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## Table of Contents:

1	<b>Tourism and Protected Areas: The Guadiana Valley Natural Park (Portugal)</b> Victor FIGUEIRA, João ROLHA, Bruno SOUSA, Laurentina VAREIRO	2085
2	<b>The Impact of Tourism Management on Firm Performance: Chiang Mai Tourism Industry Perspective</b> Varattaya JANGKRAJARNG, Sainatee CHERNBUMROONG, Vimolboon CHERAPANUKORN	2094
3	<b>Developing Cashless Tourism from a Tourist Perspective: The Role of TAM and AMO Theory</b> Mega Fitriani Adiwarna PRAWIRA, Eko SUSANTO, Andar Danova Lastaripar GOELTOM, Chairul FURQON	2104
4	<b>Smart Technology Effecting Tourism Development in Albania</b> Etleva MUÇA, Irena BOBOLI, Ilir KAPAJ, Ana KAPAJ MANE	2113
5	<b>Impact of Risk Budgeting on Enhancing the Projected Growth of the Hotel Industry under the Conditions of Enduring Uncertainty Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Case study by the Republic of Kazakhstan</b> Ruslan YEMBERGENOV, Diana Baltabayevna MURATOVA, Lyudmila POPP, Maiya ARZAYEVA, Karlygash ABDYKULOVA	2122
6	<b>Shariah-Based Hospitality, Competitive Advantage and Tourists' Revisiting Interest on Indonesia Tourism</b> Abdul NASIR, Waridin WARIDIN, Deden Dinar ISKANDAR, Indah SUSILOWATI, Abas HIDAYAT	2134
7	<b>Knowledge Map of Chinese Tourists Travelling to Thailand: Based on the Bibliometric Method</b> Haiying FU, Chonlavit SUTUNYARAK	2144
8	<b>Some Insights Concerning the Halal Tourism Researches. A Bibliometric Analysis</b> Riduan MAS'UD, M. SYAMSURRIJAL	2161
9	<b>Financial and Administrative Measures for the Development of Tourism after COVID-19</b> Marat Zh. AISIN, Madina AITKAZINA, Nurgul Hasanovna MAULINA, Dinmukhamed Saparovich ZHAKIPBEKOV, Gulnara Telmanovna SAPAROVA	2174
10	<b>Proposing Three Potential-Interest Development Paradigm as the Local People Involvement Strategy for Tourism Destination Sustainability in Indonesia</b> GIYOTO, Elen INDERASARI, Sri LESTARI, Hidayatul NURJANAH, Harun Joko PRAYITNO, Amri Adi Nur SALAM	2181
11	<b>Determinants of Mentoring in the Context of Human Capital Development. Modeling the Effectiveness of the Mentoring Processes in Business Tourism Organization</b> Małgorzata BARAN	2190
12	<b>The Tourist Demand from the Perspective of Motivation and Satisfaction around Gastronomy: The Case of Olón, Ecuador</b> César VILLAGÓMEZ-BUELE, Mauricio CARVACHE-FRANCO, Orly CARVACHE-FRANCO, Wilmer CARVACHE-FRANCO, Tito RAMÓN-CASAL, Irene HOLGUÍN-IBARRA	2205
13	<b>Maqashid al-Shariah, Social Dialogue, and Tourism Development in Lombok</b> Muh SALAHUDDIN, ABDILLAH	2213

