

## **CLUSTERING POLICY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF UZBEKISTAN**

**Nurmukhammedova Mukhtabar Khasanovna-**

Senior Lecturer Gulistan State University;

**Mastura Kudratullayevna Allayarova-**

Senior Lecturer Gulistan State University;

**Bekmukhamedova Barno Uktamova-**

Senior Lecturer Gulistan State University;

**Mamazhonova Saida Vakhabzhonovna-**

Senior Teacher Gulistan State University;

**Akmal Abdulazizovich Abduvokhidov-**

Senior Lecturer Gulistan State University

akash7509@rambler.ru

**Annotation.** The tourism industry is the main source of employment, foreign exchange and tax revenues for developing countries. The flow of foreign currency income from tourism in developing countries far exceeds all aid flows from foreign donors.

Currently, the development of tourism, attracting investment in the sphere, increasing human resources is an urgent task.

Today, there is an increasing need for scientific research that provides a basis for the further development of the global tourism sector, increasing its share in macroeconomic indicators, improving the use of tourist and recreational facilities in order to provide the population with new jobs in the regions of the country. In this regard, this article analyzes the role of cluster policy in the development of the tourism services market in our country.

**Keywords:** tourism, tourism industry, tourism cluster, cluster policy, national economy, competitiveness of regions.

**Introduction.** On March 10, 2021, the U.S. Congressional Research Center released a 159-page report entitled “The Global Economic Impact of COVID-19”. The report was updated on July 9 this year. The report is supplemented by additional resources and information on the measures taken by the world's major countries and economies with great economic potential in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This material is grouped in chronological order by countries of the world and is comprehensive in its study of the impact of the pandemic on the world economy. On March 11, 2020, the outbreak of a new viral disease called Covid-19 was officially recognized worldwide as a “pandemic”. It has once again demonstrated that the global economy is characterized by

Nurmukhammedova Mukhtabar Khasanovna, Mastura Kudratullayevna Allayarova,  
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interdependence, with viral infection spreading rapidly across countries and affecting the world community at the same time. In early March 2020, when the center of infection moved from China to Europe, it had a serious impact, especially on Italy. But in April 2020, the center of infection moved to the United States. As early as April 2021, with the emergence of new outbreaks in Brazil and India, daily morbidity and mortality in these countries reached record levels.

In the first phase, economic measures against the effects of the pandemic were linked to monetary policy aimed at stabilizing financial markets and ensuring the flow of credit needed to support the economy.

In the second phase, the main focus was on supporting economic growth through budgetary measures.

In the third stage, the development of the vaccine, the launch of its production and the implementation of mass vaccination have been the main focus of public policy, and this stage continues to this day. It is natural for everyone to think about the future course of events.

The pandemic has had a serious negative impact on global economic growth. According to the data, due to the coronavirus, the growth of the world economy in 2020 slowed from 4.5% to 6.0%. At the same time, the growth of the world economy in 2021 is projected to grow from + 2.5% to + 5.2%. In the current dynamics of economic growth, countries with developed economies, which account for about 60% of world economic activity, will not be able to operate at their capacity until at least 2024.

According to some estimates, between 100 million and 110 million people worldwide will be forced to live below the poverty line. In addition, we can note that according to estimates, global trade will decline to 9.0% in 2020. The economic consequences of the pandemic affect employment, which is characterized by high unemployment rates not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s, as well as the steadily rising level of debt. The largest share of job losses due to coronavirus control measures falls on services, especially tourism.

The International Labor Organization estimates that by 2020, 93 percent of workers and employees were forced to work under one or another restriction, resulting in the loss of nearly 9 percent of working time in 2020 due to the global pandemic. The total number of working hours lost due to coronavirus in 2020 compared to 2019 was in Europe (14.6%) and North and South America (13.7%), which in turn led to strict and long-term quarantine restrictions in these countries and regions. explained.

According to the International Labor Organization, the global job loss in 2020 was 114 million jobs compared to 2019. The largest share of lost working hours due to high unemployment was in Europe (6.0%), America (2.7%) and Arab countries (1.7%).

According to a number of economists and experts, the imbalances in the labor market caused by the pandemic have a huge negative impact on the economies of developed and developing countries.

