The main aspects of the state policy of promoting tourism activities in Georgia

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Abstract. Many countries of the world consider tourism as an important and integral part of the country's development strategy. Political aspects of tourism are related to economic effects. The main principle of tourism policy is to formulate issues for the state to get the maximum benefit from the economic and social income of tourism. The paper discusses the role of the state of Georgia in the development of tourism, the processes of economic policy formation of tourism produced by it, and modern challenges. Analyzed satellite reports, statistical information to measure the effectiveness of tourism. In the article, we discussed the new law "On Tourism" developed for the development of the tourism industry, which defines the state policy in the field of tourism and the subjects and directions of tourist activity; the rights and guarantees of the tourist as a consumer, the functions and obligations of the state government and local self-government bodies; mechanisms of private and public cooperation in the field of tourism, tourist safety and other issues related to tourism. In the research, we rely on qualitative research methods, empirical research is used, the current situation in the field of tourism in Georgia was analyzed in detail, including various statistical data and conducted studies. Based on the analysis, it is determined that as a result of the increase in the amount spent by visitors, the contribution of tourism to the economy of Georgia has increased, more attention is paid to the quality and variety of visitors than to the number of visitors. The number of domestic tourists has increased recently.

Keywords:
tourism policy
state
industry
sustainable
challenges
Introduction. Edgell argued that the main goal of tourism policy is to combine the economic, political, cultural, intellectual and economic benefits of tourism with people and countries in order to significantly improve the quality of life and provide the basis for peace and prosperity [1]. Tourism policy is important because it provides (provides) a common, agreed-upon goal for action in tourism. The policy sets broad parameters for planning and coordinates all stakeholders in the tourism chain. The United Nations World Tourism Organization and the World Travel and Tourism Council are of great importance in determining the tourism policy of the countries, which try to best represent the business environment, local community interests in tourism and government structure. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO) encourages all tourism stakeholders and tourism-related organizations to develop and adhere to a tourism code of ethics. It provides a business ethics framework for examining the impact of international tourism policy issues as they apply to contemporary local, state, regional, national, and international issues. The directives issued by the World Tourism Organization to Georgia in order to promote the development of tourism processes in 2024 are interesting [2].

Considering the role of state policy in the paper, we discussed the current state of development of the tourism sector of Georgia. The new law "On Tourism", proposed directives and new regulations adopted for the purpose of legal protection of the field in Georgia [3]. It is important to consider the main directions of tourism activity and modern challenges, taking into account the aspects of sustainable tourism management. The economic effectiveness of the tourism sector and a wide range of social consequences have been studied, satellite reports have been analyzed. The purpose of the research is to analyze the tourism policy of Georgia and discuss the potential of tourism in Georgia from a state point of view, to identify and define all the factors that shape the concept of tourism policy in Georgia.

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**Methodology.** In the study, we rely on qualitative research methods, empirical research is used, the current situation in the field of tourism in Georgia, the role of the state in the development of tourism policy, various statistical data and conducted studies were analyzed in detail. Based on the analysis, it is determined that as a result of the increase in the amount spent by visitors, the contribution of tourism to the economy of Georgia has increased, more attention is paid to the quality and variety of visitors than to the number of visitors. There is an increase in the number of domestic tourists at tourist destinations.

**Literature review.** The works on the issues of the state policy of tourism and legal provision have been published by: M. Metreveli, Kh. Berishvili, L. Kobaladze, G. Shubladze, G. Bregadze, L. Dolokashvili, A. Okrotsvaridze, M. Vadachkoria, L. Korganashvili, L. Okrotsvaridze, V. Arghutashvili, L. Gaidukovich d. Timothy, A. Bulls and others.

In the scientific literature reviewed by us, there is no unified view on the influence of state authorities on the field of tourism. The impact of state government bodies on tourism is defined as regulatory, as governing and as state policy makers. According to the first approach, the state manages tourism. According to the second view, the state regulates the processes in tourism, this view is based on the fact that tourism is a field that is structurally composed of business entities that are not directly under the authority of state authorities, therefore the term regulation is used, and the third view, according to which it is not important to use the terms - Management and regulation - differentiation, it is possible to use both management and regulation at the same time.