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- 14 **Prospects for the Formation of a Smart Destination as a Determining Factor in the Modernization of Urban Infrastructure and a Means of Sustainable Urban Tourism Development in Kazakhstan** 2222  
Amina BERDIBEKOVA, Guldana SADYKOVA, Sholpan ALPEISSOVA,  
Lyazzat PARIMBEKOVA, Zhanar ZHANABAYEVA
- 15 **Moderating Effect of Perceived Behavioural Control on Tourists' Revisit Intention in Island Tourism Industry: A Conceptual Model** 2230  
Nur Akmal ROSLI, Zaliha ZAINUDDIN, Mohd Yusoff YUSLIZA, Zikri MUHAMMAD,  
Jumadil SAPUTRA, Aleff Omar Shah NORDIN, Shahriman Abdul HAMID
- 16 **The Effectiveness of Attractions in Increasing the Visits of Tourists in Samosir, North Sumatera** 2240  
Erika REVIDA, Rizabuana ISMAIL, Prihatin LUMBANRAJA, Februati TRIMURNI,  
Sri Alem Br SEMBIRING, Sukarman PURBA
- 17 **Identification of Regional Factors Affecting Management of Territories: Formation of Residence and Social Infrastructure System in Urban and Rural Settlements in Kazakhstan** 2248  
Alla A. KORNILOVA, Seimur E. MAMEDOV, Gani A. KARABAYEV,  
Yevgeniya M. KHOROVETSKAYA, Irina V. LAPTEVA
- 18 **Analysis of Spatial Concentration of Accommodation Establishments Using Machine Learning Techniques and Spatial Analysis Tools** 2255  
Helien PARRA, Diana M. Ayala VALDERRAMA, Sebastián MORENO
- 19 **Hotel Recovery Post Pandemic: Is Rebranding Required?** 2263  
Ni Made ERNAWATI, Mihai VODĂ, I Wayan JENDRA, Gusti Ayu Diah TANTRI,  
Eleonora Laura AVRAM
- 20 **Influencing Factors for Employability of University Graduates in the Tourism Industry** 2271  
Zhibek OMARKHANOVA, Murat BESPÆV, Zamira MUKHAMBETOVA,  
Raushan MUSSINA, Gulzhan KUNAFINA, Anargul RYSMAGANBETOVA
- 21 **Issues of Attracting Foreign Investment in the Tourism Industry of Kazakhstan** 2284  
Askar SADUOV, Beibut MUKANOV, Saule MAZHITOVA, Almas TOLEUULY,  
Zoya GELMANOVA, Turiybek KAZBEKOV
- 22 **The Determinants of Loyalty to Ecotourism against the Background of Consumer Satisfaction** 2295  
Sinh Duc HOANG, Ngoc Thuyen NGO, Diep T.N. NGUYEN, Thi Thu Huong NGUYEN  
Zuzana TUČKOVÁ
- 23 **Role of Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex to Create Areas of Agritourism** 2311  
Madina RAKHIMBERDINOVA, Elvira NUREKENOVA, Mainur ORDABAYEVA,  
Medet KONYRBEKOV, Yulia SAIFULLINA, Nurgul KUTTYBAEVA
- 24 **Community-Based Agritourism: A Qualitative Research of the Impacts, Opportunities, and Constraints in a Tourist Village** 2320  
Pudin SAEPUDIN, Fajar Kusnadi Kusumah PUTRA, Andre HERNOWO, Ita MAEMUNAH,  
Nenden DIANAWATI
- 25 **The Online Reputation of Tourism Brands and their Dependence on Pandemic Scenarios: An Analysis of the "Hospederías De Extremadura" Brand before and During COVID-19** 2333  
Marcelino SÁNCHEZ RIVERO, Luis MURILLO GONZÁLEZ,  
María Cristina RODRÍGUEZ RANGEL
- 26 **New Practices of Tourism Industry as Effects of Development of the Agricultural Land Market** 2348  
Aisulu KULMAGANBETOVA, Bazarkhan RUSTEMBAEV, Olessya MISNIK,  
Almaz BAYARLIN, Shynar RAMAZANOVA, Samat BEKTENOV

# Call for Papers Spring Issues 2023 Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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## Role of Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex to Create Areas of Agritourism

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### Abstract

Agritourism is rapidly developing in many countries, but despite this, little is known about the specific implementation, the actual scope and effectiveness of public and private measures to support the development of agriculture and agritourism, especially in recent times. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the development of agro-industrial complex for the creation of agrotourism zones on the materials of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The integration of agrotourism is a breakthrough for the prosperity of rural industry and the revitalization of rural areas. In addition, agricultural eco-efficiency and the integration of agro-tourism are closely related, so studying the relationship between them is of great importance for realizing high-quality agro-ecological development.

**Keywords:** agro-industrial complex (AIC); agriculture; agritourism; agribusiness; tourism.

**JEL Classification:** Q51; Q52; Q01; Z32.

### Introduction

The agro-industrial complex (AIC) is the largest inter-industrial complex, covering various sectors of the economy engaged in the production and processing of agricultural raw materials and the supply of products to the end consumer. It includes agriculture and industrial sectors closely related to agricultural production: all sectors of the country's economy involved in transportation, storage, processing and delivery of agricultural products to

consumers; supply of agricultural machinery, chemicals and fertilizers; maintenance of agricultural production. Kazakhstan is traditionally an agricultural country and is one of the largest producers of grain and meat in general, thanks to the development of virgin lands.

Recent climatic, environmental, energy, and economic crises have increased the importance of agricultural land efficiency and productivity (Faulkner *et al.* 2019, Khan 2021). Of the different types of tourism, one way is to convert agricultural land into a base for agritourism, mainly in cities and their rural suburbs (Adamov *et al.* 2020). The term and concept of agritourism has only recently appeared in the literature (Arroyo *et al.* 2013). The popularity of agritourism as a special form of tourism continues to grow (Santeramo and Barbieri 2017).

Agritourism is considered the key to local economic development for rural areas with ecological and cultural heritage. The beneficial effects of agritourism have a positive impact on the overall economic structure of the region, such as public investment and capital attraction in rural areas.

## 1. Research Background

Due to the growing interest of tourists in experiencing rural life, agritourism has spread rapidly around the world. The diversification of economic activities in rural areas, primarily through agritourism, increases farm income and helps reduce financial problems. Research results show that the economic effects of agritourism include improved economic development, monetary recognition of new economic models, and the requirement of economic and administrative measures to develop this industry.

The concept of agritourism is considered in various forms related to tourism and rural development, with no consensus on the different types of its activities. Agritourism is often referred to as tourist farm, holiday farm, rural tourism (Pérez-Olmos and Aguilar-Rivera 2021). Many authors define agritourism from different perspectives, but the lack of a common definition limits the development of effective policies to support agritourism (Rauniyar *et al.* 2021).

Agritourism is an economic activity on a farm to entertain visitors, generating income for the owner at the microeconomic level and contributing to a country's GDP at the macro level (Parker *et al.* 2019). Rural communities have faced many challenges over the past few decades (Varmazyari *et al.* 2018, Askarpour *et al.* 2020; Rauniyar *et al.* 2021), such as when crops fail or prices are low.

Grillini *et al.* (2022) emphasize that both public and private involvement is important to strengthen agritourism, requiring clear criteria and mandatory definition to protect agritourism and make it a unique and sustainable farming experience. Some statistical results show that the integration of agritourism contributes significantly to agricultural eco-efficiency (Guirong 2022).

The integration of agriculture and tourism is an important way to integrate rural industry, which not only helps to expand farmers' income channels, promote the transformation and modernization of agriculture, maintain rural prosperity and stability, but also helps to continuously enrich the tourism industry and lengthen the industrial chain. Opinions on accelerating agricultural and rural modernization by comprehensively promoting rural revitalization also clearly indicate that the synergistic development of agriculture and tourism is an important element and the main path for rural revitalization (Yi, Zhao and Fu 2019). In addition, agritourism integration can develop energy support for agriculture and tourism (Irfan and Ahmad 2022).

The development path of the traditional industry of agriculture and tourism integration, based on the initial sparring of resources, means of production and ecology, is proving difficult. It is necessary to accelerate the transformation and modernization of agriculture, promote the coordinated development of new rural integration, embark on the path of green and sustainable agricultural development and improve the environmental efficiency of agriculture.

