

# DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMY

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## COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE OPPORTUNITIES OF ECOTOURISM IN THE LIBERATED REGIONS

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**Introduction.** Karabakh has rich natural and cultural heritage resources. Here, there are all opportunities for the development of ecotourism, mountain tourism, winter tourism, hunting tourism, and health tourism based on the natural heritage resources. Favorable economic-geographical position of Karabakh, rich resources, rare natural-climatic characteristics, rich flora and fauna, etc. can stimulate the development of the tourism industry in the region.

From the analysis of ecotourism resources in the region, it is clear that the natural monuments of the area, the exotic forest landscape create a favorable environment for the development of tourism. The spread of the region's unique tree and bush species, caves, flat coats, thermal water sources, geological and geomorphological monuments can play a basic role in the development of ecotourism.

**Relevance of the topic:** based on modern realities, the importance of strengthening the state policy regarding the post-conflict situation in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan is justified. The relevance of the topic is that the world experience in the restoration of liberated territories and the realities of Karabakh are reviewed here. The activity models and mechanisms implemented in the world political and economic processes in the post-war and post-conflict period are examined. In the post-conflict situation, the priorities and objectives of the state economic policy are indicated.

**Analysis of international experience in ecotourism development.** When compared at the international level, we can see that "eco-label" is very important in France and the construction of "eco-hotels" and "eco-villages" in nature areas is widespread. In Greece, since 2001, "catch the eyes" motto of a different approach has been created "ecological cities" that ensure the sight of all "those looking for something different". In Greece, on the other hand, there is a widespread effort to combine different tourist attractions, trademarks and cultures into a "package" that offers a common and unique experience of the region. This is achieved through special festivals in which the aspect of ecotourism is one of the main or additional parts (for example, festivals like "Oinoxeneia" and "EnSirmo") [9].

Looking at the state of nature (ecotourism) tourism in China, it is important to provide substantial support to agencies specialized in ecotourism. For example, China uses a special certification system for ecotour agencies and tour guides, unlike the traditional certification system. At the same time, the Chinese government says that tourism operators to protected areas do not create a correct image of ecotourism and do not make any distinction between ecotourism and conventional tourism. China sets regulations to ensure the development of healthy ecotourism for all stakeholders. Also, CNTA is working on establishing an accreditation system.

In Japan, education and experience play a major role in promoting ecotourism. Also, in order to maintain the quality of ecotourism, Japan has established a website for ecotourism professionals (also successful ecotour operators) to easily identify companies that offer superior ecotour services in Japan to their ecotourists.

All the routes and their GPS are listed on the website in a specific and convenient way. Ecotourism is already the largest source of foreign currency in countries such as Costa Rica, Guatemala, Tanzania and New Zealand. Costa Rica is one of the leading destinations for ecotourism in the world, and the ecotourism experience here includes local communities. ACTUAR (Costa Rican Rural and Community Tourism) is a local community association that supports over 40 partner community networks in Costa Rica [8].

**The purpose of the study:** the purpose of the article is to analyze the importance of tourism development for socio-economic systems. Considering all the characteristics of the Karabakh region, it is the development of promising methods of using its resources.

**Research methods:** the methodological basis of the research is presented with scientific generalization, comparative analysis, complex, systematic approaches.

**Object of the research:** it is the study of the main characteristic features of the freed Karabakh region and its surrounding regions and the analysis of the socio-economic nature of those areas.

**Caves of ecotourism importance.** About 20 large and small caves are found in Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur region for the development of spele tourism. The main caves in the region are distributed in Shusha, Khojavand, Kalbajar and Lachin regions. The main caves include Azikh, Taglar, Dashalti, Shusha cave in Shusha district, Zar, Bashibel, 8 caves on the banks of the Tarter river in Kalbajar, Sadinlar, Baygara, Khochaz, Qaranlikkaha caves in Lachin district [14].

Zar cave is located in the village of the same name in the Kalbajar region, in the Eastern Goyca range. 152 objects made of obsidian were found in the cave. The archaeological findings in the cave belong to the Upper Paleolithic period. The tools of Zar cave reflect the second stage of the Mustye culture and the transition from the Mustye to the Upper Paleolithic according to their typological and technological level and the morphology of the sherds. The depth of the cave is 5-8 m, the height of the cave is 1.8 m [13].