**Discussion and Results.** In modern conditions, the state policy in tourism includes a system of methods that ensures the regulation of socio-economic, cultural, foreign-political and other measures of the field by state and private organizations. The main task of the country's tourism policy is to develop such an economic and organizational mechanism that will support the establishment of a fair, sustainable
world tourism order and will bring equal benefits to all sectors of society [4].

In Georgia, tourism is recognized as a priority direction for the development of the national economy. The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the National Administration of Tourism of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Regional Development participate in the development and implementation of the state tourism development policy of the country [5].

The primary task of tourism development policy in Georgia is to complete the legislative framework of the field and harmonize it with the European Union legislation. There are national laws regulating tourism in the countries, where the main concepts and principles of development are defined. The goal of the state policy in the field of tourism in Georgia is to support the sustainable development of the economic sector of tourism, promote employment in the field of tourism, increase the tourism potential of the region and develop the relevant infrastructure. "Strategic tourism planning" is a process that aims to obtain benefits from tourism in such a way that the result is a balance of appropriate quality and quantity of supply at the appropriate level of demand. In the strategic planning of tourism, economic, environmental and socio-cultural factors and their relationship for the development of sustainable tourism, as well as the goals for the development of sustainable tourism, should be taken into account [6]. Thus, strategic tourism planning is a structure designed to provide direction for any tourism organization or destination and emphasizes quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

Tourism policy affects such areas as: socio-economic development of the tourism destination; Taxation-types and levels; Financing of the tourism sector - sources and conditions; product development support; regulatory practices; environmental practices; Marketing practice. Thus, according to the Tourism Law of Georgia, the main principles of state policy in the field of tourism are:
1. Support of tourist activity, creation of favorable legal and economic conditions and relevant infrastructure for its development;

2. Determination of priority tourism destinations and promotion of development;

3. Promotion of Georgia as a tourist destination;

4. Protection of tourist resources for sustainable development of tourism;

5. Creating an appropriate legal environment and protecting the legal interests and rights of tourists and tourism service providers;

6. Ensuring the development of international cooperation in the field of tourism [7].

Regulations for high-risk tourism activities, registration and qualification requirements for guides have become important for business. A tourist guide who is a citizen of a foreign country is obliged to register in accordance with the rules established by the Government of Georgia. The accredited personnel certification body is obliged to ensure the publicity of the register of certified tourist guides, its constant updating and sharing with the legal entity of public law - the National Administration of Tourism of Georgia.

Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) in a country are a standard statistical framework and one of the main tools for measuring the economic effects of tourism. It was developed by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Eurostat (Eurostat) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) [8].

It should be noted that the year 2023 was particularly successful for the tourism industry, including the statistics of visits by international travelers - their number exceeded seven million, which is 30.3% more than the same indicator of the previous year (Figure1). In addition, 4,669,467 international tourist visits took place in Georgia last year - compared to 2022, the increase is +27.8%. In 2023, the income from international tourism exceeded the data of 2022 by 17.3% (608.7 mln US dollars) [9].
In 2023, the country received an income of 4.1 billion US dollars from tourism. (Figure 2). Georgian airports served 6 million passengers. According to global tourism revenues, the recovery is 93% [10].

In 2023 the largest number of visitors (1.2 million visitors) was from Russian Federation, which amounts to 23.2 percent of total number of visitors. On second place is Turkey with 21.4% share and on third place – Armenia with 13.5% share. Correspondingly, the largest number of visits were made by the citizens of Russian Federation (1.42 million), Turkey (1.40 million) and Armenia (962.5 thousand) [11].
In 2023 the average number of nights spent during the visits equaled to 5.4 nights, which is 13.6 percent lower than the figure indicated in 2022 (6.2 nights). 72.8 percent of visits was repeating visit. The chart below shows the distribution of visits by the level of satisfaction in 2023 [12].