Few scholars have explored the development path of agritourism integration from a sustainable development perspective (Pan *et al.* 2018).

Agrotourism, as a form of selective tourism, is not only a possible way to keep residents in rural areas, but also contributes to economic growth and sustainable development of rural areas. On the other hand, some scholars have studied only the measures and influencers of agricultural eco-efficiency (Picazo-Tadeo *et al.* 2011, Deng and Gibson 2019, Liu *et al.* 2021). The integration of agritourism is the main force contributing to the development of the rural economy and the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

As a form of selective tourism, agritourism can not only retain residents in rural areas, but also contribute to economic growth and sustainable rural development. On the other hand, some scholars have only studied the indicators and effects of agritourism (Picazo-Tadeo *et al.* 2011, Deng and Gibson 2019, Liu *et al.* 2021).

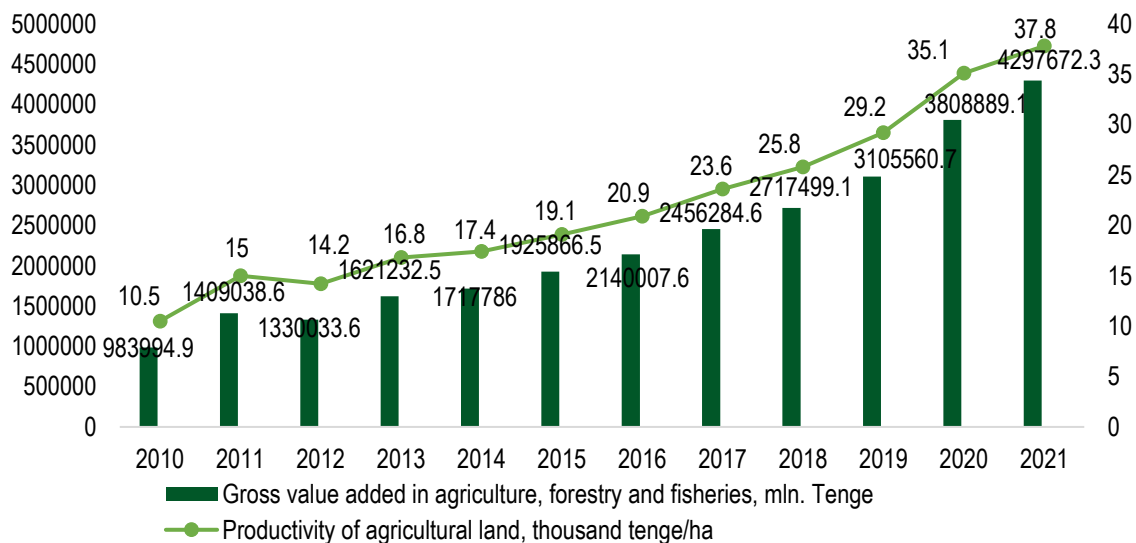
According to Lifang (2018), Meng (2019), Han *et al.* (2020) the integration of agritourism involves a development process in which agriculture and tourism intertwine and intersect and eventually merge to form a new type of business.

## 2. Development of Agro-Industrial Complex in Kazakhstan and Its Impact on Agritourism

Currently, one of the main tasks of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan is to increase the competitiveness of the agro-industrial complex, as one of the key drivers of the national economy with great potential upon other branches of economy, as tourism industry is. The current situation in the domestic tourism industry orders the need to develop alternative types of tourism, such as rural tourism, as a separate tourist destination, which began to develop relatively recently.

Therefore, we can analyze agritourism from the point of view of the development of rural tourism and its development in terms of investment attractiveness. Agriculture in Kazakhstan is one of the areas of economic development, with great potential and reserves (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Indicators characterizing agriculture in the Republic of Kazakhstan



Source: compiled by authors <http://www.stat.gov.kz>

Diverse climatic conditions make it possible to grow almost all crops and livestock in temperate zones. Almost a quarter of the country's territory is occupied by steppes, half by semi-deserts and deserts, and the remaining quarter by foothills. 80% of the country's territory is occupied by arable land, with an area of more than 200 million hectares. However, only 40% of this area, or 96 million hectares, is used for agriculture.

The agricultural sector in Kazakhstan has always been considered a fundamental component of the national economy. This is based on a number of advantages that the republic has:

- the presence of a large area - in terms of the number of agricultural lands per capita, Kazakhstan ranks second in the world;
- being one of the largest exporters of grain and flour;
- growing demand for food from neighboring countries (China, Central Asia, EEC, CIS).

An important advantage of rural tourism is that, in addition to the usual entertainment and recreation for the general public, it can also contribute to solving the urgent problems of small and medium agricultural producers and the social development of rural areas.

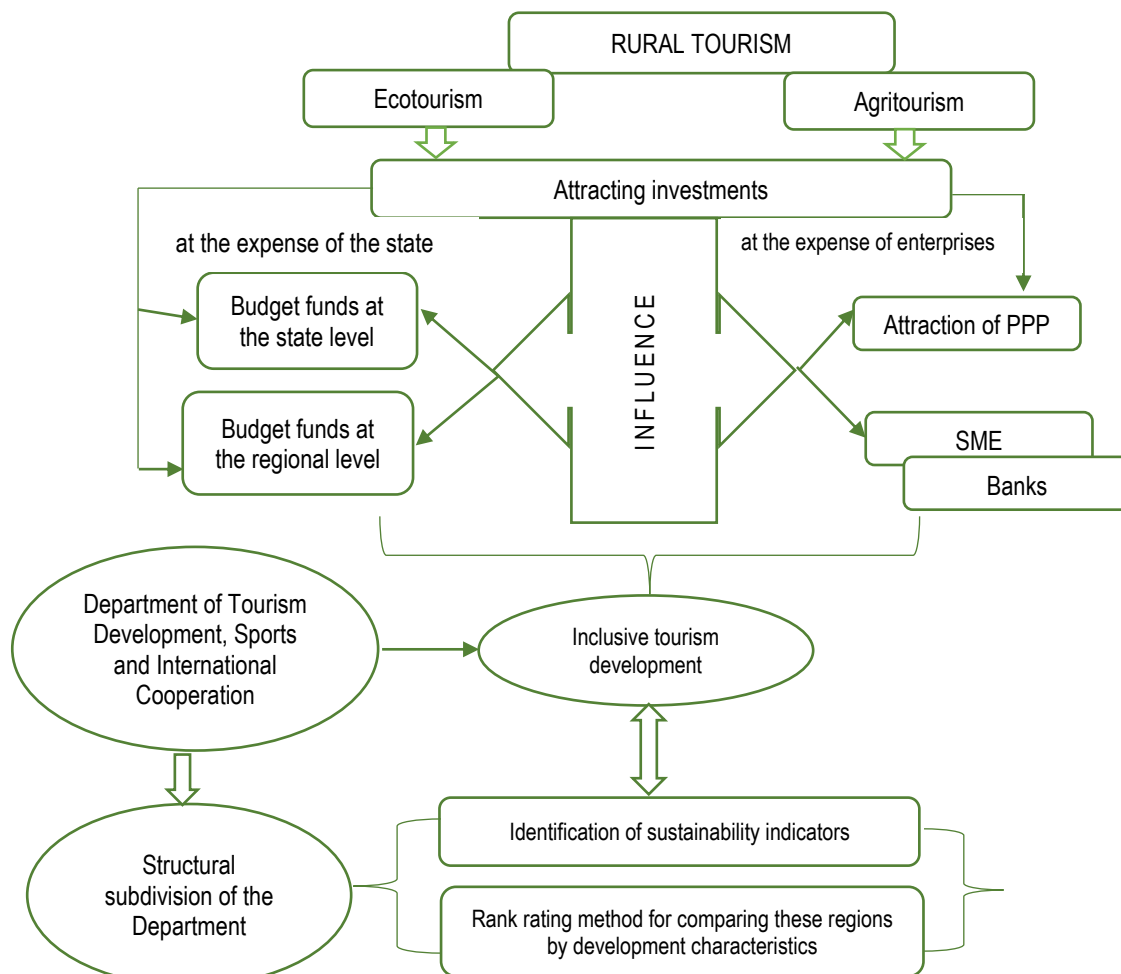
The development of rural tourism is one of the main points of growth for agricultural communities, as it will allow not only to realize an additional source of income, but also raise the potential of traditional hospitality as an integral part of culture to a new level. In 2020, the following regions provided ecotourism and accommodation services in the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Almaty region (Saty, Karabulak, Karakastek, Lepsinsk, Karabastau, Talgar, Basshi);
- Karaganda region (Karkaraly, Shabanbai Bi);
- Turkestan region (Zhabagly, Lenger);
- East Kazakhstan region (Chemaya Uba, Ridder);
- Akmola region (Shchuchinsk, Sarybulak, Burabay, Korgalzhyn);

- Zhambyl region (Merke, Mynkazan).

In order for agritourism to develop, it is necessary to develop mechanisms in the field of ensuring the necessary level of sustainability in the development of the studied regions (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Model of inclusive sustainable development of tourism



Source: compiled by authors

Therefore, in order to form a sectoral mechanism that provides the necessary level of development of tourist destinations and industrial sectors such as ecotourism and agro-tourism, it is necessary to establish a structural unit that will provide a unified strategic and general framework for the management of tourism activities in the region, promoting sustainable development and safe and inclusive tourism development and increase its attractiveness as a competitive force.

The mechanism of the sector is based on the tourism priorities and plans of the study region and its interaction with agribusiness, promoting the development of the region as a safe and sustainable tourism destination, with the following priorities:

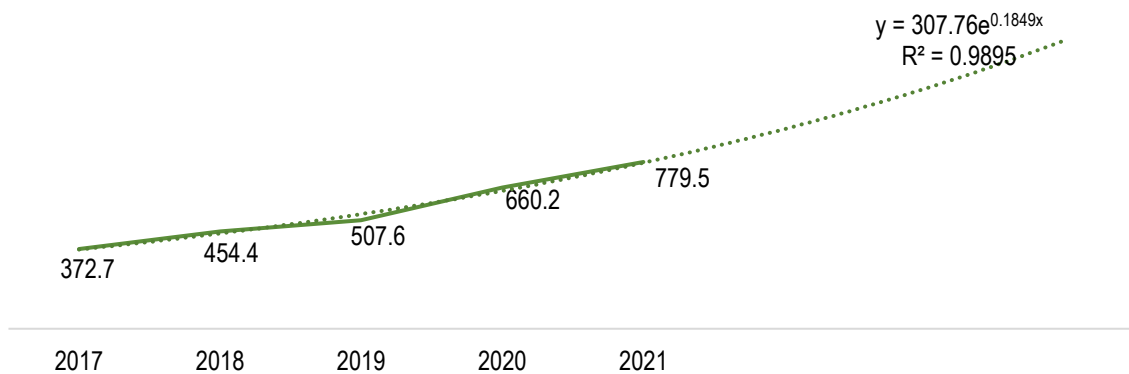
- prioritizing quality over quantity and ensuring environmental, social and cultural sustainability;
- adapting to global trends and increasing sustainability by promoting the uniqueness of the region's tourism product while creating regional synergies to effectively respond to new global and regional developments;
- reducing cross-regional disparities and revitalizing local communities;
- promoting all-season tourism by diversifying offerings and promoting multi-destination travel, accounting for seasonality, and providing regions with year-round business opportunities.

