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of languages



Bachelor Thesis

The development of the Issyk-Kul region

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Farida Baiysheva

Economics and Management

Thesis title

The development of the Issyk-Kul region

Objectives of thesis

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to evaluate the influence of national parks and natural monuments on the development of the Issyk-Kul region in the Kyrgyz Republic in the last ten years and define the role of regional infrastructure and its impact on tourism.

Methodology

The bachelor thesis will be divided into two parts: theoretical and analytical. The Issyk-Kul region's environment and its current economy will be characterized in the theoretical part. The analytical part will consist of data analysis obtained from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. The following methods will be used: analysis, quantitative data collection, and statistics.

The proposed extent of the thesis

30-40 pages

Keywords

economy, Issyk-Kul Lake, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyzstan, national parks, regional development, Tian Shan, tourism, UNESCO

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "*The development of the Issyk-Kul region*" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 15.03.2023

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I would like to thank PhDr. Alena Drebitková Malá, Ph.D. for her continuous and thoughtful support and guidance throughout the whole process of writing of the bachelor thesis.

The development of the Issyk-Kul region

Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on the evaluation of the Issyk-Kul region and its development over the past decade and the role of the region in the economy of the country. The aim of the thesis is to characterize the regional development of the Issyk-Kul region in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2012 to 2022 and define the role of the regional infrastructure and its impact on tourism. Subsequently, the relevant recommendations leading to their improvement are suggested.

The literature search conducted in this study focuses on the theoretical knowledge of regional policy, methods, and tools, as well as regional development and tourism. The practical part of the study uses these findings to describe the Issyk-Kul region, including its historical and cultural monuments and tourism development. This information is then analysed in a detailed SWOT analysis, which leads to suggestions for improvement and future development of the region.

Keywords: Development, Ecology, Economy, GDP, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, Region, SWOT analysis, Tourism,

Rozvoj regionu Issyk-Kul

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zhodnocení regionu Issyk-kul a jeho vývoje za poslední desetiletí a roli regionu v ekonomice země. Cílem práce je charakterizovat regionální rozvoj regionu Issyk-kul v Kyrgyzské republice v letech 2012 až 2022 a definovat roli regionální infrastruktury a její vliv na cestovní ruch. Následně jsou navržena příslušná doporučení vedoucí k jejich zlepšení.

Literární rešerše prováděná v této studii se zaměřuje na teoretické znalosti regionální politiky, metod a nástrojů, jakož i regionálního rozvoje a cestovního ruchu. Praktická část studie využívá tyto poznatky k popisu regionu Issyk-kul, včetně jeho historických a kulturních památek a rozvoje cestovního ruchu. Tyto informace jsou následně analyzovány v podrobné SWOT analýze, která vede k návrhům pro zlepšení a budoucí rozvoj regionu.

Klíčová slova: Cestovní ruch, Ekologie, Ekonomika, HDP, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstán, Region, Rozvoj, SWOT analýza.

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Introduction

The large vertical extent of Lake Issyk-Kul, the complexity of the relief, significant fluctuations in hydrothermal parameters and other environmental factors have led to a wide variety of flora and fauna in its basin.

The Issyk-Kul region is one of the administrative-territorial units of Kyrgyzstan and is located in the east of the country. In ethno cultural and economic terms, the region, together with the neighbouring Chui and Naryn, as well as the outlying Talas regions, is part of so-called Northern Kyrgyzstan - a more industrially developed area of the state with a larger share of the Russian-speaking population.

Issyk-Kul Lake is located in this part and is one of the largest mountain lakes in the world. It is very picturesque. At one time, Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky compared it with "*precious aquamarine in a silver frame of snow-covered ridges*."¹

This is one of the best resort places in Central Asia - salty water saturated with radon; numerous therapeutic muds, mountainous landscape and clean mountain air are increasingly attracting the attention of tourists.

In the decision of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to preserve the rich natural and cultural heritage, the unique ecological system of Lake Issyk-Kul, in 1998 a resolution was adopted on the creation of the Issyk-Kul biosphere zone within the administrative boundaries of the Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyzstan².

It is a specially protected natural area of the national importance to the republic and is included in the world network of biosphere reserves within the framework of the UNESCO program "*Man and the Biosphere*"³. Yet, this region also has its environmental problems.

The Issyk-Kul region has long been famous for its resort wealth, occupying one of the first places in Central Asia in terms of availability and diversity. Special attention is paid to the lake with countless mineral springs varied in physical and chemical properties, therapeutic mud and small salt lakes.

¹ International Youth Forum "Silk Road - New Format - Green Standard". Amedia Press, 2019. Available at <https://amedia.press/event/mezhdunarodnyj-molodezhnyj-forum-shelkovyj-put-novyj-format-zelenyj-standart/>. Accessed [online] on 21.12.2022

² CENTRALIZED DATA BANK OF LEGAL INFORMATION OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC Under the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/7038> Accessed [online] on 11.12.2022

³ Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. UNESCO, Available at <https://en.unesco.org/mab> Accessed [online] on 18.12.2022

The author has chosen the topic for the bachelor thesis due to the Issyk-Kul region's importance in terms of tourism and the need to preserve its natural and cultural heritage. This study aims to evaluate the region's economic and tourism development from 2012 to 2022, taking into account its natural and cultural resources, and the environmental challenges it faces. Specifically, the study will conduct a detailed SWOT analysis of the tourism industry in the region and provide suggestions for improvement and further development. Additionally, the study will analyse the ecological, industrial, and economic development of the region and provide recommendations for future growth and sustainability.

1 Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Objectives

This bachelor thesis aims is to evaluate the regional development of the Issyk-Kul region in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2012 to 2022 and define the role of regional infrastructure and its impact on tourism.

1.2 Methodology

The bachelor thesis is divided into two parts: theoretical and analytical. The theoretical part provides the definition of the region, its classifications as well as national parks and protected areas. The chapter also highlights the aspects of tourism in the region, the regional policy, its methods and tools and the regional development.

The analytical part presents an analysis of the Issyk-Kul region, its historical and cultural monuments, natural sights, and coastal areas. The chapter also outlines a regional analysis of tourism, ecology and economy in 2012 - 2022.

An important part of the work is the thorough SWOT analysis - a tool that is used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a particular research topic. The analysis involves identifying and listing internal factors that are considered strengths or weaknesses, and external factors that present opportunities or threats.

Strengths are those attributes that give an advantage over others, while weaknesses are those attributes that place it at a disadvantageous position. Opportunities are external factors that could provide an advantage, while threats are external factors that could pose a risk⁴.

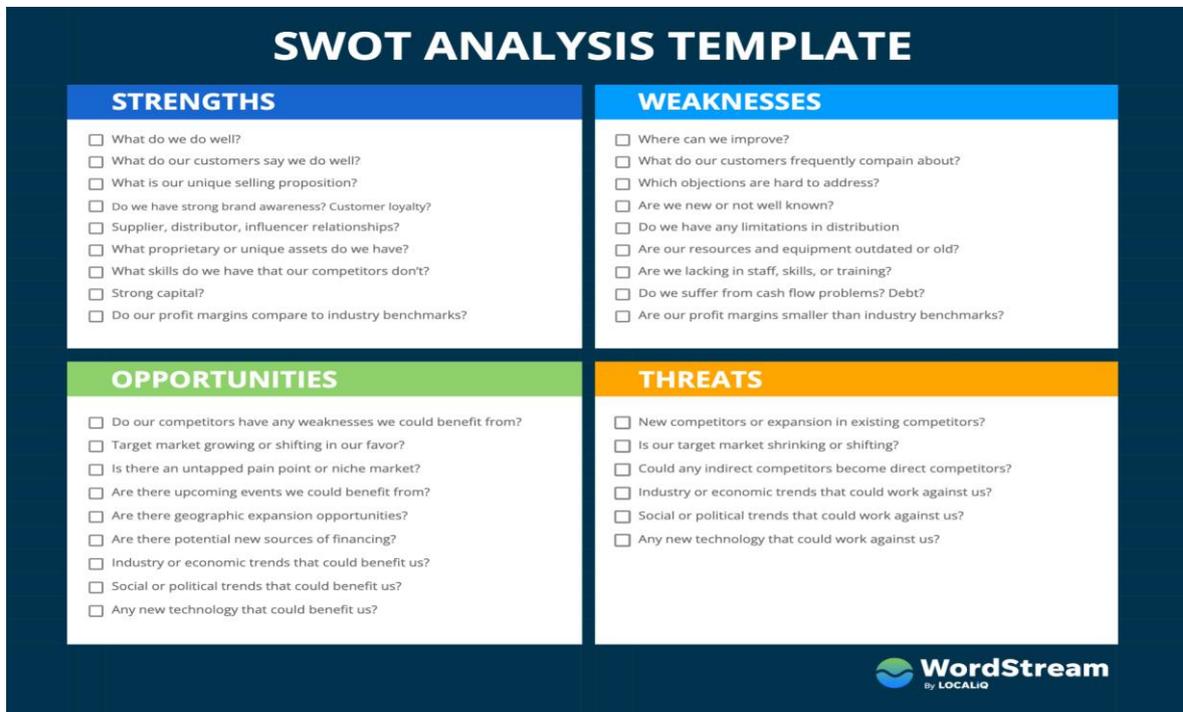


Figure 1 - SWOT analysis template. Source: <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/12/20/swot-analysis>

Finally, the thesis offers the suggestions for future development of the region. The following methods are used: analysis, quantitative data collection, and data synthesis and data comparison.

⁴ Humphrey, A. S. SWOT Analysis for Management. Stanford Research Institute, Menlo Park, CA, 1964

2 Theoretical part

2.1 Regions and their classification

When examining contemporary international processes, one can observe a mix of global and regional interaction involving not only states but also various structures, corporations, and organizations. On the one hand, it could appear that there are multi-order and multi-directional phenomena with various angles that cannot coexist harmoniously, but as world practice demonstrates, the development and interaction of global and regional is the essence of the contemporary world order.

In the political and legal sphere, the term "*region*" is presented in the Community Charter for Regionalization enacted by the European Parliament. It defines as "*a territory which constitutes, from a geographical point of view, a clear-cut entity or a similar grouping of territories where there is continuity and whose population possesses certain shared features and wishes to safeguard the resulting specific identity and to develop it with the object of stimulating cultural, social and economic progress*"⁵.

Nowadays, regions are widely perceived as spatial systems of very different scales, ranging from local metropolitan areas to groups of adjacent states connected by shared characteristics (natural, economic, administrative, socio-political, historical, cultural, confessional, militaristic and other regions).⁶

Two main directions were identified in the early half of the 20th century, showing the origins of the term "region" itself. It is characterized by regionalist geographers of the first half of the 20th century (Andrew John Herbertson, Richard Hartshorne, Carl Ortwin Sauer and others) as the variety of territorial systems, which was the starting point of a synthetic geographical description, suggesting coexistence, interweaving and overlapping in real geographical space.⁷

⁵ Community Charter for Regionalization. Official Journal of the European Communities. European Parliament Session Document A2-0218/88/Parts A and B, page 9. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/1/ep_resolution_regional_11_88.pdf Accessed [online] on 05.10.2022

⁶ KATZENSTEIN, P. J. *A world of regions. In: A World of Regions*. Cornell University Press, 2015. p.47. ISBN: 9781501700378

⁷ CHORLEY, R.; HAGGETT, P.. *Integrated Models in Geography (Routledge Revivals)*. Routledge, 2012. p.95. ISBN 9780415658683

According to Yadav, the region is a “*global region or city region or supraurban, subaltern urbanisation or peri-urban areas depending on their characteristics*”⁸. The author classifies them into agro-climatic, coastal, eco-sensitive, hilly and desert ones.

Clarification of the nature of the concept of “*region*” has gone through several stages, resulting in many formulations. Among this variety of approaches to the definition, one can highlight the administrative and economic approach, which takes into account the nature of the production and economic relations of the territory. In this aspect, it is considered as part of the country's district with characteristic natural and climatic features, the level of culture of the population, production experience and the type of settlement. As a result, it was interpreted as the area of the country, which thanks to a combination of natural characteristics, population and historical cultural accumulations would serve as one of the links in the overall chain of the country's economy.⁹

Even though there is not a single definition as of yet, there is no doubt that it plays a crucial role in understanding both the national and global economy. Moreover, the disparity between economically struggling regions with stagnant populations and prospering regions became a major issue.¹⁰

Extreme diversity in the field of classification, which this chapter attempts to take into account, has resulted from the abundance of approaches to the definition, its functions, and methods of regionalization.