Taglar cave is located 3 km west of Akhyz cave in Yukhari Taglar village. More than 8,000 stone products and more than 600,000 hunted animal bones can be found in the cave. The archaeological research conducted in the Taglar camp showed that the Mustye culture has its own characteristics in the territory of our republic. The cave is surrounded by an exotic forest landscape, which increases its touristic importance [4].

Azikh cave is located on the left bank of the Tug depression and the Guruchay, the most scenic and healing area of the Paleolithic period. The depth of the cave reaches 120 m in some places, the main part of which consists of step parts that can be crossed. There are 6 layers, which consist of centers with special passages. In addition to the jawbone, tools, fauna, and hearth remains were found in the cave. The cave is surrounded by an exotic forest landscape, which increases its touristic importance.

The Shusha cave camp is located in the valley of the Dashalti river, which belongs to the Stone Age. The cave consists of a special chamber that can fit several people. This cave, which is called as Khan's cave, is located at an altitude of 1400 m from the road that goes up from Dashalt to Shusha. This cave, which is clearly visible from the outside, is suitable for organizing spelunking.

Dashalti cave was created from natural limestone and obsidian rocks in the middle course of the river with the same name. It is also noted that it was formed from lava released during volcanic eruptions. The remains of various domestic and wild animals are found here. The water trickling down from the cave creates an exotic waterfall. The existence of an exotic landscape around the cave and a waterfall with umbrellas increase its importance in terms of ecotourism.

The mentioned caves create a favorable lane for the development of spelunking in the region. In the future, it is possible to organize a speletourism route as part of ecotourism, which can include about 20 caves in Khojavand, Shusha, Kalbajar and Lachin districts.

**Tourism importance of exotic forest landscape and rare plant species.** Forests cover 22-25% of the territory of the region, the main part of which belongs to Khojavand, Shusha, Kalbajar, Tartar, Khojaly and Lachin regions. The presence of rare plant species in the forest landscape makes it possible to use them for ecotourism. As an example of these, forests consisting of red oak trees of Lachin district are found in the forests of Lachin ban and Hachishamli. Although vandalized by Armenians, a small part of those forests has been preserved in the form of spoils. Besides being favorable for ecotourism maintenance, these forests can be included in tourism routes [12].

Hazelnut forests of Kalbajar region are widespread in Zulfugarlı, Agdaban and Tutgun river valleys. Also, among these forests, you can find grayish, goke garmashov, and eastern oak trees that are several hundred years

old. Although the mentioned forests are subjected to Armenian vandalism, they can be used for ecotourism purposes, taking into account self-recovery.

The Topkhana forest of Shusha region is rich in oak and vales trees. Although it was subjected to Armenian vandalism several times, it is currently possible to expand within its area. 100 kg of oak cones were sown in Topkhana forests by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, and new saplings were planted, which will create conditions for the restoration of forests and their use in terms of ecotourism [7].

Araz, Georgian oak, and juniper trees belonging to arid forest landscape in Gubadli region are found in other areas of the region, besides spreading in Gubadli reserve. The arid forest landscape consists of endemic plants, which can be used for ecotourism.

The organization of the National Park, which covers a large area at the base of the Basitchay, Karagöl reserves, Gubadli, Lachin and Dashalti reserves in the region, would make it easier to use the existing potential for tourism purposes. Currently, the existing natural resources of these reserves and shelters are being evaluated, which will allow to determine the possibility of using these resources for tourism purposes.

By expanding the area of the Basitchay reserve, new eastern sycamore, oak, and sycamore seeds were sown, and trees suitable for local climatic conditions were planted. It should also be noted that goldfish tables were poured into the river of the same name in the Basitchay reserve, which will allow it to be spread over a wide area for the purpose of its purification. Eastern sycamore forests in the Basitchay reserve have been affected by Armenian vandalism, and their current area has halved. Currently, the restoration processes of the reserve have been started and scientific research works are being carried out. In addition to the eastern sycamore, forest fauna and flora species are spread in the territory of the reserve, which increases its importance for recreation and tourism.