Regarding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the world economy, the IMF draws the following conclusions:

- 1) per capita income will be lower than its pre-pandemic level for several years, which in turn will have a negative impact on current productivity levels;
- 2) the requirements for national health systems to combat the pandemic have a negative impact on the effective treatment of other diseases;
- 3) bankruptcy of enterprises leads to a decrease in productivity at the national and global levels;
- 4) an increase in the level of debt leads to a limitation of potential borrowing opportunities and investment flows.

According to IMF forecasts, the loss of global economic production in the period from 2020 to 2025 as a result of the pandemic will reach 28 trillion. dollars. The possibility of creating more than 120 million jobs in the tourism sector alone will be completely eliminated. In particular, we can see that in 2020, due to the pandemic in Uzbekistan, the number of foreign tourists visiting our country decreased by 4.5 times, the volume of tourist services to 261 million dollars.

The rapid development characterization of the crisis associated with the Covid-19 pandemic raises a number of unpredictable problems, with the result that assessing potential losses is an extremely difficult task. There are a number of questions that need to be answered in connection with these issues, in particular:

- How long will the Covid-19 crisis last?
- how many jobs are subject to temporary restrictions or are closed completely;
- how many more countries of the world will be affected by new strains of the virus, as a result of which economic activity will decrease, the rate of economic recovery will slow down;
- when the negative economic effect due to coronavirus reaches its lowest point;
- the level of future economic activity due to the further development of the disease;
- What forms and methods of monetary and fiscal policy should be used at the national and global levels to overcome the crisis;
- what will be the temporary and permanent impact of the crisis on business;
- how to organize production in the conditions of restrictions;
- What should be the ratio between economic policy and health needs and requirements in the implementation of measures to ensure the stability of the economy and prevent the spread of the virus?

At a time when such ambiguity prevails in the world economy, the support of tourism in our country is more important than ever.

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Level of study of the topic. In terms of a systemic approach, a cluster is a set of business entities in different sectors in a single organizational structure that are interconnected and operate together for a specific purpose. M. Porter defines a company's competitiveness primarily by the competitiveness of the economic environment, which in turn suggests that the effective operation of a cluster depends on healthy competition among cluster participants [1].

M. Porter suggests looking at the competitiveness of a country or region not from the point of view of the competitiveness of individual organizations, but from the point of view of clusters of different network enterprises that allow efficient use of available internal resources. M. Porter developed a "competition rectangle (rhombus)" consisting of four groups of advantages, such advantages include:

- Factors - natural and human resources, scientific and information potential, capital, infrastructure, including the level of welfare;
- Factors and conditions of domestic demand - the quality of demand, compliance with changes in world market demand, growth in demand;
- mixed and service industries (industry clusters) - the field of origin of raw materials and semi-finished products, the field of origin of equipment, the field of use of raw materials, equipment and technology;
- The structure and strategy of firms, the existence of competition - methods of organizing the management of firms, goals and strategies, competition within the network.

In addition, there are two additional factors that significantly affect the efficiency of cluster activities, which we should not ignore. The first of these factors is the state's supportive policy, and the second is random processes and events. The management of enterprises and organizations do not have the ability to control random processes and events.

The main conclusion to be drawn from Porter's views is that prospective competitive advantages are decided in domestic markets rather than outside. After studying the competitive potential of more than 100 industries in more than a dozen countries, Porter concludes that multinational companies with a high level of competitiveness tend to consolidate within a single country or even a single region of the country, rather than being randomly located in different countries. This is explained by the fact that once one or more firms become competitive in the global market, they begin to have a positive impact on their suppliers, consumers and competitors in the immediate vicinity. In turn, the success of business entities around the company will greatly contribute to the further strengthening of the company's competitiveness in the future.

A cluster is usually distinguished by several key descriptive aspects. Such characteristics include: the interconnectedness of the participants and their geographical location, the competition between the participants, and the excessive number of small and medium-sized businesses. Researcher Obidov R. In the article "Features of the calculation of costs for storage, processing and sale of agricultural products in a cluster system" [2] cites the following factors for the effective operation of clusters:

- integration;
- initiative;

- interest;
- innovations;
- information.

Modern economic development and today's practice show that economic systems with a high level of internal competition can provide the highest level of efficiency.