Different regional economic studies may use various classification standards for regions. It is typically based on the following factors: the degree of economic development, regional economic growth rates, the type of territorial economic organization (nodal or homogeneous regions), the population density coefficient, the rate of population growth, the type and degree of industrial specialization, etc.¹¹

⁸ YADAV, Vinita. *Sustainable Regional Development*, Studera Press, 2020, page 1. ISBN: 978-93-85883-97-2

⁹ FOUBERG, E. H.; MOSELEY, W. G. *Understanding world regional geography*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-119-39390-0

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ NIJMAN, J.; MULLER, P. O.; DE BLIJ, H. J. *Geography: Realms, regions, and concepts*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017. ISBN: 1118093607

Unlike the above-mentioned scholars, Kurbanov defines the region as a lower level of power concerning to the central one, as well as a set of states that have functional ties and create a common system.¹²

When referring to the essay of Chukubayev and Kydyrbekova, one can find the interpretation of "*regionalism*" as various forms of social, cultural, and political self-determination of the territorial community, which manifests itself in the form of ideas, moods, and actions aimed at preserving regional identity or raising its status in the system of nation-states. Furthermore, the authors indicate that the subjects of the region are tied with a set of common and shared social and environmental problems, the solution of which is possible with the pooling of resources and efforts.¹³

As can be observed, there are no significant disparities or disagreements determined when comparing the definitions from European and Asian scholars - the truth is that the term „region“ is interpreted from different angles and perspectives, but even then the definitions overlap or reflect more or less the same concepts.

2.2 National parks and protected areas in the region

National parks are the most popular type of organization for a protected region, where the flora and fauna have been kept in their natural state. They are created in places where humans have not considerably damaged the ecosystems or influenced them to change because of their economic activities. The concept of protected areas first appeared in the 19th century in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. In the following century, it extended to other parts of the world.¹⁴

According to The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), there are approximately 270 thousand protected areas in the world today¹⁵, as shown in the Figure 2, where green

¹² KURBANOV, Rashad. *Regional integration: Issues of theory and practice*. UNITY-DANA PUBLISHER, 2016. p. 2. Available at <http://scholarsmepub.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SJHSS-14200-205.pdf> Accessed [online] on 11.10.2022. DOI: 10.21276/sjhss.2016.1.4.13

¹³ CHUKUBAEV, E, KYDYRBEKOVA, B. "*Regions and regionalization in Central Asia*" KazNU Bulletin, 2012 Available at <https://bulletin-ir-law.kaznu.kz/index.php/1-mo/article/download/333/327/> Accessed [online] on 11.10.2022. ISSN 1563-0285

¹⁴ SELLARS, R.W. *Preserving nature in the national parks*. In: *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*. Yale University Press, 2008. Available at <http://www.georgewright.org/sellars.pdf> Accessed [online] on 15.10.2022. ISBN: 0300069316

¹⁵ The World Database on Protected Areas. Available at <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/thematic-areas/wdpa?tab=WDPA>. Accessed [online] on 16.10.2022

colour means Terrestrial and Inland Waters Protected Areas, blue is for Marine Protected Areas.

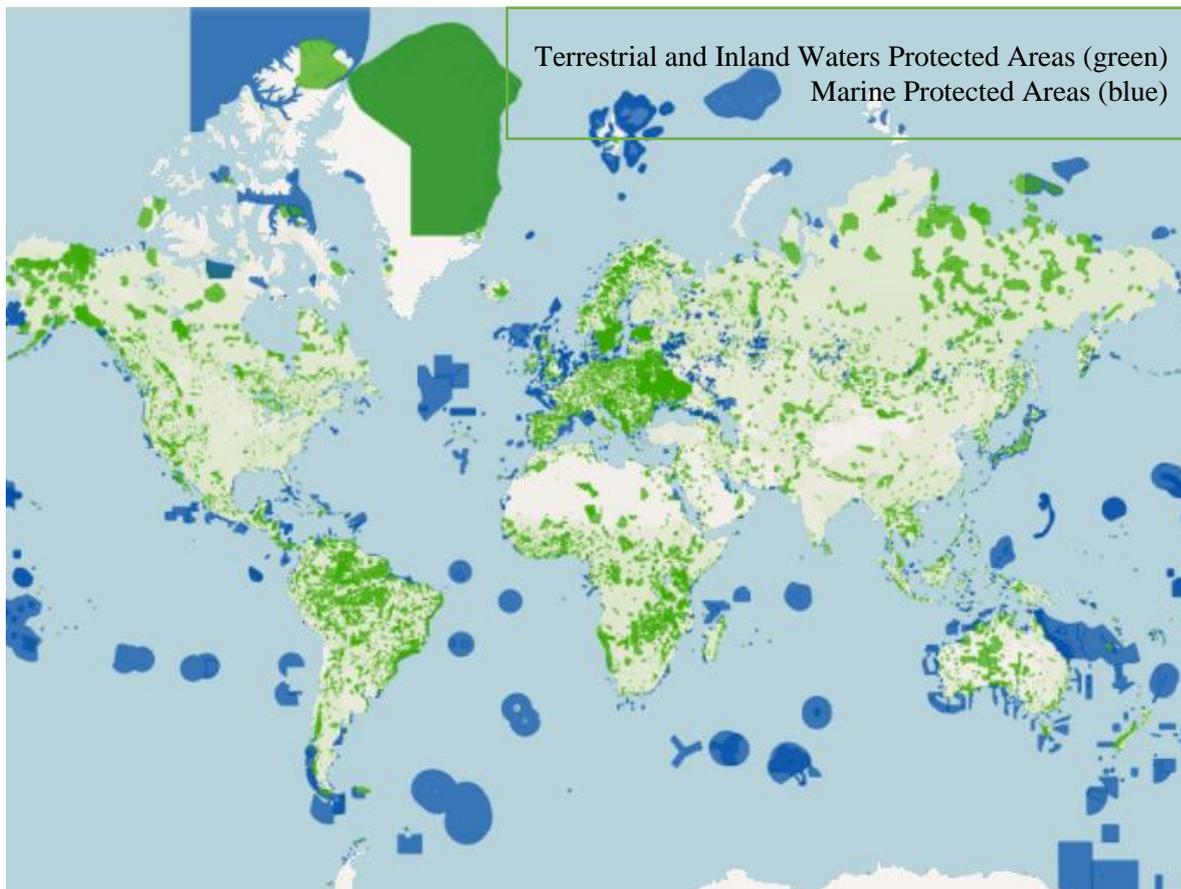


Figure 2. World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). Graphic overview of Terrestrial and Inland Waters Protected Areas (green) and Marine Protected Areas (blue), Source: www.protectedplanet.net

As seen in Figure 3, the study of WDPA and WD-OECM on the territorial coverage also shows that even compared to the beginning of the XXI century, in 2000 the marine coverage area increased in 2021 from 2 mln km² to 28 mln km² – almost by 14 times, while the land coverage increased from 14 mln km² to 22 mln km².¹⁶

¹⁶Protected Planet Report 2020. Chapter 3 - Coverage. Available at <https://livereport.protectedplanet.net/chapter-3> Accessed [online] on 16.10.2022

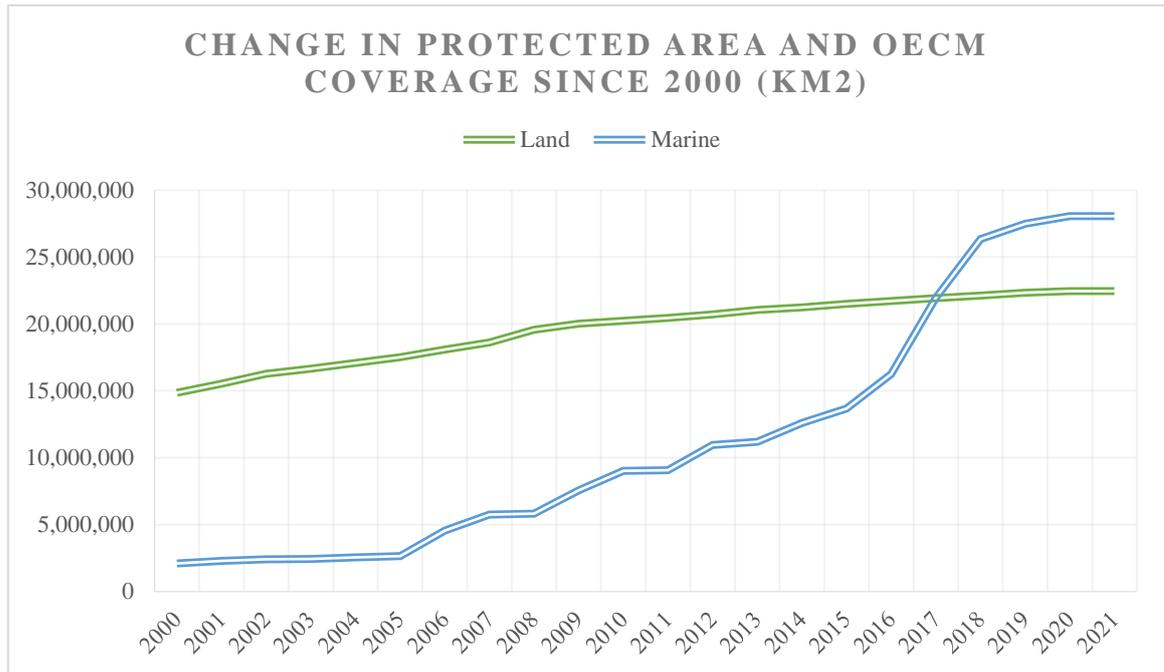


Figure 3. Change in protected area and OECM coverage (km²) since 2000. Source: own processing of data from UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2021) *Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures*.

Tourism traffic to protected areas is increasing steadily and expectedly. At the same time, the types and amounts of tourists in protected areas are rigorously regulated. Travellers go along predetermined routes in customized vehicles with tour guides and tents in designated campsites. The seriousness of trips to national parks is what generates the economic advantages of travelling, and the revenues from tourism raise the importance of national parks locally, nationally, and worldwide.

2.3 Tourism in the region

A form of indication of the state of society, its material prosperity, and its spiritual well-being partially depends on the level of tourism development. As a component of the public context, it serves to boost one's intellectual capacity and physical growth while also reviving one's vitality and soothing neurotic stress.

The GDP of many countries is significantly shaped by tourism, which further improves the foreign trade balance and generates new jobs and employment for the population. In other words, tourism functions as a sort of accelerator for socio-economic growth by having a significant impact on major economic sectors including transportation

and communications, construction, agriculture, the production of consumer products, and many others.

According to the UNWTO, the world could see 1.8 billion tourists by 2030.¹⁷ Tourism itself has an impact on all aspects of regional development, contributing to an increase in regional income, improving infrastructure, solving the problem of employment by creating new jobs, strengthening interstate and interregional ties.

The global challenges, such as COVID-19 pandemic, dramatically affected on industry within the recent 2019 - 2021.¹⁸ According to UNWTO Tourism Dashboard¹⁹, the international tourist arrival in 2020 dropped by 71% in comparison with the previous year, remained almost on the same level in 2021 and only showed a slight increase by 43% in 2022, as the restrictions in many countries were eased or lifted.

Besides the pandemic, the world faces major climate issues, including drought, fires, earthquakes, as well as political upheavals and wars – all this does not play in favour of tourism development.

There are many classifications of tourism; they differ in the very concepts of this phenomenon. It forms the basis for the creation of targeted and regional programs that draw on elements of national culture, sectoral economic standards that are unique to each region of the nation, and other factors that contribute to the diverse development of territories, the preservation of ecosystems, the effective promotion of traditional local crafts, the resolution of issues relating to raising the standard of living of the population, etc.

The following categories are set apart in accordance with WTO standards: domestic, inbound and outbound tourism.²⁰ Within those categories, there are several types of tourism according to its function:

- Recreational and leisure (when people travel to be acquainted with natural, historical and cultural attractions, museums, theatres etc.)

¹⁷ UNWTO. Tourism Towards 2030. Global Overview. Available at <https://www.unwto.org/archive/global/press-release/2011-10-11/international-tourists-hit-18-billion-2030> Accessed [online] on 20.10.2022

¹⁸ SIGALA, M., 2020. Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research. *Journal of business research*, 117, pp.312-321. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.015

¹⁹ The UNWTO: INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AND COVID-19. Available at <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/international-tourism-and-covid-19> Accessed [online] on 20.10.2022

²⁰ The UNWTO GLOSSARY OF TOURISM TERMS. Available at: <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms#:~:text=Forms%20of%20tourism%3A%20There%20are,national%20tourism%20and%20international%20tourism.> Accessed [online] on 22. 10. 2022

- Medical (travel for medical purposes, including both medical treatment and rehabilitation);
- Adventure (a type of active tourism, which includes non-standard trips to exotic, hard-to-reach and sometimes dangerous places);
- Water (when people travel to the seaside or lake, it might include sailing, rafting and boating or can be just rowing on catamarans, kayaks and other types of watercraft)
- Professional (travel to perform official or professional tasks)
- Religious (or pilgrimage – one of the oldest types, when people visit holy places, temples and monasteries)²¹.