![Figure 3](https://www.geostat.ge)

**Figure 3**
**Visitors by the country 2022-2023**
*Source: [www.geostat.ge](https://www.geostat.ge)*

![Figure 4](https://www.geostat.ge)

**Figure 4**
**The distribution of visits by the level of satisfaction in 2023.**
*Source: [www.geostat.ge](https://www.geostat.ge)*
The role of tourism in the country's economy is determined by its contribution to the GDP, the effectiveness of its influence on the quality and duration of people's lives. In 2023, the GDP of Georgia in current prices amounted to 80.2 billion GEL. The travel and tourism industry is one of the fastest recovering sectors among services. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2022, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 7.6% to global GDP [13].

The demand for hotels in the country is high, especially for high-budget establishments. In 2023, high-end hotels saw significant growth, reaching an average occupancy rate of 58%, an increase of 8 percentage points compared to 2022. By 2024, a 4% increase in the occupancy rate is expected.

Georgia's tourism indicators are slightly behind the world indicators, and in 2023 compared to 2019, an 80% recovery was observed. The unstable geopolitical situation of the region has a significant impact on the development of tourism in Georgia. However, there is significant potential for further demand growth, primarily because the recovery is still lagging behind the levels seen in 2019 [14].

The most important thing for the country is the rehabilitation and development of Georgian resorts. The year 2023 was successful with large-scale infrastructure projects implemented in the mountain resorts of Georgia - 300 million in Bakuriani. Lari was invested, and the amount of investment in Gudauri was 70 million. amounted to GEL. Last year ended with significant results for the aviation industry as well, data confirms that 9 new airlines entered the Georgian market in 2023, and 21, including 6 new European destinations, were added to air flights. Among the strategic new destinations are Hamburg, Copenhagen, Madrid, Frankfurt, Brussels, Poznan, Cologne and Delhi. Today, leading airlines operate on the Georgian air market - Wizz Air Hungary, Turkish Airlines, Pegasus, Georgian Airways, Azerbaijan Airlin, Fly Dubai, Air Arabia, etc[15].

Conclusion and recommendations. Tourism can stimulate economic development faster than many other industries, it quickly generates the necessary financial capital, increases the awareness of a country's tourist destination, improves infrastructure and creates new job opportunities. In developing countries, the benefits of tourism development are
more visible. If the country is able to meet the demand of visitors in a qualitative way, then the export earnings of the country increases significantly.

Although Georgia recognizes tourism as one of the priority areas of national resorts and economic development, it still cannot create favorable environmental conditions for tourism and resort activities. Effective and successful functioning of tourism is impossible without state regulation of this field, tourism policy and the development of a complex state program for tourism development. Currently, 60% of Georgian resorts need development in terms of infrastructure. An important project is planned, which includes an investment of one billion dollars, within the framework of which the important resorts of Georgia will be rehabilitated, the infrastructure will be renewed, which will contribute to the strengthening of the economy of our country and the diversification of tourist products.

There is very high competition in the field of tourism in the world market, and therefore, in order to find your own niche, it is necessary to have a well-thought-out policy, a sustainable planned and implemented strategy. Most importantly, short-term and long-term goals in this strategy should be focused on the final, sustainable result, not short-term success.

It is important to develop and position the country as a brand, compete for similar tourist markets, increase market share, develop infrastructure, improve the service sector, raise the quality of education, attract green investors, promote and develop the local private sector through effective partnerships.

Tourism appears as a means of achieving economic and political goals, according to the development of tourism, targeted state support of the tourism industry, development of accommodation facilities with world standards, development of the transport network, solving ecological problems, protection of natural resources should be considered as the most important favorable factor for the development of tourism. The most important among them is the financing of state programs to create the country's image, the creation of a world-class brand, and promotion of its advancement and
estimation in the world market. The formation of a world-class brand contributes to the increase in the number of tourists entering the country[16].

References: