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## **THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF SHIDA KARTLI IS ONE OF THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF THE ECONOMY**

### **Abstract**

Georgia has always attracted people with its diverse and incomparable nature, historical and cultural monuments, characteristic traditions, etc. The tourist potential of Shida Kartli is usually connected with the abundance of cultural-historical and religious monuments of the four municipalities in this area. According to last year's dynamics, the flows of tourists and visitors in Shida Kartli region increased significantly, which is a positive trend. However, it should be noted that a large number of visitors to tourist facilities are different types of visitors and not tourists.

Among the factors causing the increase in the number of tourists and visitors, it is worth noting the measures of infrastructure organization at the regional level, improvement of the criminal situation in the country in general, advertising of the country's tourism potential in the world's leading media. etc.

In general, the region has a great tourism potential, but there is a need to develop and offer competitive tourism products. It is possible to develop medical tourism, ecotourism, agrotourism, cultural-cognitive tourism, active and extreme tourism in the region. The tourism potential of Shida Kartli is one of the contributing factors of the economy.

### **keywords:**

Visitor, tourist, tourist potential, tourist potential, types of tourism, tourist sights.

## **THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF SHIDA KARTLI AS ONE OF THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF THE ECONOMY**

Georgia has always attracted people with its diverse and incomparable nature, historical and cultural monuments, characteristic traditions, etc. It is important how the Shida Kartli region looks in this regard, in particular with historical and cultural monuments and whether it is possible to develop tourism widely.

Shida Kartli region has great opportunities for the development of tourism due to its convenient geographical location, excellent vacation spots, nature, cold mountain springs, large and small rivers, natural and artificial lakes, the most beautiful sights of the Trialeti and Likhi ranges, the historical and natural monuments here have always attracted visitors. attention

Shida Kartli region is one of the richest in historical monuments. This great potential will interest lovers of cultural and pilgrimage tourism. There are many stone-built fortresses, towers, temples, and ancient villages located on the mountains and valleys. The functioning church-monastery existing here will become the object of attention of pilgrims with Christian traditions. Surami Castle – Fortress, Kvishkheta Castle, Tsromi Cathedral, Urbanisi Zion Cathedral, Metekhi Cathedral, Kvatakhevi, Samtavisi, Ertatsminda, Goricjvari, Kintsvisi Monastery, Tsinrekh, Byeti Monastery, Tsveri St. George's Church, Rkoni, Dzami Castle and Mr. other. There are many archaeological monuments throughout the region. Only in Kareli district there are such important archaeological monuments for the history of Georgia as Dedofli field and Natsargora, Tsikhigora in Kaspi district and others.<sup>1</sup>

As for wine tourism, this field is not as developed in the region as in Kakheti, although the potential

<sup>1</sup> Gori and Gori district – "Universal" publishing house. Tbilisi 2010.

here is in no way inferior to that of Kakheti. Even the fact that signs of the ancient wine culture and grape pods (the oldest in the world – According to the old calendar 8000 years old) were found in the territory of Kartli. The region is capable of performing various touristic and recreational functions – it is possible to organize medical, family, hunting, fishing, sports, mountain-skiing, educational, short-term or long-term vacations here.<sup>1</sup>

21 resorts operate in Shida Kartli, i.e. one fifth of the existing resorts in Georgia. Most of them are climatic resorts, followed by mixed-function resorts, and finally – balneological type resorts. In addition to the above, there are more than 30 resorts in the region, which can be turned into resorts in the future.

The country's development prospects are highly dependent on the progress of the political settlement between the Georgian government and the separatist regime of South Ossetia. As you know, the Russia-Georgia war took place in August 2008, as a result of which the borders of the former South Ossetia Autonomous District were actually restored and the Russian Federation recognized South Ossetia as an independent state. This fact certainly has a negative impact on the tourism development of Shida Kartli, because a significant part of the territory of Shida Kartli is occupied today and a large part of the cultural monuments are on the side of the occupiers, while some of them are badly damaged as a result of the war and need immediate restoration. In addition, there is still a threat of a resumption of hostilities, as evidenced by the continuous militarization and military exercises of the separatists on the part of the Russian Federation. Under the existing conditions, it will be quite difficult to develop tourist infrastructure in Shida Kartli and revive international tourism, but in my opinion, as a result of a well-thought-out state policy, all this is possible, which in turn will play an active role in solving the acute problems with the separatists.<sup>2</sup>

The tourist potential of Shida Kartli is usually related to the abundance of cultural-historical and religious monuments of the four municipalities in the area. According to the dynamics of the last year, the flows of tourists and visitors in Shida Kartli region have increased significantly, which is a positive trend. However, it should be noted that a large number of visitors to tourist facilities are different types of visitors and not tourists.<sup>3</sup>

Among the factors leading to the increase in the number of tourists and visitors, it is worth noting the measures to organize the infrastructure at the regional level, improving the criminal situation in the country in general, advertising the country's tourism potential in the world's leading media, etc.

At the same time, it should be noted that there are factors hindering the development of tourism in Shida Kartli region, namely:

- ✓ Not a single private tourist agency operates in Shida Kartli municipalities;
- ✓ There is no tourist infrastructure;
- ✓ Tariffs set for viewing objects;
- ✓ Improper cleaning of tourist facilities.

In general, the region has quite a large tourism potential, however, it is necessary to find the right tourism "niches" and develop and offer competitive tourism products. It is possible to develop medical tourism, ecotourism, agrotourism, cultural-cognitive tourism, active and extreme tourism in the region.

### the conclusion

As a result of the research conducted by us and the analysis of the material found, we can make the following conclusions:

- Tourism can play an important role in improving the economic situation and raising the standard of living in Shida Kartli, therefore a well-planned and comprehensive long-term action plan is needed, which should be implemented under the strict supervision of the state.

<sup>1</sup> Economy of tourism – "Universal" publishing house. Tbilisi 2010.  
Gori and Gori district – "Universal" publishing house. Tbilisi 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Shida Kartli Asset Development Group Study – Tourism in Shida Kartli. Gori 2009

<sup>3</sup> Tourism from ancient times to the present – publishing house "Saari" Tbilisi 2009.



- Shida Kartli and Georgia as a whole has a huge potential for the development of tourism, which should be utilized step by step. The war that happened in 2008 put a significant dent in Georgia as a country favorable for tourism, but this situation can be corrected, because currently the situation in the conflict areas is stable and under control.
- There should be a quick settlement of the existing conflicts, which will increase the interest of foreigners in our country and reduce the risk of coming to Georgia. The development of tourism will contribute to the revival and rapid development of the de-occupied side.
- It is necessary to create a modern tourist infrastructure and train qualified personnel who will respond to the high demands of international tourists.
- After the implementation of all of the above, it will be possible to introduce and develop tourism, both traditional and non-traditional, and new branches in Shida Kartli, because the region has all the resources and conditions for this.

**References:**

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1. Economy of tourism – “Universal” publishing house. Tbilisi 2010.
  2. Gori and Gori district – “Universal” publishing house. Tbilisi 2010.
  3. Tourism from ancient times to the present – publishing house “Saari” Tbilisi 2009.
  4. Shida Kartli Asset Development Group Study – Tourism in Shida Kartli. Gori 2009