Vegetation of Karagöl State Nature Reserve located in Lachin region, mammals (roe deer, capercaillie, wild boar) and birds (turac, partridge) in Lachin State Nature Reserve are natural heritage resources. Due to the fact that the lake located in the Karagöl State Nature Reserve has no water flow from anywhere and the water is very clean and healing, the people looked at this lake as a sacred place of worship [9].

One of the issues on the agenda is the restoration of our specially protected natural areas (reserves and sanctuaries) for the protection of biodiversity in our areas liberated from occupation, as well as the creation of a new category of national park (or parks) in terms of the development of ecotourism.

Medicinal plants and phytoplants have a special role in the development of eco-health tourism in the region. There are more than 400 healing water springs in the region, the main part of which is concentrated in Kalbajar, Lachin, and Shusha regions.

Among them, the famous healing waters distinguished by their flow and exoticness are Istisu, Bagirsag, Tutgun, Zulfugarlı village in Kalbajar district, Minkend, Ahamdli water in Lachin district, more than 20 warm and hydrothermal water sources, Turshsu, Shirilan, Nuraddin water, Dashalti in Shusha district. springs can be mentioned [7]. In addition to the healing properties of the mentioned sources, the presence of exotic landscape and natural monuments around them increases their importance from the point of view of tourism. Currently, the mentioned therapeutic waters are being evaluated, which will enable the creation of eco-health clusters in the future.

A number of ecologically important lakes in the territories freed from occupation – Beyuk Alagöl, Kızık Alagöl, Zalkhagöl, Karagöl, Canlıgöl, Isıklı Karagöl and fresh water resources located in the territory of Tartar region in the grasslands of Kalbajar and Lachin districts have also been heavily affected by anthropogenic influence. But now our nature is breathing easier: parks and reserves are being restored, at the same time fertile lands are cleared of mines and polluted rivers and lakes are cleaned. All such activities enliven and enrich the ecological life of Karabakh. The presence of large mountain meadows around the mentioned lakes, the presence of natural monuments, the spread of natural "golden trout" in the lakes, wide landscapes and observation points on the plateau create favorable conditions for the development of ecotourism.

The richness of the region's vegetation, the abundance of representative plants and berries, and the spread of beekeeping in the future will create conditions for the expansion of phytotherapy and the growth of ecotourism opportunities. More than 500 types of plants are found in the region, of which about 50 types of plants and berries of phytotherapeutic importance are common. 85% of the species of flora spread in the Caucasus are found in the territories freed from occupation [7]. The fact that most of the plants are of therapeutic importance shows that they are promising for the development of eco-health tourism. The presence of rich phyto-plants in all mountainous and foothill areas of the region allows its bottling and production of phytoteas.

One of the factors driving the development of ecotourism in the region is related to the possibilities of turning cultural heritage into a tourism product. Examples of the archaeological heritage of the region include ancient settlements, urban remains, and "hill" areological examples mainly used by the population. As an example, we can mention many ancient settlements and archaeological remains in Agdam region. Karimlitape (Eyvazli village), Namazlitape settlement (Kablahuseynli village), Shomulutepe (Mirashelli village), Yolkesantape (Alibeyli village), Azikh and Taglar cave in Khojavend region, ancient settlement, areas with traces of habitation belonging to the Khojaly-Gadabey culture can be mentioned [3]. It is possible to include these archaeological monuments in tourism routes to turn them into tourism products. It is possible to use the mentioned archaeological monuments in the presentation of the ethno-cultural heritage of Hachi and in the preparation of tourism products related to it.

The architectural heritage of the liberated territories is important from the point of view of ecological tourism. Cultural heritage examples and architecture of Shusha city have an irreplaceable role in the development of eco-cultural tourism. Shahbulag castle and its surrounding exotic forest landscape in Aghdam district, historical Khudafarin bridges in Jabrayil district, Bayat, Shahbulag (Ternakut), Panahabad (Shusha) castles were built in Karabakh in the second half of the 18th century, and in those castles there was a market, a caravanserai, a mosque, a bath, etc. was built. Also buildings in Agdam. Shelter and domes belonging to his descendants were built [6].