Analyzing the views on the nature and essence of clusters, the researcher P.S. Rudneva's opinion occupies a special place, describing the cluster as follows: affiliated higher education institutions, research institutes, infrastructure, specialized service organizations, a group of companies supplying components and equipment ”[3]. In this regard, another researcher, T.V. The Tsikhan cluster is a “territorially limited form of economic activity within sectors that are usually associated with specific scientific institutions (research institutes, universities, etc.); vertical production chains of mixed stages of the production process of narrow specialization networks that form the core of the cluster; a set of industries or sectors with a high degree of aggregation ”[4]. Among the definitions given to the cluster, the most plausible in our view is E.V. As for Karpova, the researcher describes the cluster as “a set of companies and organizations that interact and interact with each other, functionally separated within a value-creation system, united on the basis of cooperation and competition to maximize profits based on the local advantages of the region” [ 5].

Research methodology. Methods such as generalization, grouping, classification, comparative analysis, and cross-comparison were used in the research process.

Analysis and results. In essence, clusters are seen as the object of a new form of economic and industrial policy, called cluster policy, whose main goal is to increase the competitiveness of countries and regions and strengthen the economic and financial stability of regions. While ignoring the importance of legal, political, social institutions and effective macroeconomic policy, it should be noted that the gross regional product is created directly at the micro level, and the role of micro-level economic entities in improving the welfare of the region's population is enormous. The effectiveness of cluster policy depends on the ability of enterprises to produce goods and services in high demand, as well as the effective use of efficient methods of organizing production, distribution and consumption.

Thus, cluster policy emerges as an important tool for development at the national or regional level, the efficiency of the business sector is directly related to the local business environment: highly productive companies have qualified staff, constantly aware of the processes around them, use, own improved infrastructure facilities and services, work with reliable suppliers and, arguably, work under high competitive pressure.

For this reason, competition is a key element of the concept of clusters, which is what distinguishes the cluster from other forms of cooperation.

While the methods of state intervention in economic development have traditionally been based on the imperfection of the market (lack of social and environmental goals, the risk of persistent crises), today there is a need to reconsider the scale of state intervention in the economy. One of the

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promising directions is the reduction of state intervention in the economy, the cluster approach to the establishment of public-private partnerships in the system of economic relations.

In essence, cluster policy includes methods and tools to support industrial, regional, small business, attract domestic and foreign investment, and implement innovative, scientific and technological policies.

The main goal of the cluster is to find new opportunities in order to increase the production of high value-added products in the industry.

“Cluster Initiatives” - projects and programs of active entities (entrepreneurs and specialists) that play an important role in the development and formation of clusters, actively stimulate the development of cluster strategy processes. The emergence of such initiatives, in turn, has led to the gradual introduction into practice of concepts such as "cluster consulting" and "cluster management".

The above aspects are mostly related to the operation of industrial clusters. In this regard, we consider it necessary to draw attention to the fact that there is some difference between the nature and essence of industrial clusters and tourist clusters (Table 1).

Russian economists T.P. Levchenko and M.K. Kulyan interpret the tourism cluster as "a form of organization of tourism on the basis of a set of interconnected tourism services and adjacent network enterprises through horizontal links" [6].

A number of researchers pay special attention to the specifics of the tourist and recreational potential of the region in the organization of tourist clusters, they believe that the tourist attractiveness of the region plays an important role in the organization and development of the tourist cluster. The practice of clustering in our country

**Table 1.**

**Comparative description of industrial and tourist clusters**

Descriptive aspects	Industrial cluster	Tourist cluster
Organizational and development goals	-economic;	-social;
End consumers	-political;	-cultural;
The task of the state	-demographic;	-economic;
Principles of placement	-social	-educational;
Cluster product	Any solvent economic entities (government, households, enterprises)	-moral
The level of innovation	- the state is both a participant of the cluster and a consumer of its products;	Individuals who make tourist trips for various purposes outside the place of residence
Collaborate with	- regulates the activities of state	State policy in the field of

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research centers	clusters on the basis of normative legal acts, current legislation and norms of international law	tourism and hospitality, implemented on the basis of regulations governing the operation of clusters
Level of development of social infrastructure	Geographical proximity is a key condition. Due to this, the issues of production and commercial nature of the organization of business processes are resolved	The specific tourist and recreational potential of the region is taken into account
Level of cooperation	Finished and semi-finished products of consumer and industrial importance	Separate tourist services with the possibility of transforming into a single regional tourism product:
Level of specialization	High. Particular emphasis is placed on innovations aimed at increasing the competitiveness of products	-location;

*Source: Author's development.*

*In addition to the fact that a lot of research has been done on it, it has also been legally consolidated. According to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Special Economic Zones", a cluster is a set of special economic zones of one or more types. According to the document, special economic zones will be established for the following purposes:*

- development of processing industries of the economy;*
- to stimulate the development of high-tech sectors of the economy;*
- tourism development;*
- development of port and transport infrastructure;*
- creation of technologies and commercialization of their results;*
- Production of new products [7].*

*An analysis of the approaches to the interpretation of the concept of tourist cluster, the views and opinions of economists in this regard, shows that there are a number of shortcomings in defining the concept of tourist cluster:*

- 1. While the main focus on defining the content and essence of tourism clusters is focused on the economic aspects of the organization of tourist clusters, almost no attention is paid to the social, cultural, moral and educational significance of tourism for society;*

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2. *Insufficient attention is paid to the role and importance of the state in the market of tourist clusters and tourism services in general. Most researchers recognize the role of the state only in regulatory regulation in the development of the market of tourist services. But today, the global economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has proved that the tourism industry cannot function effectively without the full support of the state;*

3. *The issues of introduction of innovative technologies and development of cluster structures in the market of tourist services have not been sufficiently studied, taking into account the current opportunities of scientific and technological development;*

4. *When it comes to the nature of tourist clusters, most researchers are largely limited to a specific area. In addition, the study of the nature of the tourist cluster is based on a narrow approach, which focuses only on tourism activities.*

*Taking into account the above-mentioned views and comments on tourism clusters, we consider it appropriate to define the concept of tourism cluster as follows: is a complex of multifunctional characteristics of the market of tourism services and enterprises of related industries, as well as social institutions and institutions, the interaction of which is determined and regulated by the state on the basis of moral and spiritual values.*

*Based on the above authorial approach given to the tourist cluster, we propose to distinguish between general and specific functions specific to cluster structures.*

*The general functions of the tourist cluster include:*

*Socio-economic. Due to the development of cooperative relations between the subjects of the tourism cluster structure and the effect of the tourist multiplier, opportunities will be created for the sustainable development of the regional tourism services market and the rapid growth of regional gross domestic product. At the same time, the situation in the regional labor market will change for the better.*

*Regional development. overcoming social and economic disparities within the country, ensuring the comprehensive development of territorial structures.*

*Innovative. In the process of designing and providing tourism and related services, great attention is paid to the use of innovative products and technologies as much as possible.*

*Control. A high level of control is achieved through the creation of an optimal system of control and accounting of the resource base of cluster structures, which includes tourist attractiveness, financial flows, human capital, etc.*

*It would be appropriate to include the following among the special functions of the tourist cluster:*

*Rehabilitation - recreation. Development of sanatorium-resort complexes and medical tourism programs, creation of favorable conditions for disease prevention and public health;*

- *Cultural and educational. Ensuring that people enjoy cultural and historical monuments through modern forms and means of designing and organizing recreation and leisure activities.*
- Moral and educational. Tourism plays an important role in preserving the national cultural heritage and language, educating children and youth in the spirit of patriotism, improving the spiritual level of the population, strengthening the moral foundations of society.
- Scientific and educational. This, in turn, implies the implementation of practical and fundamental research, cooperation with scientific and educational institutions, the training of highly qualified specialists in the field of tourism.

A number of scientific studies have been conducted by local and foreign scientists to provide a comprehensive understanding of the goals and objectives of the formation and development of cluster structures.

Among the socio-economic theories of cluster development, the following are the most important:

1. The theory of localization in practice in the field of social and economic geography. This theory examines the reasons for the increase in the degree of concentration of production complexes within a particular region, given the interdependence of the total cost of the production process and the level of self-sufficiency of the region. On the basis of this connection, the relevant conclusions will be drawn on the planned level of economic growth and improving the welfare of the population of the region. On the basis of this research, the possibilities of using the internal potential of the region, production through the extensive use of local raw materials, reducing transportation costs will be studied.
2. The theory of increasing the efficiency of interaction between economic entities within the region. This theory provides an idea of the advantages of cluster organization within a region. As a result of the formation of clusters in the region, the efficiency of interaction between regional market entities will increase, real transaction costs will decrease, the introduction of innovative solutions in production processes will accelerate, the level of competitiveness of regional products in domestic and foreign markets will increase.
3. A.O. Hirschmann's theory of "interaction with suppliers and customers." The famous American scientist Albert Otto Hirschman (1915-2012) made relevant scientific conclusions about the possibilities of achieving economic growth on a regional scale in the 70s of the last century. According to Hirschman, this situation is explained by the intensity of interaction between all participants in market relations, including the production cycle, the process of procurement of materials and raw materials, the sale of finished products. At the same time, close cooperation in production and sales serves to prevent economic imbalances that are more likely to occur between sectors [8].
4. The theory of ensuring economic growth through the use of the export potential of the region. This is the staple theory of economic growth, originally developed by Canadian experts. The main idea of

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this theory is to determine the role and importance of export operations associated with the extraction of natural raw materials and their multi-stage processing for the development of the region.

