



**THE ROLE OF AIRPORTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF REGIONAL TOURISM: THE CASE OF SAMARKAND  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

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**Abstract:** *This article examines how new airport infrastructure impacts regional tourism, with a focus on Samarkand International Airport. The study explores the history of the airport, its facilities, and its influence on tourist flow since its construction in 2022.*

**Keywords:** *Samarkand International Airport, airport history, tourists, flights, regional tourism.*

### **Introduction**

It is well-known that transport infrastructure connects regions and drives economic growth. Roads, railways, and airports contribute to the establishment of new businesses and job creation. Furthermore, such infrastructure is a key factor in the flow of both international and domestic tourism. Today, over 70% of international tourists choose air travel to reach their destinations. This article explores the flow of tourism through the lens of Samarkand International Airport.

### **Methodology**

Samarkand International Airport, designed in the form of a book and inspired by Mirzo Ulugbek's "Zij al-Sultani," was completed in 2022. Its construction cost approximately \$80 million, making it the second-largest airport in Uzbekistan after the Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport. The airport can simultaneously serve 1,200 passengers and handle over 2 million tourists annually. Located just 8 kilometers from the city center in the northern part of Samarkand, the airport facilitates direct flights to destinations such as Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, and the UAE. It is managed by the "Air Marakanda" airline company.

### **Results**

As previously mentioned, Samarkand International Airport annually transports millions of people to their destinations, creating an excellent opportunity for tourism development in the region. One of its primary advantages is its convenient location, just a short distance from the city center, which ensures comfort for tourists visiting Samarkand. Additionally, Samarkand, with its 2,500-year history, is rich in cultural heritage, including architectural





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marvels and the burial sites of legendary figures, playing a vital role in the growth of tourism in the region.

**Discussion.** While many travelers prefer road transport for its ability to explore new cities and historical sites, statistics reveal that over 70% of people choose air travel. This is due to the speed, convenience, and safety that flights offer. Thus, airports hold a significant position in fostering the growth of tourist flow.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, while tourism may seem trivial to some, it plays a crucial role in enhancing the economic development of a country. Airports, by providing travelers with safe and efficient transportation options, contribute significantly to the growth of tourism and the economy as a whole.

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