The historical churches located in Karabakh are at the same time B.C. It is a relic of the period of Caucasian Albania, which existed in the territory of present-day Azerbaijan from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Agoglan monastery in Lachin district, Khudaveng and Ganjasar monasteries in Kalbajar district, Amaras monastery dating back to the 4th century in Khojavand district, Albanian monuments in Tugh, Hadrut and other settlements allow to be used from the point of view of eco-cultural tourism. Surrounding the mentioned cultural heritage with an exotic forest landscape, the presence of natural monuments create favorable conditions for the organization of ecotourism [5].

Karabakh carpets, Karabakh horses, Karabakh music, and Karabakh national cuisine are among the rich intangible heritage examples of the region. It is possible to widely use the mentioned examples of ethno-cultural heritage in the organization of event tourism in the region. The Kharibulbul festival, the music and poetry festival, and the planned culinary festival in Shusha city will stimulate the development of tourism.

The holding of Karabakh horse worship festival and the invitation of the world's famous horse clubs to these competitions would increase its tourism potential. At the same time, ensuring that such competitions are of international importance would attract the interests of tourists.

The holding of international events reflecting examples of the Karabakh carpet weaving school would have stimulated the development of international tourism. The restoration of the carpet school in Shusha, the organization of the museum, and the organization of the exhibition and sales center would allow tourists to be attracted.

When implementing ecotourism activities in the region, the principle of "sustainability of the natural environment", which is one of the two important criteria, must be strictly followed. The principle of "sustainability of local cultures and the benefit of the population that will settle in the future from this tourism activity", which is the second main criterion of ecotourism, combines two important principles. First; that the population of the region where the ecotourism activity is carried out takes part in this activity. For this, first of all, it should be ensured that small agencies within the country and even in the region, and not large international tour operators, participate in ecotourism activities. This objective will then be realized by ensuring that these agencies, when developing their tour programs, meet as much as possible the tour demands from the region. Secondly; while contributing to a region through tourism, material and spiritual cultural elements should not be spoiled. In regions where original cultures and spiritual values are intact, tourist groups should respect these values. In addition to preservation of material cultural monuments, preference should be given to residential establishments providing services in original buildings under protection instead of modern architectural products that do not match the local texture.

In ecotourism, educating visitors about the region's ecosystem, local cultures, and sustainability is of great importance. Since the local population is the segment that will be most affected by ecotourism and will have the most to lose, it is important that they are informed in advance about the impacts of tourism developing in their region. The principles that will guide ecotourism activities can be listed as follows [10]:

- Tourist activities should not reduce resources;
- Visitors must present their educational experience without intermediaries;

– All stakeholders (host community, government, non-governmental organizations, industry and tourists) should be involved;

- Real values of natural resources should be respected;
- Existing resources in local areas should not be overloaded;
- The development of partnerships between stakeholders should be encouraged;
- Revenues must ensure the protection of scientific or cultural resources of the industry and the local population;
- These benefits should be long term.

The development of multi-purpose tourism routes in the liberated territories would allow the attraction of incoming and domestic tourists. Taking into account the tourism potential of Karabakh and surrounding regions, it is possible to organize routes covering eco-cultural, cultural-archaeological heritage, traditional and historical heritage, natural heritage. In terms of ecotourism in the region, the following tourist routes can be offered:

– Ahmadbeyli-Fuzuli-Hadrut-Tugh-Azikh. It is possible to present more than 20 cultural-historical heritage, exotic landscape and natural monuments on this route. The mentioned route has favorable opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking, adventure, and speleo tourism. Also, the historical and cultural heritage on the route can be presented to tourists, which increases its attractiveness.

– Amadbeyli-Dasalti-Shusha tourism route. Along this route, there is a historical cultural reserve and the presence of dozens of historical architecture and cultural heritage examples in it increases its attractiveness. Along the route, there are many natural monuments, historical sites, caves, etc. exists, which ensures its attractiveness. At the same time, there are favorable conditions for paragliding, paragliding, hiking, spele tourism. The fact that all 17 neighborhoods in Shusha have their own history and culture is relevant for the organization of cultural-understanding excursion tours. Revival of the mentioned route will be more attractive in terms of international and domestic tourism. At the moment, it can be noted that Shusha will be an important destination from the point of view of tourism due to the planning of bus routes four times a week and the constant increase of interest in it.