2.4 Regional policy, its methods and tools

If one tries to compile a list of the goals and objectives of regional policy, which are provided in various sources, one can get an impressive list. At the same time, many of these goals are similar in content and differ only in the form of presentation. In addition, there is a large group of narrow, special goals that are relevant for the development of the regions of one country or a small group of countries but are not of the utmost importance or significance to the majority of other states.²²

The key principles chosen for regional policy typically have socio-political and economic connotations. The main objectives of regional policy in the majority of developing nations are increasingly being defined as the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of the state, ensuring a combination of national and regional interests, as well as the integration of economic complexes and markets into a single economic space.²³

Many European nations are also well acquainted with the integrating benefits of regional strategy. However, the EU institutions, i.e. at the supranational level, currently use them more actively. The Single European Act, which was adopted in 1986, identified regional policy as the key component of the European Community's effort to promote its

²¹ TUREAC, C., TURTUREANU, A. Types and forms of tourism. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. (Economica)*, 4(1), 2010. ISSN:1468-0335. Available at <https://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/oeconomica/article/view/60/56> Accessed [online] on 25. 10. 2022

²² SORIN, D., et al. *Principles and objectives of territorial cohesion policy*. Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane „CS Nicolăescu-Plopșor”, 2018, XIX: 214-226. DOI: 10.3390/su11154173

²³ VANHOVE, N. *Regional policy: A European approach*. Routledge, 2018. ISBN 9781138330368

economic and social cohesion²⁴. As noted by A. Amin and J. Ommaney, the EU introduced the cohesion to designate its policy of decreasing socioeconomic and geographical inequalities in Europe.²⁵ (Amin & Ommaney, 1995)

The aforementioned general principles of the regional policy are usually concretized in the form of more specific but equally significant goals and objectives. One can opt out of a certain subset objective that is typical among most countries.

Any state's regional policy has at least two aspects - social and economic. Social issues like the high unemployment rates, increased crime, and low population incomes are deeply rooted in the economy. Similarly, the challenges of boosting production in underdeveloped areas cannot be overcome without giving their social issues the attention they require, particularly without the implementation of programs for general education and professional training of staff, the improvement of the health care system, etc.

Governments are being obliged more and more to consider national and political concerns while making regional policies (presence of interethnic conflicts, differences in unemployment levels and incomes of representatives of different nationalities, as well as indigenous people and immigrants, political stability in the regions, etc.). According to M. McLennan's analysis of the causes of regional gatherings in nations with market economies, "*Governments decide to steer money and labour to certain areas in response to political, economic, and social pressure*"²⁶. Moreover, the environmental component of regional strategy has received significantly more attention in the recent few decades in practically all countries.²⁷

The entire regional policy is intricately intertwined and interconnected. Nevertheless, it is frequently rather arbitrary to separate the economic factor from the whole setting. The regional economic policy might therefore also take the shape of engagement in other social subsystems in addition to the economic subsystem.²⁸

The objects of regional policy can be a wide range of territorial units, both fixed by the national state or administrative-territorial division of a specific country (communities,

²⁴ The Single European Act. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/the-single-european-act.html> Accessed [online] on 02. 11. 2022.

²⁵ AMIN, A.; TOMANEY, J. *Behind the Myth of European Union: Propects for Cohesion*. Routledge, 2002. ISBN 9780415130783

²⁶ VANHOVE, N. *Regional policy: A European approach*. Routledge, 2018. ISBN 9781138330368

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ FOLMER, Hendrik. *Regional economic policy: Measurement of its effect*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2012. ISBN: 978-94-009-4392-6

districts, regions, provinces, counties, cantons, counties, etc.) as well as specifically defined areas.

Special regions might include, for example, zones of radioactive contamination following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant to solve a large block of problems related to the elimination of its consequences, to determine the modes of residence of the population and economic activity in the affected territories.²⁹

Another example is the Special Areas Act of 1934³⁰, which created special areas in the UK where the government could implement a number of measures to reduce unemployment. The boundaries of specially defined areas may not coincide with those of one or more national-state or administrative-territorial units.³¹

2.5 Methods and tools for influencing the development of regions

A regional policy cannot be properly described without a more thorough examination of the strategies and instruments used to carry it out. The success of regional policy ultimately depends on how broad and varied the arsenal of tools and levers that national and local authorities have to influence regional development; as well, as how successfully they are chosen (both in terms of taking into account the interests of various social groups and from the standpoint of "compatibility" of individual tools). Figuratively speaking, the "face" of the region and, in fact, the entire economic policy of each specific state is primarily determined by the toolkit.

Management strategies can be classified into three basic categories: administrative (including organizational, administrative, legal, etc.), economic, and socio-psychological³². Sometimes legal methods are allocated in a separate group. Given that all procedures are

²⁹ HERASYMENKO, Viktor; PERTSOVYI, Ivan; ROZPUTNY, Oleksandr. Assessment of the radiation safety of the rural population of the Central forest-steppe of Ukraine in the remote period after the Chernobyl catastrophe. 2018. DOI: 10.21303/2585-6847.2018.00768. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329258905_Assessment_of_the_radiation_safety_of_the_rural_population_of_the_Central_Forest-Steppe_of_Ukraine_in_the_remote_period_after_the_Chernobyl_catastrophe Accessed [online] on 02. 11. 2022

³⁰ PAGE, A. C. *State Intervention in the Inter-War Period: The Special Areas Acts 1934-37*. British Journal of Law and Society, vol. 3, no. 2, 1976, pp. 175–203. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409814>.

³¹ MORGAN, Kevin. 7. The future of place-based innovation policy (as if 'lagging regions' really mattered). *Regional Studies Policy Impact Books*, 2019, 1.2: 79-89. DOI:10.1080/2578711X.2019.1621103. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335693939_7_The_future_of_place-based_innovation_policy_as_if_'lagging_regions'_really_mattered Accessed [online] on 06. 11. 2022

³² HEWINGS, G. J. D. *Regional Industrial Analysis and Development*. Routledge, 2017. ISBN 9781138102507

connected in practical terms, such classification is conditional. For instance, taxes typically refer to economic management practices. Still, adequate administrative and legal regulation must be in place, including laws and bylaws as well as directives, orders, and other papers issued by tax and other state agencies. The practice of most countries shows that the introduction of any tax is preceded by a more or less extensive campaign to study public opinion on the advisability of such a step, and the psychological preparation of citizens through the media to realize the need for this measure.³³

Specific tools for managing regional development include the following:

- Regionally differentiated subsidies and loans to private firms to stimulate the deployment of new products in problem areas, including the capital, that is, for the purchase of industrial buildings, machinery, equipment, and construction subsidies, as well as to cover labour costs, transport and energy costs, payment insurance premiums, rent, etc.;
- Subsidies and loans to existing and distressed enterprises located in the regions that are being assisted;
- Provision of various tax incentives or complete exemption from certain taxes to stimulate production in priority development regions;
- Regionally differentiated legislative regulation of depreciation rates for fixed assets;
- Location of new and relocation of existing state-owned (or state-controlled) enterprises and government agencies to problem areas;
- Regionally oriented state subsidies and loans for the development of small and medium-sized businesses, as well as the creation of industrial, social and environmental infrastructure (for example, the construction and equipping of industrial parks, sites, zones, energy facilities, roads, airfields, ports, land reclamation, construction of facilities in education, healthcare, environmental protection, etc.
- Preferential schemes for state orders for products and services of private firms located in depressed areas;

³³ HEWINGS, G. J. D. *Regional Industrial Analysis and Development*. Routledge, 2017. ISBN 9781138102507

- Bonuses for regional employment, regionally differentiated employment programs, vocational training and retraining of the unemployed, housing construction, environmental protection, etc.;
- Measures that stimulate the mobility of the population and production (for example, migration subsidies or bonuses for migrants or subsidies for the movement of private companies, information programs for potential migrants);
- Permits, prohibitions, licenses, certificates and other means of direct control over the construction of production facilities and administrative buildings (construction licenses, certificates for industrial construction, permits for the construction of offices, mandatory notifications of planned investments, etc.);
- Rationing the consumption of certain types of resources (for example, construction materials);
- Legal norms in the field of land use, environmental protection and other areas.³⁴

This list is not all-inclusive; many of these tools and levers are interrelated, flexible, and can be used to achieve several objectives that are not only local. Henk Folmer accurately notes that housing construction initiatives can be used to both enhance the "social accommodation profile of the region" and prevent short-term unemployment by generating new employment in the industry.³⁵

It is fairly common to mix tax and credit policies with other types of permanent subsidies. It is important to highlight that the same levers can function both positively and negatively, have a direct and indirect effect, and be both a passive and active component in regional development in different circumstances. For instance, from 1947 to 1982, the UK issued so-called "industrial construction certificates," which unintentionally encouraged the location of manufacturing in other regions of the nation while intentionally and directly restricting economic activity in government-designated regions.³⁶

³⁴ HEWINGS, G. J. D. *Regional Industrial Analysis and Development*. Routledge, 2017. ISBN 9781138102507

³⁵ FOLMER, Hendrik. *Regional economic policy: Measurement of its effect*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2012. ISBN: 978-94-009-4392-6

³⁶ Ibid.

2.6 Regional development

A fairly broad concept, regional development has different definitions throughout the field. A number of theories change as the circumstances for regional development evolve. The majority of regional development concepts share the idea that a stable and balanced reproduction of the economic potential, resource potential, and socio-demographic potential is what ensures regional development. It focuses on the positive dynamics of all major standards of living. The word "development" is frequently used in a variety of contexts, including geographical development, socioeconomic development, and others. In any case, development is defined as a gradual transformation of the economy. If the change is qualitative, then it addresses structural changes; if it is quantitative – an economic growth; and if it is complex, then it is the region's integral development.³⁷

Development always has a direction, which is determined by the purpose of management. Typically, a region's development is seen in the context of a number of social and economic objectives, such as increased production, higher incomes, changes to the social structure, etc. Such a grasp of complexity, which accounts for all social, cultural, and economic elements as well as all qualitative and quantitative traits, essentially distinguishes development from growth.³⁸

The objectives of regional development vary from country to country. A common feature is that the priority goal is to improve the quality of life of the population, and then improve health, increase life expectancy, improve the quality of education, improve the environment, and increase the income of the population.

Objectives might be short-term or long-term. The development of an information society and job roles for highly skilled professionals are two examples of long-term objectives. Likewise, examples of short-term objectives are GDP growth for the quarter, production growth, and crisis recovery³⁹.

In order to fulfil the goals, a system of criteria and indicators is established.

There are the following criteria for the socio-economic development of the region:

- GNP and GDP (including per capita) and changes in these indicators;

³⁷ NATH, V. *Regional Development Policies*. Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 6, no. 30/32, 1971, pp. 1601–08. ISSN 2349-8846

³⁸ BOHR, A. *Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order*. International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), vol. 80, no. 3, 2004, pp. 485–502. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00394.x

³⁹ LIPSHITZ, G. The Main Approaches to Measuring Regional Development and Welfare." Social Indicators Research, vol. 29, no. 2, 1993, pp. 163–81. DOI: 10.1007/BF01077894

- the average level of income and the degree of differentiation of incomes of the population;
- life expectancy, the level of physical and mental health of the population;
- the level of education;
- consumption level.

As to the material goods and services, there are the following indicators:

- housing and utilities, food, transport services, and provision of durable goods;
- level of healthcare:
- availability of hospitals, pharmacies, diagnostic centres, and ambulance services;
- state of the environment;
- enrichment of the cultural life of people;
- small business development.⁴⁰

Three types of regional development are distinguished within the context of this idea: asymmetric, harmonic, and neutral.

With *asymmetric* regional development, regions that lead in some indicators at the beginning of the period widen their lead by the end of the period, while those that lag deepen their disadvantage.

With a *harmonious* type, the difference between indicators at advanced and lagging levels is narrowed.

With a *neutral* type, the difference between indicators at advanced and lagging behind levels does not change.⁴¹

The standard method for assessing a region's economic progress is to look at its level of production (and, as a rule, material production). Such evaluation has become incomplete and biased. According to methods developed by international organizations, it is important to take into account a variety of factors when determining a region's level of development, including the volume of production as well as factors like education, health care, and the state of the environment, equality of opportunity in the workplace, personal freedom, and culture. The human development index, created and utilized by the UN

⁴⁰ SHVAIBA, Dzimtry. *Analysis of indicators of socio-economic security*. SSRN, 2017. ISBN: 978-3-7001-6968-0

⁴¹ BANSKI, Jerzy, *Dilemmas of Regional and Local Development*. Routledge, 2020. ISBN 9781032173825. Available at https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/25217/ssoar-2010-05-banski-dilemmas_for_regional_development_in.pdf?sequence=1 Accessed [online] on 11. 11. 2022

Development Program to evaluate the development of individual nations, is a very good indicator of regional development.⁴²

When managing the economic development of a particular region, it is essential to single out all of the above relatively independent goals and monitor their achievement. In particular, along with monitoring the state of regional production and the dynamics of cash incomes of the population, it is necessary to monitor other important parameters of economic development.

The availability and level of quality of schools, kindergartens, and other educational institutions and their accessibility, as well as the level of education and qualifications of people, are the most important parameters of the level of development of any region. Food supply, food quality control, observance of consumer rights in the retail market are also important parameters for assessing the level of regional development. The level of physical and mental health of the population, life expectancy, the level of development of the health care system and its accessibility, the state of the environment are further important assessment criteria for the socio-economic development of the region.⁴³

⁴² The Human Development Index. UNDP. Available at <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index> Accessed [online] on 13. 11. 2022

⁴³ KURBANOV, Rashad. *Regional integration: Issues of theory and practice*. UNITY-DANA PUBLISHER, 2016. p. 2. DOI: 10.21276/sjhss.2016.1.4.13

3 Analytical part

3.1 Characteristics of the Issyk-Kul region

The Issyk-Kul region is located in the northeastern region of Kyrgyzstan, as shown in Figure 4 with a dark blue colour. The territory shares borders with Kazakhstan to the northeast, with China to the southeast, the Chui region of Kyrgyzstan to the northwest, and the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan to the southwest. The region's overall area is 43.1 thousand square kilometres or nearly 22% of the Kyrgyz Republic's total area⁴⁴. The city of Karakol serves as the region's administrative hub.

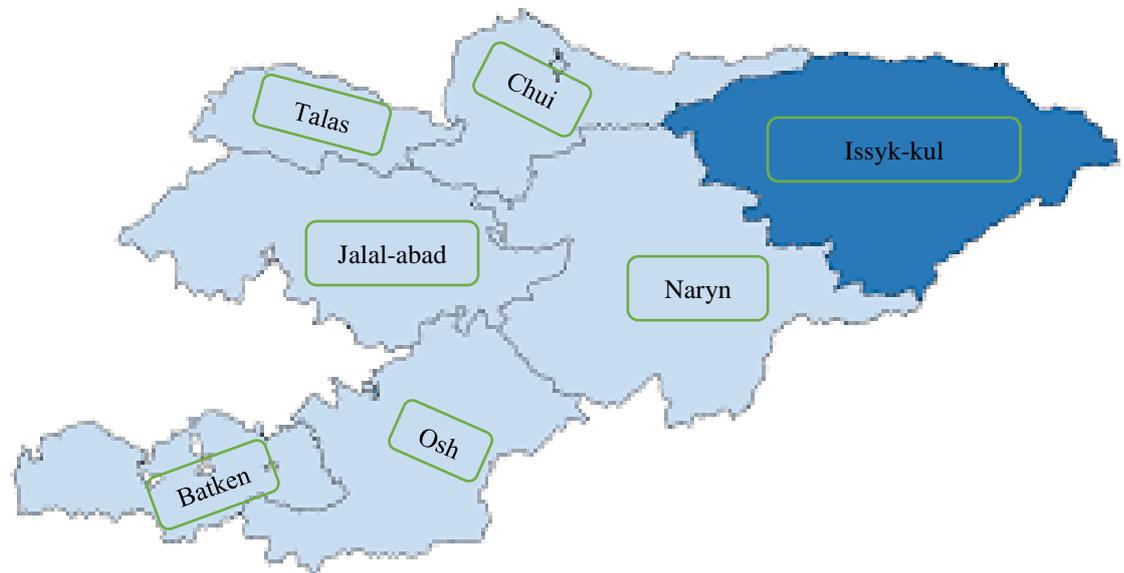


Figure 4 - Map of Kyrgyzstan and its division into regions. Source: www.stat.kg

The Issyk-Kul region is composed of 5 districts, 3 cities, 2 urban-type towns and 60 villages⁴⁵.

The Issyk-Kul region has a continental climate. The relief, the lake's size, the volume of water, and its altitude above sea level affect it. In the coastal zone, there is constant evaporation from the water surface, which increases air humidity. In January, the average air temperature ranges from +2 to -3°C, and around 17 to 28 °C is the typical temperature

⁴⁴ SAVVAITOVA, K., Petr T. Lake Issyk-kul, Kirgizia //International Journal of Salt Lake Research. – 1992. – T. 1. – p. 21-46. DOI: 10.1007/BF02904361

⁴⁵ Ibid.

in July and August. The average January temperature in the high-mountainous region is -8 to 10°C.⁴⁶

Due to the atmosphere's general circulation and the development of air currents that drop in the west and ascend in the east, precipitation in the Issyk-Kul region is distributed unevenly and increases from west to east. Most precipitation occurs in the summer season.⁴⁷

3.2 Historical and cultural monuments of the Issyk-Kul region

The Issyk-Kul region is a unique cultural region of Kyrgyzstan that vividly illustrates the growth of the human civilization over a thousand years and the development of a cultural landscape. An attempt at the cultural and landscape zoning was made, using the example of this region, which is closed geographically, has unique natural and climatic factors, has monuments of history and culture dating from the Stone Age to the late Middle Ages and is an example of the harmonious coexistence of human and nature⁴⁸.

According to the planning scheme of the State Agency for Architecture, Construction and Housing, and Communal Services under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Gosstroy⁴⁹), there are four main large sub-regions in the region, within which there is a wide variety of historical, cultural, and natural monuments. Those are Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern sub-regions.

The diversity of region's cultural landscape reflects the development of its political, social, and economic space across time. Eastern sub-region occupies the whole Tyup region and is characterized by remoteness from large tourist areas and factories. Significant collections of cemeteries that have endured to this day are located in the east.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ KORZHENKOVA, L. A. et al. Archeological monuments: Evidence of strong earthquakes in the past (using the example of the southwestern part of the Issyk-Kul Lake region, the Tien Shan) //Izvestiya, Atmospheric and Oceanic Physics. – 2021. – T. 57. – №. 11. – p. 1396-1413. DOI: 10.1134/S0001433821110050

⁴⁹ The State Agency for Architecture, Construction and Housing and Utilities under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at <https://gosstroy.gov.kg/ru/> Accessed [online] on 16. 11. 2022

⁵⁰ KORZHENKOVA L. A. et al. Archeological monuments: Evidence of strong earthquakes in the past (using the example of the southwestern part of the Issyk-Kul Lake region, the Tien Shan) //Izvestiya, Atmospheric and Oceanic Physics. – 2021. – T. 57. – №. 11. – p. 1396-1413. DOI: 10.1134/S0001433821110050

3.2.1 South

The Southern sub-region holds a unique position since it is the largest sub-region and has preserved settlements and natural landmarks that surely influenced the cultural life of the community and established the originality of its cultural heritage.

Settlements, ancient Turkic and Karakhanid landmarks, natural monuments, and places of ancient people (Tosor pass), where artefacts from the Mousterian era were discovered, dominate the area.

The least anthropogenic impact on the historical and cultural space on the scale of the entire Issyk-Kul basin is another characteristic of this sub region. The shoreline, a nesting area for rare Red Book birds, is entirely untouched.

Tuura suu burial grounds

The house where the Hero of Socialist Labour T.Akmatov lived

Monument to fellow villagers who died during the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945

Tamga Tash stones

The sacred place of Mohammad Kyrgyz

Barskoon waterfall

Fairy Tale Canyon

Gumbez Balchak mausoleum⁵¹

3.2.2 East

The Eastern part is the second-largest cultural and natural sub-region. This part is notable for its extensive collection of Orthodox churches, late 19th- and early 20th-century monuments, and burial grounds⁵². The uniqueness of the natural landscape, which is characterized by a predominance of mountain forests, was also shaped by the sub region's particular climate. The Saka and Usun cemeteries create a kind of hallowed cultural environment and represent the active migratory past.

Jeti Oguz Rocks (the monument of nature)

Gumbez Balchak mausoleum

Chelpek burial grounds

⁵¹ PLOSKIKH, Vladimir. "MONUMENTS OF KYRGYZSTAN ALONG THE GREAT SILK ROUTE." Editor: K. WARIKOO K. WARIKOO Assistant Editor Assistant Editor: SHARAD K. SONI SHARAD K. SONI (2006): 59. Available at <http://www.himalayanresearch.org/pdf/2006-7-8/Vol10%20N2-3final.pdf#page=64> Accessed [online] on 22. 11. 2022

⁵² Ibid.

Przhevalsky Memorial Museum

Trinity Church

The Church of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica.

Dungan mosque

*Gumbez Kydyr-ata*⁵³

3.2.3 North

Numerous petroglyphs are the main feature of the Northern sub-region. A unique sort of nomad heritage may be found on the foothill plateau, with many stonewalls and petroglyphs. This heritage requires a separate study to ascertain its origin, function, and typological affiliation. Additionally, this sub-region has both manufactured and natural monuments from the late Middle Ages. Contrary to the Southern coast, the Northern sub-region is sadly characterized by an extensive anthropogenic impact. Over time, a number of recreational amenities have completely altered the landscape along the North Shore.

Burial grounds (Chon Sary Bulak, Taldy-Suu, Ken-Suu, Korumdu and others)

Temple in Honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

San-Tash Burial Mound

Kyrchyn burial ground

*The Petroglyph Museum*⁵⁴

3.2.4 West

The Western sub-region is characterized by a variety of monuments, including the monuments and burial grounds of the Saka, Usuni and Xiongnu tribes and monuments of the early and late Middle Ages. The tomb constructions, monuments of memorial architecture and settlements.

Ancient people settlements (Salamat Bulak, Ak Olen and others)

Toru-Aigyr Monument

Monuments to Pyotr Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ploskih, Vladimir. "MONUMENTS OF KYRGYZSTAN ALONG THE GREAT SILK ROUTE." Editor: K. WARIKOO K. WARIKOO Assistant Editor Assistant Editor: SHARAD K. SONI SHARAD K. SONI (2006): 59. Available at <http://www.himalayanresearch.org/pdf/2006-7-8/Vol10%20N2-3final.pdf#page=64> Accessed [online] on 22. 11. 2022

3.3 Issyk-Kul Lake, south coast and north coast

The resort region of Issyk-Kul has long been famous for its resort wealth, ranking among the top locations in Central Asia in terms of its availability and diversity. Issyk-Kul Lake holds a distinctive place with its countless mineral springs, which vary in their physical and chemical qualities, medicinal mud, and small salt lakes. Around 30 remnant and residual lakes that split off because of the lake's level, being lowered can be found in small reservoirs along the shore of the lakeside plain in the Issyk-Kul basin⁵⁶.

In addition, Issyk-Kul Lake has a deep centre basin (668 m of water depth) with a flat bottom that makes up around 25% of the lake's surface⁵⁷, as shown below in Figure 5. In the Western and Eastern parts of the lake, two sizable shallow platforms represent river deltas. The eastern delta is roughly 60 km wide, and the western delta is about 40 km wide⁵⁸. The lake's north and south shelves are relatively small and isolated from the basin's middle by high slopes⁵⁹.

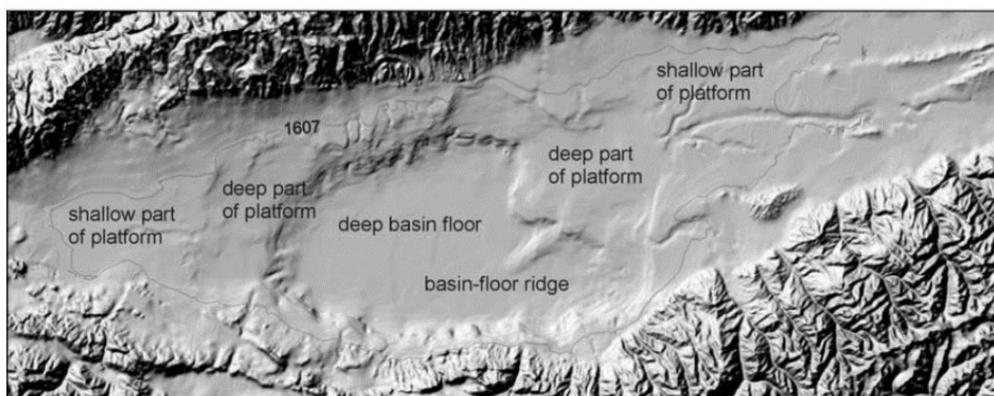


Figure 5. Digital map of the Issyk-Kul lake bottom terrain. Source: Romanovsky, 2002.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Alifujiang Y. et al. Innovative trend analysis of precipitation in the Lake Issyk-Kul Basin, Kyrgyzstan //Atmosphere. – 2020. – T. 11. – №. 4. – p. 332. Available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4433/11/4/332> Accessed [online] on 22. 11. 2022. DOI: 10.3390/atmos11040332

⁵⁷ Romanovsky V. V. Water level variations and water balance of Lake Issyk-Kul //Lake Issyk-Kul: its natural environment. – 2002. – p. 45-57. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-010-0491-6_4

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Alifujiang Y. et al. Innovative trend analysis of precipitation in the Lake Issyk-Kul Basin, Kyrgyzstan //Atmosphere. – 2020. – T. 11. – №. 4. – p. 332. Available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4433/11/4/332> Accessed [online] on 22. 11. 2022 DOI: 10.3390/atmos11040332

The shelf in delta regions is splitted into two sections: a shallow section with water depths up to 110 m and an average slope of 0.5° , and a deeper section with water depths between 110 and 340 m and an average slope of 1° ⁶⁰. Both the eastern and western deltas contain incised channels that are up to 2-3 km broad and 50 m deep⁶¹, but these channels are constrained by the shallow portion of the shelf, as seen in Figure 4. They are situated on the eastern shore of the lake, where modern river mouths continue, and are probably linked to the Chu River's former mouth and source in the western delta. Multiple terraces, which are thought to be historic deltas and represent lower water levels, are present in the deep parts of the shelf⁶².

The lake is fed by a total of 118 rivers and streams draining an area of 22,080 km²⁶³. These rivers primarily transport groundwater, rainwater, snow and glacier meltwater. The Jergalan and Tyup rivers, which access Issyk-Kul Lake from its eastern side, are the two biggest rivers in the area. In the past, Issyk-Kul Lake flowed through the Chu River at its western end, but it does not now. The drainage basin is currently covered by glaciers, which are located at altitudes of at least 3000 m above sea level⁶⁴.

3.4 Tourism of Issyk-Kul region

The availability of four key elements - capital, technology, labor, and recreational resources - allows the implementation of the tourism company under market conditions. It indicates that without enough money, it would be impossible to invest in technology, hire staff, or promote tourism. To do this, there is a need to find a location with recreational amenities. Alternatively, if such location is not already there, construct one.

The potential for tourism and leisure in Kyrgyzstan is significant, and there are numerous opportunities for local and international growth of tourism. In Kyrgyzstan, there

⁶⁰ Romanovsky V. V. Water level variations and water balance of Lake Issyk-Kul //Lake Issyk-Kul: its natural environment. – 2002. – p. 45-57. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-010-0491-6_4

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Zhang Y. et al. The Dynamic Changes of Lake Issyk-Kul from 1958 to 2020 Based on Multi-Source Satellite Data //Remote Sensing. – 2022. – T. 14. – №. 7. DOI: 10.3390/rs14071575. Available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/14/7/1575> Accessed [online] on 25. 11. 2022.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

are two primary forms of tourism based on global market development patterns - adventure tourism: mountain climbing, trekking, rafting, fishing trips, and photo hunting; and resort and recreational tourism: vacations in guesthouses and sanatoriums, primarily on the coast of the Issyk-Kul lake⁶⁵.

In the market of resort and recreational tourism, travel for leisure, recreation, health, and sports are the primary motives for the tourists. The existence of stunning, untainted landscapes, lakes, beaches, and fresh mountain air is crucial. The market is mostly focused on local travellers as well as travellers from the close neighbourhood, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia, as shown below in Figure 6; the numbers of visitors are in thousands. This is a typical market for the middle class who can afford to take a vacation but cannot afford the cost of an international tour⁶⁶.

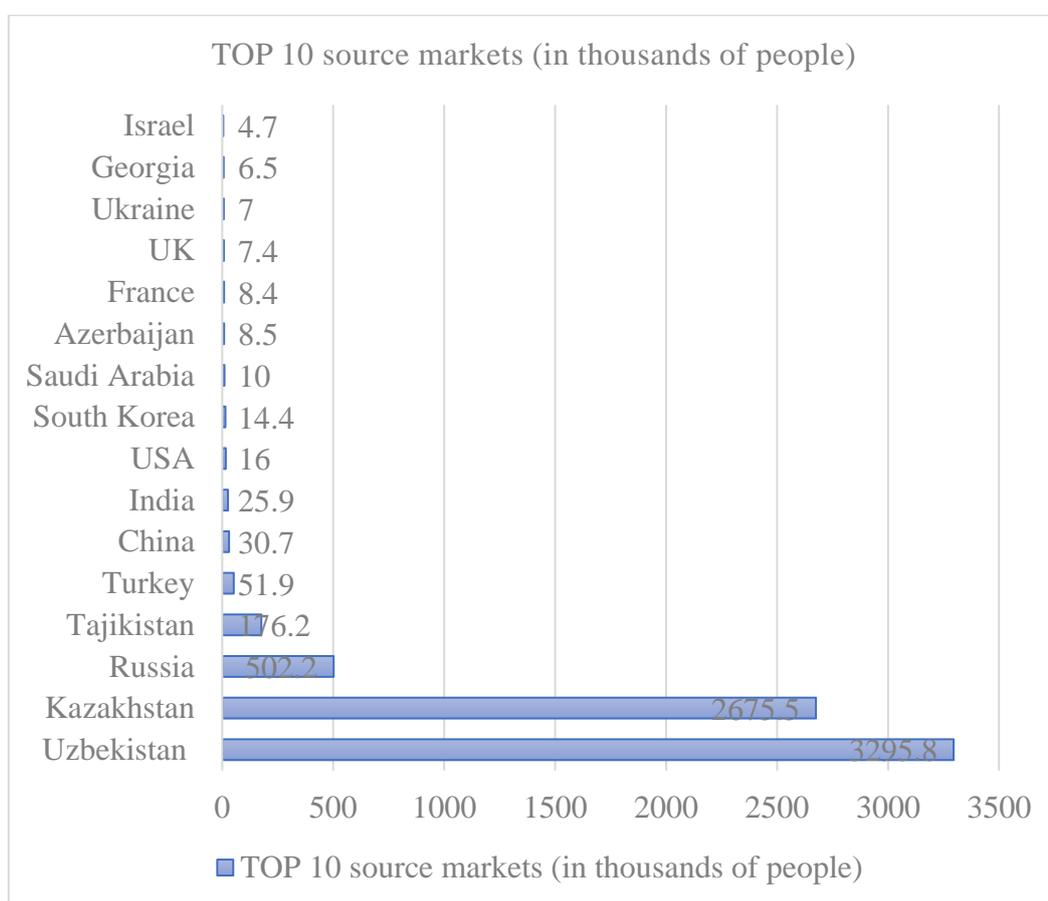


Figure 6 - Top 10 source markets of tourism flows in Kyrgyzstan in 2019 (in thousands of people). Source: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/global-and-regional-tourism-performance> Accessed [online] on 27. 11. 2022

⁶⁵ Kozhokulov S. et al. Assessment of tourism impact on the socio-economic spheres of the Issyk-Kul Region (Kyrgyzstan) //Sustainability. – 2019. – T. 11. – №. 14. DOI:10.3390/su11143886. Available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/14/3886> Accessed [online] on 27. 11. 2022

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Adventure tourism has longer season than the recreational tourism, yet, it has significantly less tourists' arrivals. If the place experiences positive economic development, this type of tourism will grow more quickly than resort and recreational tourism. It is also interesting to see how extreme adventure tourism is developing. While there are much fewer visitors than in resort tourism, they arrive in groups and spend more money. If the place experiences positive economic development, this type of tourism will grow more quickly than resort and recreational tourism. It is interesting to see how extreme adventure tourism is developing. Adventure tourism is mostly targeted at travellers from wealthier countries like the US, Japan, South Korea, and EU nations. There is a rising need for impressions-based tourism, including escape from city life, a desire for adventure, and outdoor physical activities. Among popular types are trekking, skiing and rafting. Western European visitors, typically young professionals with substantial travel experience, play a specific role in the demand structure for this type of "soft" adventure tourism. This type of traveller does not need to make any special accommodation because everything can be arranged on the spot with reasonable promptness⁶⁷.

Although the market is still relatively small, Kozhokulov claims that it can finally develop, if the quality of product advertising improves⁶⁸. Vacationers' choice of destination is heavily influenced by natural resources. In terms of the potential for the development of water sports, fishing, and outdoor swimming, as well as in terms of the increased attractiveness of the environment itself, the network of surface waterways is significant. The unpolluted water surfaces with suitable temperature and current, which makes it possible to create natural beaches, swimming pools, or waters with a surface that is beneficial for the cultivation of various types of water tourism, reflects favourable hydrological conditions for recreation⁶⁹.

3.5 Regional analysis of the prospects for water tourism in Kyrgyzstan

During the years 2012 - 2022, lake tourism on Lake Issyk-Kul has grown in popularity as a source of entertainment, health promotion, and impressions. Small yachts and rafts were rented to the tourists, as well as excursions along the lake were offered.

⁶⁷ Kozhokulov S. et al. Assessment of tourism impact on the socio-economic spheres of the Issyk-Kul Region (Kyrgyzstan) //Sustainability. – 2019. – T. 11. – №. 14. – p. 3886. DOI:10.3390/su11143886. Available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/14/3886> Accessed [online] on 22. 11. 2022

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The organization of sea tourism on the lake is laden with substantial challenges. It is vital to offer every amenity, and level of comfort. Additionally, it is important to design the route wisely from a tourist's perspective, enhance airline advertising, and schedule any essential on-board special events.

Natural resources are the primary "*means of production*" in recreational tourism, just as they are in other resource-intensive businesses, meaning that revitalization is based on their use.

The conflict between recreational and commercial activity undermines the growth and improvement of the resort and recreational regions. If it cannot be resolved completely, the growth of resorts may be seriously threatened since its foundation of recreational opportunities and a healthy environment would be compromised. The irresponsible use of resources has led to a number of issues, including the steady decline of the water level of Lake Issyk-Kul.⁷⁰

The water level recedes by 7-9 cm per year⁷¹, and in many places, the edge of the water recedes by an average of three meters annually. Although formally (according to the legislation) recreational resources are seen as specially protected objects, mineral springs of recreational zones in the Kyrgyz Republic remain neglected, therapeutic muds are not protected, sanitary protection zones are not observed; mud deposits are not secured, not rationally used, as a result of which they are depleted and deteriorated⁷².

In Kyrgyzstan, there are several distinctive ecological systems where national natural parks could be established. The allocation and preservation of particularly valuable forest areas in spruce, fir, juniper, and walnut woods, which have environmental and recreational significance, are also worth receiving special attention.

The primary scientific and practical issue in the field of expanding the use of recreational resources in Kyrgyzstan is the task of assessing the current state of recreational resources and prospects for their use. Information about the current state of recreational resources must be extensively disseminated to state and local authorities, potential sponsors

⁷⁰ Bekboeva M. A. The potential of the Issyk-Kul region for the development of the tourist market in the Kyrgyz Republic //European Journal of Natural History. – 2015. – №. 5. – p. 14-18. ISSN 2073-4972. <https://s.world-science.ru/pdf/2015/5/5.pdf> Accessed [online] on 27. 11. 2022

⁷¹ Akbar I. et al. Resource potential assessment for the tourism cooperation on border territory of Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan) regions //Вестник КазНУ. Серия географическая. – 2021. – Т. 60. – №. 1. – p. 39-50. DOI: 10.26577/JGEM.2021.v60.i1.04 <https://bulletin-geography.kaznu.kz/index.php/1-geo/article/view/1016> Accessed [online] on 30. 11. 2022

⁷² Ibid.

and investors, the public, and non-governmental organizations engaged in environmental initiatives. Sanatorium therapy programs can also be created to advance the country's economy and environmental circumstances, draw in investors and create smart marketing plans so that Kyrgyzstan could compete on the global tourism scene.⁷³

3.6 SWOT analysis of regional tourism in Issyk-Kul

3.6.1 Strengths

- Health-improving value of Issyk-Kul Lake;
- Rich natural resources (fresh mountain air, thermal and mineral springs, mud clinics);
- Availability of a minimum of private and public infrastructure and equipment;
- Liberal currency and visa regime;
- Cheap labour;
- Hospitable cultural and historical traditions

3.6.2 Weaknesses

- Political instability;
- Short swimming season;
- Steadily increasing prices;
- Insufficient inflow of investments;
- Low quality of service;
- Geographical remoteness from the main tourist markets;
- Limited market (mainly targeted at the Commonwealth of Independent States countries);
- Underdeveloped tourism industry;
- Lack of a marketing strategy for the development of the region, including tools for its implementation and control;
- Limited range of offered tourist products;
- Lack or poor awareness of the Issyk-Kul region;
- Poverty of the population of the country.

⁷³ Ibid.

3.6.3 Opportunities

- Development of human resources;
- Untouched nature of the mountains, attractive for tourists from developed countries;
- A positive trend in the development of tourist attractions, folk crafts, and animation of tourist services;
- Development of a network of educational institutions that train tourism industry personnel;
- Improving the quality of service;
- Differentiation of tourist offers in terms of both quality and price;
- Development of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On tourism" (Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated October 23, 2018 No. 501).⁷⁴

3.6.4 Threats

- Limited domestic market due to the low purchasing power of the population;
- High prices for accommodation, and other services, with insufficiently high quality;
- striving to maximize current profit to the detriment of solving long-term problems;
- The level of requirements and requests of tourists is ahead of the pace of a real increase in the level of quality; -
Underestimation of the human factor by the leaders of many tourism enterprises (minor investments in personnel);
- Deterioration of the economic situation;
- Border and customs problems;
- Engagement of competitors;
- Negative or indifferent attitude of the population towards tourists and tourism;
- Lack of a behavioural model of hospitality;
- Corruption of officials;
- Financial instability (lack of tax benefits and difficulty in obtaining a loan).

It is clear that significant efforts from the government, tourism associations, and the industry itself are required to improve the state of the resort and recreational tourism sector.

⁷⁴ Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On tourism". Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/12663?cl=ru-ru> Accessed [online] on 30. 11. 2022

The study of the industry's primary customer and the experience of catering to tourists offers insightful lessons for the growth of the sector. As it was mentioned previously, Kazakhstanis make up the majority of visitors who travel to the Issyk-Kul Lake for vacation and leisure purposes; Russian and Uzbek nationals come in second and third place, respectively.

Commonwealth of Independent States tourists represent a fast-expanding segment of the global tourism market, and countries like Turkey or Greece, South East Asian countries and others might be competing for their businesses by offering visitors more attractive service packages. One of the key goals of the sector is the conquest and gradual growth of its share of the market. The tourism industry in Kyrgyzstan has strong foundations for growth and equal participation in the global tourism market. Nevertheless, there are issues that need to be addressed quickly if the country is going to expand and attract international tourists from all over the world.⁷⁵

Unreasonably high hotel and other service fees are one of the key issues. In the summer, prices for guesthouses and resort hotels frequently increase in an unpredictable manner. The reason given by hotel business owners is that they must make money for themselves for a short period from June to September due to weather conditions in order to survive comfortably for the rest of the year. Notwithstanding, tourists who are offered a much more luxurious holiday for less money in Turkey, Thailand, and other countries will prefer the second option. The country risks losing the current of tourists in the search of short-term profit⁷⁶.

The short touristic season in Issyk-Kul is a serious problem, and all efforts need to be put in order to solve the issue, for instance, by attracting tourists for medical and rehabilitation purposes. Among the problems that may hold back the flow of international tourists is the lack of direct flights and railway routes. The travellers could arrive to the capital and then take a ride by taxi or coach. There is a railway route from the capital city of Bishkek to Balykchy city in Issyk-Kul, as shown in Figure 7. However, the train stops there and the traveller can take a car or coach to go further from Balykchy to the main resort and

⁷⁵ Yeşiltaş M. Obstacles to the tourism development in Kyrgyzstan //Manas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi. – 2009. – T. 11. – №. 22. – p. 239-248. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/manassosyal/issue/49930/639842> Accessed [online] on 30. 11. 2022

⁷⁶ Ibid.

recreational zones. There is also an airport in the city of Tamchy in Issyk-Kul, but it does not function in 2023 due to reconstruction⁷⁷.

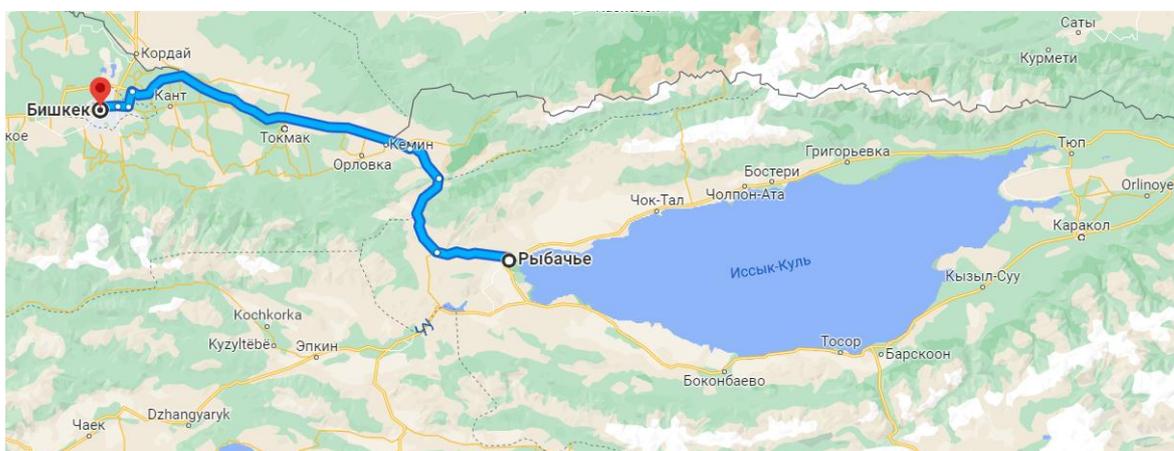


Figure 7 - Railway route from Bishkek to Balykchy. Source: own processing on Google Maps

The growth in the number of tourists is negatively impacted by the notoriously poor condition of Kyrgyz roads. The tourists' expectations for the comfort of transportation and roads are consistently rising. The bad condition of the restrooms, as well as the absence of parking lots with equipment along the route, provide a bad impression on travellers⁷⁸.

Tourism entertainment, especially evening entertainment, is a great issue for visitors to coastal areas. The lodging businesses and public tourism organizations have put a lot of effort into providing tourists with cultural leisure, but it is obvious that there are insufficient options for entertainment activities. The attention to tourists and the desire to make their vacation enjoyable are as much important as the material and financial costs of these issues⁷⁹.

If we look below at Figure 8 and explore how many museums the region has and compare it to other regions, it needs to be admitted that there are 7 museums in Issyk-Kul region, 17 in Bishkek, and 68 in the whole country⁸⁰. There are fewer museums officially counted in other regions. Although, the functionality and attendance level of those museums is under question mark.

⁷⁷ Kaktus Media. What do we know about Issyk-kul airport? Available at https://kaktus.media/doc/463731_что_известно_о_реконструкции_аэропорта_манас_и_новом_главе_мам.htm

⁷⁸ Kozhokulov S. et al. Assessment of the Impacts of Tourism on the Socio-economic Sphere in the Issyk-Kul Region //Tourism in the Kyrgyz Republic: Social and Economic Development of the Issyk-Kul Region. – 2021. – p. 93-107. DOI:10.3390/su11143886

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ The National Statistics Committee. Available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/4976/> Accessed [online] on 07. 12. 2022

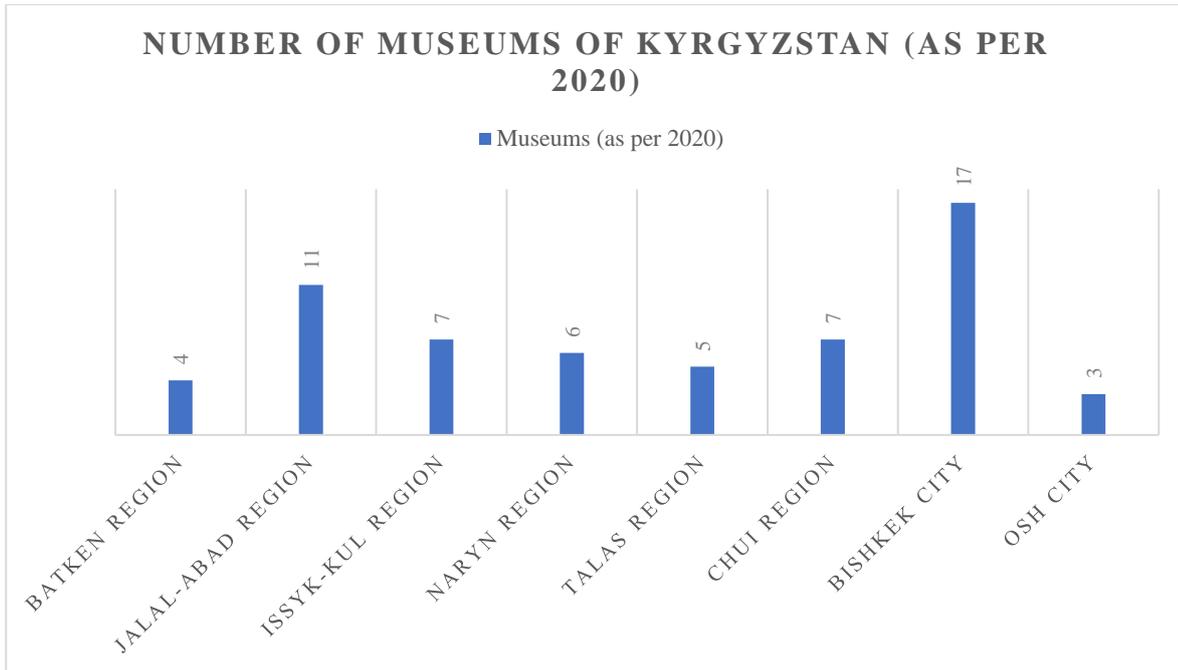


Figure 8 - The number of museums of Kyrgyzstan (as per 2020). Source: own processing based on data from the National Statistics Committee available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/4976/>. Accessed online on 14.12.2022

However, the main problem is the safety of tourists. For the majority of tourists from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the coach is the most popular mode of transport. The majority of road accidents happen with cars. As can be seen below in Figure 9, the number of traffic accidents is the highest in the city of Bishkek, around 1000 each year⁸¹. Issyk-Kul region has half fewer accidents as in the capital, fluctuating from 350 to 500 each year⁸². Yet, it is still a significant amount of accidents per region.

⁸¹ The National Statistics Committee. Available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/109/> Accessed [online] on 07. 12. 2022

⁸² Ibid.

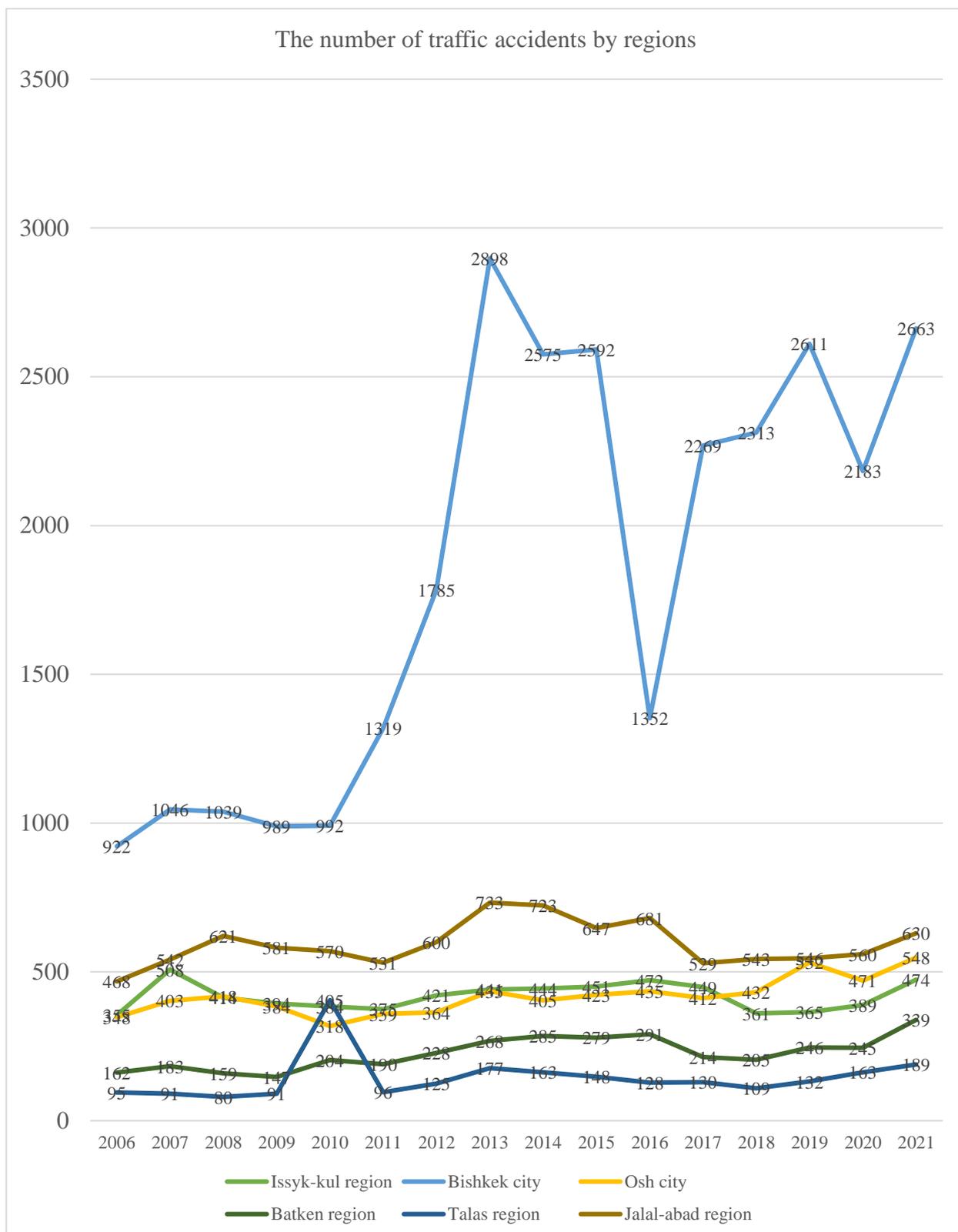


Figure 9 - The number of traffic accidents by regions. Source: own processing based on data from the National Statistics Committee available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/109/> Accessed online on 14.12.2022

As Yusuf Balasagun claimed in the 11th century: “Where *the law is the country’s nerves are strong*.”⁸³ The state might want to get rid of the illusion that the beauty of the high mountain lake and its attractiveness will make people forget about the careless attitude of the visitors and the greed of officials, overcome corruption and become civilized. It is vital to reduce the negative or indifferent attitude of the population towards tourists and tourism, and to introduce a behavioural model of hospitality through the concentration of efforts of the state, the private sector and local communities. To create the most favourable conditions for the tourism industry's subjects, the country's political leadership must have the political will and understanding to do so. They must also engage in systematic daily media outreach to the citizenry to explain the economic benefits of tourism, not just in the current season but also in the future.

The commercialization and renovation of a substantial part of the lodging businesses have resulted in a revival in the Issyk-Kul recreation sector over the years 2012 - 2022. Until now the tourism industry has evolved independently and mostly because of local investment. As seen below in Figure 10, the contribution of tourism to the GDP of Kyrgyzstan is tiny in comparison to other countries, but also significant. The officially available data were indicated only until 2020, which is now more than 2 years old data⁸⁴. The data shown in Figure 10 is in millions of Soms, as written in the table as well. As of 14th of March 2023, 1 Euro equals 93 Soms⁸⁵.

⁸³ Lukpanov A.I. *The Spiritual heritage of Yusuf Balasagun in the context of the modernization of political science*. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, 2019. DOI: 10.26577/jpcp.2019.v67.i1.015 Available at <https://bulletin-philospolit.kaznu.kz/index.php/1-pol/article/download/1039/1000/> Accessed [online] on 13. 12. 2022

⁸⁴ The National Statistics Committee. Available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/130/> Accessed [online] on 13. 12. 2022

⁸⁵ XE Exchange Rates. Available at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=EUR&To=KGS>

Items	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
The GDP in the field of tourism (mln. soms)	8241.5	12877.2	14205.5	16169.0	17318.2	20331.4	21673.8	26323.1	28720.5	31622.2	17079.3
The share of tourism in GDP	3.7%	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%	4.3%	4.7%	4.6%	5.0%	5.0%	5.1%	2.9%
Fixed capital investments in tourism (mln. soms)	6951.7	10004.2	8040	8771.7	10635.3	13812.0	17452.6	22795.1	25757.4	27184.2	15067.4

Figure 10 - Indicators of tourism development in Kyrgyzstan. Source: own processing based on data from the National Statistics Committee available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/130/>

The advantages of the resort and recreational travel are undeniable, but they must be developed with considering any potential harm to the environment, national culture, local residents, and the idea of the region's capacity: 1) physical throughput: the amount of rooms or lodging spaces and dining facilities; 2) biological carrying capacity: the condition of the aquatic environment, the flora and fauna, and the point at which a process becomes irreversible and nature ceases to exist; 3) Socio-spiritual carrying capacity: if there are too many visitors, they obstruct the ability of locals to live their daily lives, and satiety sets in. Although it may be difficult to grasp this line, the quest for more tourists is in fact riddled with social and environmental issues.

Figure 11 shows the number of sanatoria and recreation institutions in the whole country, the figures include tourist camps, sanatoria, children's sanatoria, sanatoria-preventoria, rest homes, holiday hotels with treatment, health camps, tourist centres and other rest institutions.

Unfortunately, the data is available only until 2020 and without a breakdown of separate regions. In 2012, there were 155 recreational institutions, yet, by 2020, the amount decreased to 97⁸⁶. This may be explained by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

⁸⁶ The National Statistics Committee available at <http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/turizm/> Accessed [online] on 13. 12. 2022

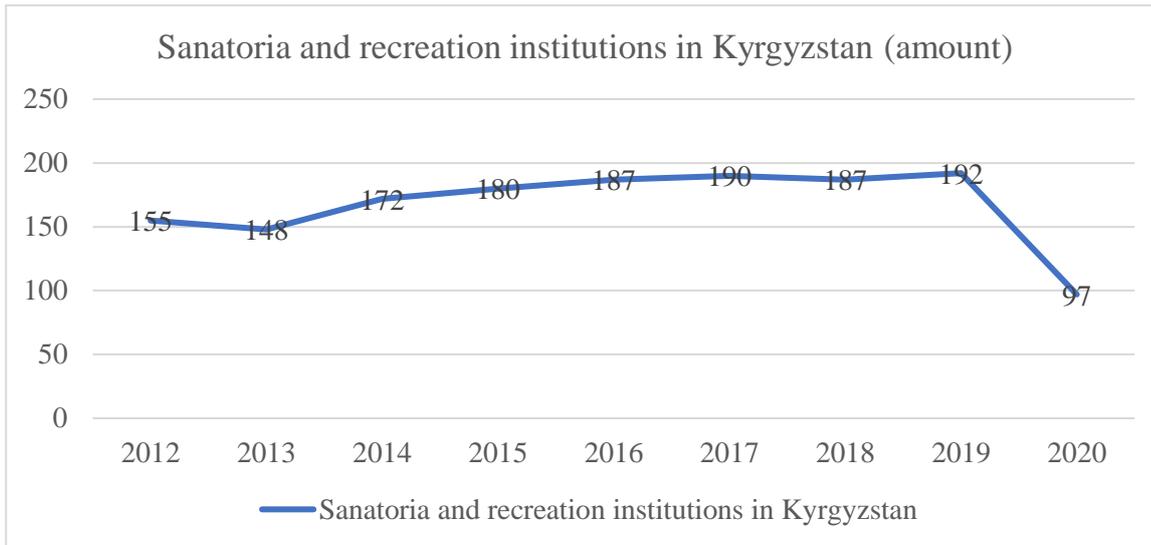


Figure 11 - The numbers of sanatoria and recreation institutions in Kyrgyzstan. Source: own processing based on data from the National Statistics Committee available at <http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/turizm/>

As seen in Figure 12, although the number of people accommodated in sanatoria and recreation institutions was not large and compounded only a bit less than 330 thousand people in 2019, it dropped quite dramatically in 2020 by almost three times, not totalling even 100 thousand people⁸⁷. Again, this is the consequence of the coronavirus outbreak and one of the reasons why the sanatoria and recreation institutions had to shut down – simply because of the absence of visitors.

⁸⁷ The National Statistics Committee available at <http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/turizm/> Accessed [online] on 13. 12. 2022

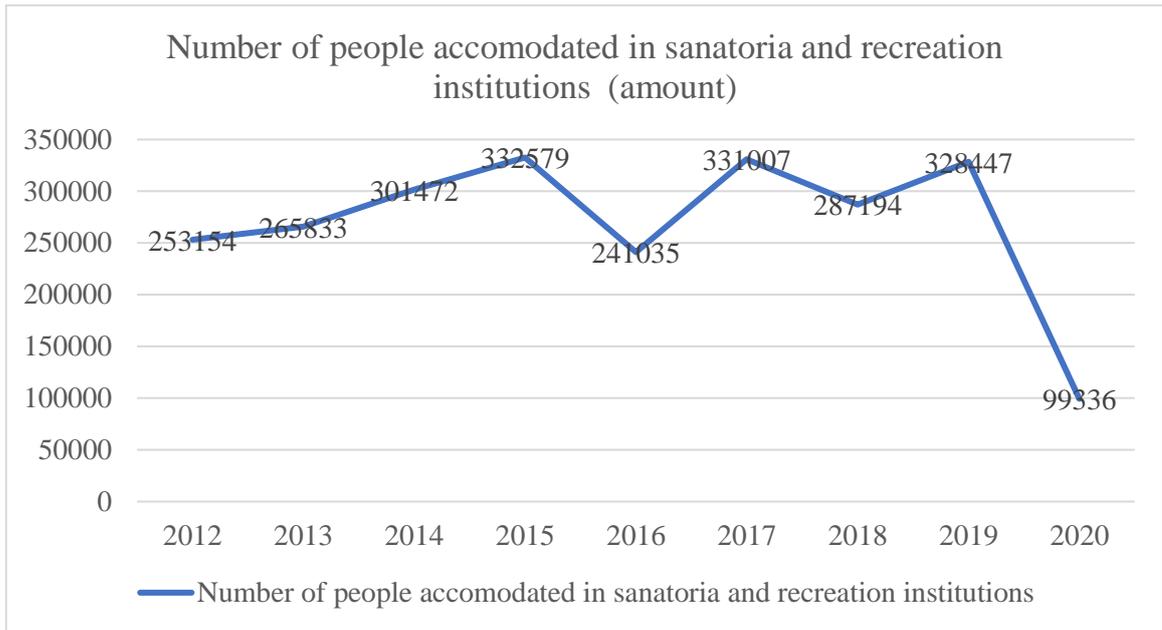


Figure 12 - Number of people accommodated in sanatoria and recreation institutions. Source: own processing based on data from the National Statistics Committee available at <http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/turizm/>

According to the UNWTO Tourism Dashboard, as Figure 13 shows, in 2019 Kyrgyzstan has experienced 8,5 million tourist arrivals, this number decreased 4 times amounting to 2,1 million tourist arrivals in 2020. The latest year with data available is 2021, and there was a mild increase in 2021 to 3, 2 million arrivals⁸⁸.

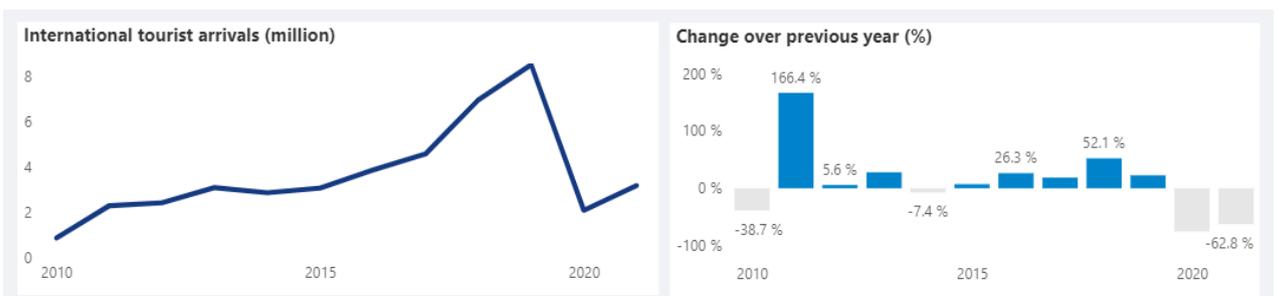


Figure 13 - UNWTO Tourism Dashboard. Source: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/unwto-tourism-dashboard>

⁸⁸ The UNWTO Tourism Dashboard. Available at <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/unwto-tourism-dashboard> Accessed [online] on 14. 12. 2022

3.7 Ecological aspect of the development of the Issyk-Kul region

The Kyrgyz Republic Law No. 115 of August 13, 2004, "*On the Sustainable Development of the Issyk-Kul Ecological and Economic System*," imposes more limitations on those who engage in outdoor activities in the lake's water region and the surrounding area.⁸⁹

The following economic activities are prohibited on the grounds of the ecological and economic system "Issyk-Kul":

- Chemical pollution of the lake or a portion of the lake, as well as the catchment area;
- Physical change of its state;
- Development of mineral deposits close to rivers flowing into the lake;
- biological pollution related to use, breeding, or acclimatization in the lake and water bodies that have a permanent or temporary connection to the lake, as well as aquatic animals and plants that are not typical of the ecological system of Issyk-Kul lake.⁹⁰

Law establishes the regulations for the land designated for recreational facilities. Capital construction, as well as the building and operation of facilities, with the exception of recreational facilities, closer than 500 meters from Lake Issyk-Kul, are forbidden at a distance of less than 100 meters from the lake.⁹¹ Additionally, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 06 September 1999 No. 48 "*On Biosphere Territories in the Kyrgyz Republic*"⁹² and the Regulation on the Issyk-Kul Biosphere Territory, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 01/24/2000 No. 40⁹³, set forth the characteristics of the protection of Lake Issyk-Kul.

The study of regulatory legal acts in the field of protection of Issyk-Kul showed that in the Kyrgyz Republic, it is necessary to take measures to properly regulate the procedure for the implementation of tourism activities in the central ecological zone and in the core zone of Issyk-Kul. It is important to remember that the rapid growth of tourism and recreational

⁸⁹ The Law No. 115 of August 13, 2004, "*On the Sustainable Development of the Issyk-Kul Ecological and Economic System*", Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1514> Accessed [online] on 14. 12. 2022

⁹⁰ The Law No. 115 of August 13, 2004, "*On the Sustainable Development of the Issyk-Kul Ecological and Economic System*", Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1514> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 06 September 1999 No. 48 "*On Biosphere Territories in the Kyrgyz Republic*". Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/213> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

⁹³ The Regulation on the Issyk-Kul Biosphere Territory approved by the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 01/24/2000 No. 40, Available at <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/94392> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

activities is always accompanied by the rise of environmental and economic issues, which can be resolved by organizing the use of land for recreational purposes in accordance with aspects of land management, forest management, and urban planning.⁹⁴

The studies found that organizations operating on the territory violate water and land legislation; sewage treatment is improperly carried out; there are no receivers for the collection and disposal of liquid household waste.⁹⁵ All this falls under the control of the prosecutor's office, law enforcement and regulatory bodies of the Issyk-Kul region. The prosecutor's office is given a significant role in the effort to ensure the rule of law in the area of nature protection. According to a study of the prosecutor's office's organizational structure, the Kyrgyz Republic lacks a dedicated environmental prosecutor offices but has a person in a section of the general prosecutor's office whose major responsibility is to supervise the execution of environmental laws⁹⁶.

The prosecutor's office of the Issyk-Kul region conducts activities to ensure the rule of law in the Issyk-Kul natural area. Nevertheless, it appears that the Kyrgyz Republic currently lacks an environmental prosecutor's office in the system of prosecution bodies, which is a result of the same objective circumstances:

- The challenging environmental situation in all regions of the country,
- The extensive and intricate structure of environmental legislation;
- The legal infractions,
- The need to control public perception of land and soil protection, forest management, etc.

The establishment of a dedicated prosecutor's office will help to coordinate the work of state agencies fighting environmental crimes, especially those committed in the Issyk-Kul natural area.

3.8 Economic development of the Issyk-Kul region

As can be seen from the Figure 14, municipal lands of Issyk-Kul region make up only 1.46% of all lands in the Issyk-Kul region⁹⁷. Still, these are the most densely populated and scarce lands, they are an exhaustible resource and belong not only to the living but also to future

⁹⁴ Schmidt, M. *"Central Asia's blue pearl: the Issyk Kul biosphere reserve in Kyrgyzstan"*, 2011. ISBN: 978-3-7001-6968-0OPAC

⁹⁵ Giralt S. et al. 1,000-year environmental history of Lake Issyk-Kul. – Springer Netherlands, 2004. – p. 253-285. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-0967-6_10

⁹⁶ Who is who. Akipress. Available at <https://who.ca-news.org/catalog:357> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

⁹⁷ The State Registration Service under the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at <https://grs.gov.kg/ru/> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

generations of citizens. It is no coincidence that conflicts regularly arise around these lands, and their management requires great attention and care on the part of local governments.

Quality management of land resources implies several factors:

- Control by the local municipality (presence of local regulatory legal act, regular reporting);
- Accounting (inventory) and classification of objects and lands;
- Management plan or strategy, taking into account the classification and priorities of the population (current and future generations), including
- A plan for generating and managing income (targeted investment of income, timely adjustment of rental rates, compliance with competitive procedures for granting plots for lease and sale).

Regions	State property lands		Municipal property lands		Private property lands	
	ha.	%	ha.	%	ha.	%
Batken	1617367	94.87	3325	0.20	84155	4.94
Osh	2678750	92	6735	0.23	226153	7.77
Jalal-abad	3072625	94.78	3805	0.12	165373	5.10
Talas	1226624	91.49	5499	0.41	108556	8.10
Chui	1598919	79.69	26485	1.32	381037	18.99
Issyk-Kul	4123832	94.29	63753	1.46	185930	4.25
Naryn	4308723	97.57	2552	0.06	104730	2.37
TOTAL	18626840	93.2	112154	0.54	1255934	6.28

Figure 14 - The distribution of land ownership in Kyrgyzstan according to regions (in hectares). Source: State Registration Service under the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic

Figure 15 shows that according to the National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the minimum living wage per month in Issyk-Kul region for the year 2022 is 6780.86 KGS,

which equals to nearly 73 EUR and it increased by 16.3% compared to the preceding year⁹⁸. Following the structure of the subsistence minimum, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 694 dated November 6, 2009, the share of food products in it is 64 per cent, non-food products - 17 per cent, services - 17 per cent and taxes - 2 percent. The energy value of the food basket is 2101 kilocalories.⁹⁹

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Living wage for the Issyk-Kul region	4217,73	4423,98	4376,31	4362,51	4965,17	5828,67	6780,86
	Kyrgyz soms						

Figure 15 - Living wage. Source: the National Statistic Committee, available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/living-wage/>

3.8.1 Industrial development of the region

In the Issyk-Kul region, the industrial complex consists of 57 large and medium-sized enterprises, of which 40 are stably operating enterprises¹⁰⁰. Those include the brick factory, production of juices and jams, clothes tailoring, milk processing and production of dairy products, cattle meat processing and many others. The expansion of touristic facilities in the area boosts the demand for building materials, which benefits other small businesses by boosting their production volumes.

As the analysis of the industries in the regions of Kyrgyzstan's northern area by the Ministry of Economy indicates, 30% of all businesses in the Issyk-Kul region were completely idle in 2021¹⁰¹. If we compare the contribution of the industrial activity of the GRP share (Gross Regional Product) of the Issyk-Kul region, as shown in Figure 16, we can see that it makes up more than half. The agriculture and service sectors together make up nearly the rest 40% of the GRP share¹⁰².

⁹⁸ The National Statistic Committee, available at <http://www.stat.kg/ru/living-wage/> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

⁹⁹ The National Statistics Committee. Living wage for the II quarter of 2022 <http://stat.kg/ru/news/prozhitochnyj-minimum-za-ii-kvartal-2022-goda/> Accessed [online] on 20. 12. 2022

¹⁰⁰ Alymkulova B. et al. Consideration of water uses for its sustainable management, the case of Issyk-Kul Lake, Kyrgyzstan //Water. – 2016. – T. 8. – №. 7. – p. 298. DOI: 10.3390/w8070298

¹⁰¹ Analysis of trends and problems of economic development of the regions of the Kyrgyz Republic at the present stage. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Institute for Statistical Research and Advanced Studies. 2019. Available at https://mineconom.gov.kg/storage/document/documents/22/15726091295dbc1c69b8643_pdf.pdf Accessed [online] on 22. 12. 2022

¹⁰² The Structure of economy of the Issyk-kul region. Source: <https://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/section/document> Accessed [online] on 22. 12. 2022

STRUCTURE OF ECONOMY (% TO GRP)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Agriculture	9,3	8,1	7,2	10,7	6,9	19,8
Industrial activities	61,9	71,2	72,0	50,4	65,4	54,1
Service sector	20,4	14,9	17,3	25,8	18,7	19,3

Figure 16 - Structure of economy of the Issyk-Kul region. Source: <https://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/section/document>

3.8.2 Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistical tool developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to measure and rank countries' levels of human development based on three dimensions: education, health, and income. A country's HDI value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of human development. In 2021, Kyrgyzstan ranked 118th out of 191 countries in the HDI ranking with a value of 0.692¹⁰³.

This means that, compared to other countries, Kyrgyzstan's level of human development is relatively low. Kyrgyzstan's HDI value puts it ahead of only Tajikistan among the countries of Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)¹⁰⁴.

However, according to Rafkat Khasanov, an expert on economic and financial policies of the Investment Council, the Issyk-Kul region in Kyrgyzstan has the highest level of HDI compared to other regions in the country. This means that in terms of education, health, and income, the people living in the Issyk-Kul region are better off than those living in other regions of Kyrgyzstan are. It is worth noting that while the Issyk-Kul region may have a higher HDI compared to other regions within Kyrgyzstan; it may still lag behind other countries in the world in terms of human development.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ The Human Development Index. Source: HDI UNDP, <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI> Accessed [online] on 22. 12. 2022

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Khasanov, Rafkat et al. NATIONAL REPORT ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC. The Ministry of the Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2016, Available at <https://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/section/document?page=2> Accessed [online] on 22. 12. 2022

4 Results and recommendations

In 2020, the authorities intended to create a roadmap for the regional development program "*10 stages of development*" in order to ensure the dynamic and sustainable development of the Issyk-Kul area in the medium term. This road plan is anticipated to act as the primary program document that establishes the major directions of socioeconomic development in such spheres of the population's socioeconomic life, as education, urbanization, environmental pollution, healthcare, digitalization, tourism and public safety.¹⁰⁶

According to the local government plan, this roadmap will be implemented at the expense of the Issyk-Kul Development Fund, the Issyk-Kul Regional Capital Construction Department, the microcredit organization under the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the GKR in the Issyk-Kul Region, international donor organizations, as well as other sources.¹⁰⁷ However, due to unknown but predictable situations, the creation and implementation of the roadmap were paused. The author believes that the coronavirus outbreak had a significant effect on this.

It is apparent that all the goals and steps mentioned in the roadmap concept are feasible to achieve with proper funding, which also depends on understanding the depth of the problems and what causes them. There are plenty of problems, including ones that are essentially “man-made” yet only exist on the surface.

It can be mentioned that the Issyk-Kul basin has the potential to develop into one of the primary destinations for leisure, tourism, sports, and culture for the Central Asian countries as a whole, as well as to become a sort of a hallmark for Kyrgyzstan. In general, Issyk-Kul serves as a powerful city-forming factor and a sustainable source of welfare for the country.

Since Kyrgyzstan is a donor-dependent country, there is a number of projects planned for the Issyk-Kul region that will be implemented by international organizations, such as UN programmes, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and many others. Promising infrastructure projects from such organizations will contribute to the development of the tourism industry.

¹⁰⁶ The Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic. A meeting on the socio-economic development of the districts of the Issyk-Kul region. Available at <https://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/post/6528> Accessed [online] on 25. 12. 2022

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

The Issyk-Kul region is situated in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan. It is famous and attractive for its resort potential, ranking among the most visited locations in Central Asia in terms of its availability and diversity. With its numerous mineral springs, which vary in their physical and chemical characteristics, therapeutic mud, and little salt lakes, Issyk-Kul Lake is one of the unique places in the region.

Based on the analytical part of the thesis in general, and on the SWOT analysis in particular, the author has withdrawn several recommendations for the further development of the region:

- 1) *To improve the quality of service.* The region's poor service quality is a major problem, and in order to increase it, it is necessary to draw in more tourists. Businesses in the tourism sector need to make an investment in their staff by giving them the right training to improve their abilities.
- 2) *To develop a marketing strategy.* Another issue in the region is the lack of a marketing plan. A thorough marketing strategy that emphasizes the region's advantages, such as the Issyk-Kul Lake's scenic beauty and the locals' rich cultural traditions, is vital. To broaden the market, the strategy should also target tourists from wealthy nations in addition to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
- 3) *To diversify tourist products.* There is currently a small selection of tourism-related goods available in the region. More tourists can be attracted and the season can be prolonged by diversifying the types of tourism that are offered, such as adventure, environmental, and cultural tourism.
- 4) *To increase investments.* A fundamental problem of the region is the limited inflow of investments. The government should take the appropriate steps to increase investment in the tourism sector in order to boost levels of service and infrastructure.
- 5) *To enhance human resources.* A big possibility for the region is the creation of a network of educational institutions that can teach workers in the tourism sector. To offer top-notch services to tourists, the public and private sectors should engage in the development of human resources, including training initiatives and capacity building.
- 6) *Address corruption:* Corruption is a threat to the region. The government should work to address corruption and establish a stable and transparent regulatory environment.

5 Conclusion

The Issyk-Kul region in the Kyrgyz Republic has immense potential for tourism and economic development. The region's unique geographical location, natural beauty, and cultural heritage make it a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists. However, there are several challenges that hinder the region's development, including poor service quality, limited marketing strategies, a small selection of tourism-related goods, a limited inflow of investments, and corruption. This bachelor thesis aims to evaluate the regional development of the Issyk-Kul region from 2012 to 2022 and define the role of regional infrastructure and its impact on tourism. The study provides recommendations to overcome the challenges and maximize the region's potential for sustainable and dynamic development.

The thesis evaluates the regional development of the Issyk-Kul region from 2012 to 2022. The study found that the authorities intended to create a roadmap for the regional development program "10 stages of development" in 2020 to ensure the dynamic and sustainable development of the Issyk-Kul area in the medium term. However, due to the coronavirus outbreak, the creation and implementation of the roadmap were paused. The roadmap was anticipated to act as the primary program document that establishes the major directions of socioeconomic development in spheres of the population's socioeconomic life, such as education, urbanization, environmental pollution, healthcare, digitalization, tourism, and public safety. The study also found that the Issyk-Kul basin has the potential to develop into one of the primary destinations for leisure, tourism, sports, and culture for the Central Asian countries and become a sort of hallmark for Kyrgyzstan. However, the region faces several challenges that hinder its development, including poor service quality, limited marketing strategies, a small selection of tourism-related goods, a limited inflow of investments, and corruption.

To overcome these challenges and achieve sustainable and dynamic development, the study recommends implementing several measures. These measures include improving service quality by investing in staff training and establishing quality standards, developing a marketing strategy that targets wealthy nations as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States, diversifying tourism products to include adventure, environmental, and cultural tourism, increasing investments in the tourism sector, creating a favourable investment climate and providing incentives to attract investors, and enhancing human resources by

establishing a network of educational institutions and offering training initiatives and capacity building. Additionally, the government should establish a scholarship program to encourage students to pursue tourism-related careers to ensure that the region offers top-notch services to tourists. By implementing these measures, the Issyk-Kul region can maximize its potential for sustainable and dynamic development.

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ADB - Asian Development Bank
AKF - Aga Khan Foundation
CIS - Commonwealth of Independent countries
EAEU - Eurasian Economic Union
EU - European Union
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GNP - Gross National Product
GRP - Gross Regional Product
HDI - Human Development Index
JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAB - "Man and Biosphere"
SWOT - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TIKA - Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
UK - United Kingdom
UNDP - United Nations Development Program
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization
US - The United States
WDPA - The World Database on Protected Areas