As part of the foreign economic complex of the region, the concept of exports involves the placement of production facilities in a single production area, equipped with the necessary infrastructure, as well as investments in socially important facilities. Based on the above, we can conclude that export activity plays an important role in the formation of regional associations of regional production entities.

5. M. Porter's theory of a cluster model of regional development. The essence of this theory is that, according to him, the creation of a unified territorial-industrial complex and its economic development can be achieved only by increasing the efficiency of interaction between cluster objects. M. According to Porter, these relations are based on four main directions:

- availability of a common database of shared resources;
- Availability of highly developed production infrastructure and access to it by enterprises participating in the cluster system;
- Existence of market demand for these goods and services;
- positive changes in the development of the whole external environment of the cluster structure and related industries [9].

Thus, while the approaches to the organization of integrated production and economic structures, including clusters, are somewhat ambiguous, the authors who conducted research on this issue agree on the need to increase the competitiveness of enterprises or organizations, ie to strengthen cooperation between enterprises and organizations within the region. through which it is possible to increase the level of competitiveness. Accordingly, we can consider the organizational and methodological issues of the organization of cluster structures in the field of hospitality and tourism.

Conclusions and recommendations. Based on the above, we can highlight the following specific positive aspects of the organization of tourist clusters:

1. Interaction within the cluster allows to expand the opportunities for inter-regional specialization of tourism market participants, both within one region and within one region. This can be achieved, first of all, by increasing the opportunities to realize additional advantages in the field of competition and internal relations.
2. It will be possible to formulate a single strategy for the implementation of competitive advantages. This is especially relevant today, as it is characterized by increasing business process risks in the tourism and hospitality industry.
3. At the expense of the cluster structure it is possible to expand the opportunities of each subject of the cluster structure in terms of access to financial resources and increase potential income.

4. By implementing the cluster structure as a continuous process, it is possible to increase efficiency in various areas of tourism and related industries. These include the creation of an integrated structure of tourism products, improving the quality of transport infrastructure, ensuring social security, finding investors to consistently introduce innovations in the management of tourism cluster entities in order to improve the level of competence.

5. Opportunities to disseminate knowledge, innovative solutions and practical tourism solutions will be expanded through the use of cluster structure. This in turn increases the competitive position of each participant in the cluster.

6. Due to the cluster structure, it will be possible to cooperate with various educational and scientific institutions and, as a result, widely implement the results of research on the tourism market, taking into account the needs of potential consumers and changes in them.

7. The use of clusters allows for more efficient use of existing production factors, resulting in a corresponding reduction in the cost of tourism products and the possibility of using the scale effect in the market of tourist services.

8. The existence of a cluster structure provides additional impetus to the economic development of the region by creating additional jobs and improving the social package by the employer, improving the housing and living conditions of the local population.

9. Tourism cluster entities will have the opportunity to influence the external environment by lobbying their own interests.

The process of creating a cluster system includes the following stages: formation of the mission and strategy of the cluster structure, identification of key vectors of its development, selection of areas of activity, clarification of the level of impact of the business environment, formation of goals and objectives. Based on local and foreign experience, the process of forming a cluster system can be related to the initiative of potential participants in the structure, as well as the needs of state or local authorities.