– Goygol-Togana-Kalbajar-Zulfugarlı-Istisu eco-health tourism route. More than 20 natural monuments along the route, many healing thermal springs, exotic landscape, natural monuments, and cultural-heritage examples are among the factors that increase the attractiveness from the point of view of tourism. There are opportunities for hiking, spelunking, mountain climbing, mountaineering, photo safari, and adventure ecotourism. In the mentioned ecotourism route, deep river canyons from hydrological monuments, opportunities to use Tungunchay for rafting, waterfalls are considered ideal areas for active tourism. Among the examples of cultural heritage, the presence of two statues, about 10 historical-archeological monuments, and architectural examples increases the attractiveness from the point of view of ecotourism. Kalbajar's pure oxygen-rich air, lakes, and the presence of natural golden river fish are considered to be the main features of the route. The development of beekeeping farms in the region, the traditional heritage presented by the local communities after their return, and regional cuisine samples will lead tourists to take advantage of new opportunities.

– Guzanli-Aghdam-Garvand-Shahbulag-Khachin Reservoir Cultural Natural Heritage Route. In the direction of the route, there are historical-architectural monuments, fortresses, observation points, ancient mounds and settlements, natural monuments in the village of Gulabli, a mosque in the city of Aghdam, etc. is considered one of the main resources for attracting tourists. Currently, the large number of people traveling on the Baku-Aghdam bus route will play an important role in attracting domestic and incoming tourists to this area in the future. Along with the historical and cultural heritage, the exotic landscape, natural monuments, natural monuments near the Khachin reservoir and observation of the surrounding areas from the observation point are considered attractive factors of the route.

– The "Dark tourism" route. The cities of Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Gubadli are considered to be the main places for the presentation of black tourism. The presentation of the rich history of the region in the "Victory Museum" that will be built in each region in the future will create a new impression for visiting guests and local tourists. At the same time, presentation of the crumbling central part of Agdam city will lead to its formation as a dark tourism destination.

**Conclusion.** The increase in the demand for natural and cultural heritage in international tourism, the presentation of their attractive factors as a tourist product, conditions the development of ecotourism in the region. Geological and geomorphological monuments related to natural heritage resources, climate-landscape factors, hydrological monuments, mineral and thermal waters, as well as rich cultural heritage resources in the liberated territories can stimulate the development of eco-cultural tourism, which includes architectural, archaeologi-

cal, religious, based on intangible heritage potential. In particular, Shusha, Tugh-Azikh-Taglar, Shahbulag and surrounding areas create conditions for the organization of eco-recreational and eco-cultural tourism clusters in Sugovushan. Effective use of available resources can become an additional source of income for the population living in the region, which allows for employment and stimulation of living.

**The novelty of the research work:** The author analyzed the main indicators of the development of tourism at the global and regional level within this research. For the first time, the socio-economic revival of territories in the Karabakh region in the post-occupation period was considered using world experience, and recommendations and suggestions were given on these issues.

**Application importance of the research work:** Based on the approved modern regional development concept, the proposed models can solve the issues of tourism development and contribute to additional investment flows.

**The economic effect of the research:** During the research, the strategic development of the promising tourism destinations of the Karabakh region was determined based on the existing tourism potential, taking into account the regional opportunities due to natural-climatic, cultural and economic characteristics, which will help to improve the quality of life of the population in the region.

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**Isa Muradov Ibadulla**, PhD student, Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction. **Comprehensive analysis of the opportunities of ecotourism in the liberated regions.**

Ecocultural tourism, a new type of tourism brought about by the relationship between cultural and nature tourism, aims to develop cultural and ecological resources by presenting the ecological and cultural components of the landscape together. Sustainability and participation are two key factors crucial to the long-term future of tourism. Appropriate strategies should be defined to realize the potential of ecotourism, which carries all the principles of sustainability, and ecocultural tourism, where nature is valued together. Within the framework of these strategies, the concept of "eco-museum" that preserves the natural and cultural environment as a whole comes to the fore in international practice. The joint use of eco-cultural heritage in the liberated territories allows for the creation of this strategy. In particular, the wide potential of territories freed from occupation for the use of cultural and natural heritage creates favorable conditions for the development of eco-cultural tourism. It creates favorable conditions for the organization of eco-cultural, ethno-cultural, eco-health and eco-ethno-cultural tourism clusters in the liberated territories, which is based on the rich natural and cultural heritage potential of the region. Tugh-Azix-Taglar in Khojavand region, Zulfugar village and its surroundings in Kalbajar region, Shusha city and Dashalti village, Minkend in Lachin region and nearby examples of cultural heritage allow the formation of eco-ethno-cultural tourism clusters. It should also be noted that the settlements and ancient graves found as a result of archaeological excavations in Aghdam region, the areas around Shahbulag create conditions for the formation of an eco-cultural tourism cluster. At the same time, joint use of natural and cultural heritage in territories freed from occupation, restoration of the infrastructure of the clusters to be formed, and establishment of new communication links increase the prospects of its use. At the same time, the article analyzes the possibilities of using the natural, tangible and intangible heritage potential of the liberated regions from the point of view of ecotourism, the spread of existing resources, their importance in terms of eco-cultural tourism, the possibilities of joint use with other types of tourism, and the role in ensuring

the employment of the population in the future settlement. is done. At the same time, regions favorable for the development of eco-cultural and eco-health tourism are analyzed and directions for the formation of clusters in this area are indicated.

**Key words:** Kalbajar, Lachin, Shusha, Azikh, Tugh, Taglar, natural heritage, cultural heritage, cluster, ecotourism, eco-cultural tourism, eco-health tourism, tourism routes, sustainable tourism, state park, national park.

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**Мурадов І.І.**, докторант, Азербайджанський архітектурно-будівельний університет. **Комплексний аналіз можливостей екотуризму у звільнених від окупації регіонах.**

Екокультурний туризм, новий вид туризму, що виник на основі взаємозв'язку між культурним та природним туризмом, спрямований на розвиток культурних та екологічних ресурсів шляхом поєднання екологічних та культурних компонентів ландшафту. Сталість та участь є двома ключовими факторами, що мають вирішальне значення для довгострокового майбутнього туризму. Необхідно визначити відповідні стратегії для реалізації потенціалу екотуризму, який несе в собі всі принципи сталого розвитку, та екокультурного туризму, де природа цінується комплексно. В рамках цих стратегій на перший план у міжнародній практиці виходить концепція "екомuzeю", що зберігає природне та культурне середовище як єдине ціле. Спільне використання еколого-культурної спадщини на звільнених територіях дозволяє реалізувати цю стратегію. Зокрема, широкий потенціал звільнених від окупації територій для використання культурної та природної спадщини створює сприятливі умови для розвитку еколого-культурного туризму. Це формує сприятливі умови для організації на звільнених територіях кластерів еколого-культурного, етнокультурного, еколого-оздоровчого та еколого-етнокультурного туризму, який базується на багатому природному та культурно-історичному спадковому потенціалі регіону. Туг-Азих-Таглар в Ходжавендському районі, село Зульфугар і його околиці в Калбаджарському районі, місто Шуша і село Дашалті, Мінкенд в Лачинському районі та прилеглі зразки культурної спадщини дозволяють сформувати еколого-етнокультурні туристичні кластери. Слід також зазначити, що виявлені в результаті археологічних розкопок поселення та стародавні поховання в Агдамському районі, місцевості навколо Шахбулагу створюють умови для формування еколого-культурного туристичного кластеру. При цьому спільне використання природної та культурної спадщини на звільнених від окупації територіях, відновлення інфраструктури кластерів, що формуються, налагодження нових комунікаційних зв'язків збільшують перспективи її використання. Водночас у статті проаналізовано можливості використання потенціалу природної, матеріальної та нематеріальної спадщини звільнених регіонів з точки зору екотуризму, поширення наявних ресурсів, їх значення з точки зору еколого-культурного туризму, можливості спільного використання з іншими видами туризму, роль у забезпеченні зайнятості населення в майбутньому розселенні. При цьому проаналізовано регіони, сприятливі для розвитку еколого-культурного та еколого-оздоровчого туризму та вказано напрями формування кластерів у цій сфері.

**Ключові слова:** Кельбаджар, Лачин, Шуша, Азих, Туг, Таглар, природна спадщина, культурна спадщина, кластер, екотуризм, екокультурний туризм, екооздоровчий туризм.