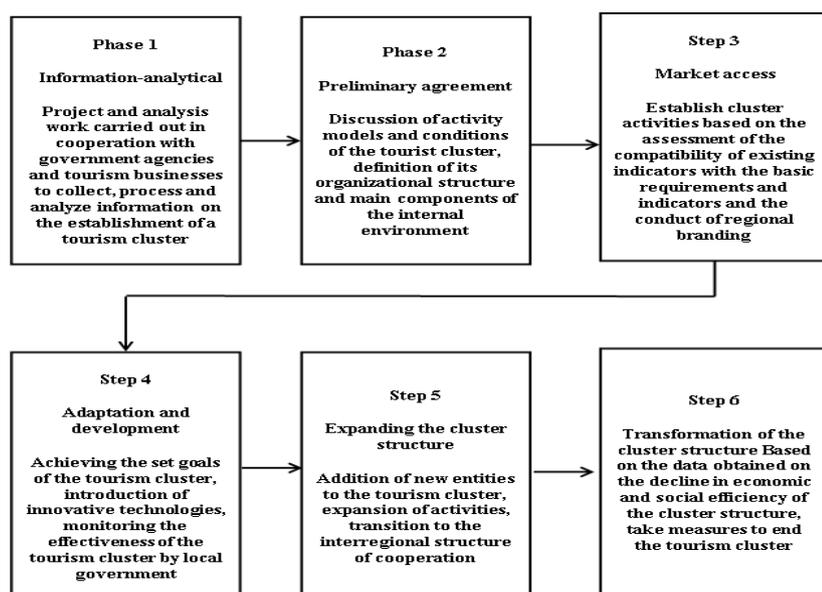


Figure 1. Stages of organization and development of tourism cluster.

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Source: Author's development.

In the process of formation and development of cluster structures, the business sector plays a leading role in the development and implementation of management decisions in the consideration of clusters as a group of enterprises engaged in the integration of production and labor resources, innovative technologies aimed at increasing the profitability and productivity of services in tourism. we can conclude that

Stable economic growth and, at the same time, rapid development of the region will be ensured due to the active participation of the business sector in the operation of cluster structures.

Consistent introduction of new technological solutions in the hospitality and tourism industry and their transfer to other participants, the creation of a modern innovative product in the market of tourist services requires support from educational institutions and research institutions. The set of institutions operating in this area allows to form the educational and scientific core of the cluster, which will meet the needs of cluster participants.

The practical application of cluster structures in other countries suggests that financial and credit institutions, commercial banks, investment companies and various funds can emerge as active participants in cluster processes. This will allow us to implement investment projects, attract additional material and resource base, which is especially important at a time when tourism services are experiencing a market crisis.

Initiatives to establish tourism clusters should be based on an in-depth analysis of local and foreign experience.

Based on the study of the experience of foreign countries in the organization of tourist clusters and in-depth analysis of research work in this area, we propose the above block diagram of the organization of tourist clusters (Figure 1). Stage 1, proposed in the block diagram, plays an important role in the organization of cluster activities, as it forms the basic principles and rules that affect the effectiveness of the tourist cluster structure in the future.

Having a comprehensive and structured set of information on the organization of cluster structures will play an important role in ensuring the sustainable operation of the tourism cluster in the future. This stage of cluster development requires consistent consideration of the following issues:

- Availability of tourism opportunities in the region and the region's focus on the development of the tourism industry;
- Location of the subjects of the tourist cluster across the territory and space;
- Adequacy of materials and resources for joint commercial activities;
- Existence and scope of competition within the projected cluster;

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- The specificity of the tourist and recreational potential of the region and opportunities for its further development;
- Existing problems and opportunities for the development of the Hulud tourism industry;
- Improving the technology of creating and offering services in tourism and related industries;
- Creation and development of a new set of tourism products, the ability to quickly adapt to the situation in crisis situations and the changing conditions of the market of tourist services;
- Effective use of human capital to increase the efficiency of the tourism services market.

The data obtained on the basis of the data of the primary and secondary descriptions can be quantitatively analyzed using mathematical and statistical research methods. In this case, we can use the following tools as research tools:

- SWOT analysis, we can apply this analysis tool to the entire cluster structure, as well as to individual components of the tourist cluster;
- Functional and economic analysis of potential participants of the cluster structure;
- Modeling of the desired state of the studied tourist cluster, taking into account the selected stage of its life cycle;
- Identification of the most successful areas of activity of the tourist cluster through comparative analysis;
- Formation and redistribution of cluster structure and design objectives;
- Encourage a systematic approach in the process of developing a strategy for cluster structure development;
- Effective use of forecasting methods to assess the prospects of the tourism cluster structure, taking into account the crisis risk assessment system.

In our opinion, when considering the second stage of cluster structure formation and development, it is expedient to analyze the main directions and priorities of cluster structure creation, following the sequence of their implementation.

The above data show that the management of cluster structure activities is extremely complex, requiring the coordination of the actions of all participants to increase its effectiveness.

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