In Kazakhstan, for example, after gaining independence, a number of policy documents were developed, on the basis of which the national policy in this area was implemented. Currently, Kazakhstan is implementing the National Program for the development of the agro-industrial complex of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017-2021, which, taking into account new opportunities, aims to double gross agricultural production, increase exports of processed products by 2.5 times to 2.7 billion dollars, increase credit financing compared to 2017, increase the



inflow of investment in fixed capital by 2021 by three times. The total costs provided for in the budgets of national and local authorities to implement the program is about 2,774.6 billion tenge (Figure 3).

Figure 3. State Program for the Development of the Kazakhstan's Agro-Industrial, 2017-2021, billion tenge



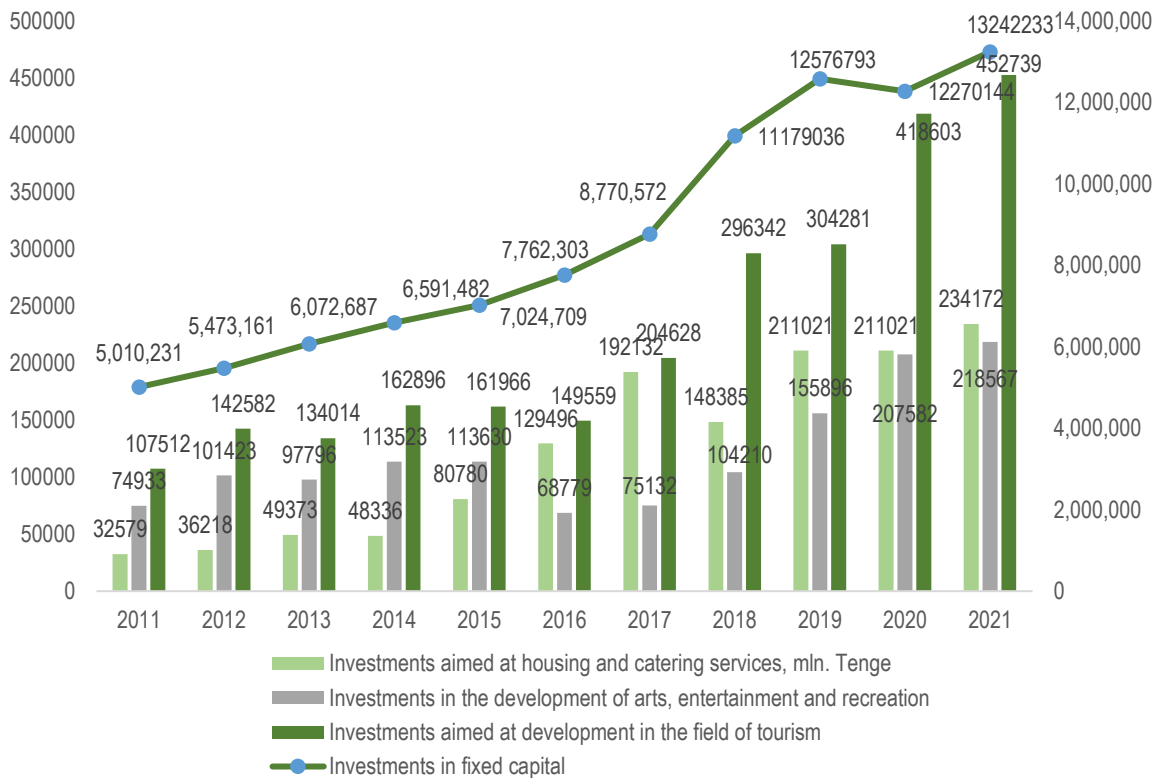
Source: compiled by authors

Currently, Industry 4.0 provides for the large-scale development of robots, cloud servers, cyber-physical systems, including in agriculture. Therefore, the program of industrialization of agriculture in Kazakhstan aimed at the use of innovative equipment, being a kind of impetus for its development in step with the times (Kashakova et al. 2022).

### 3. Some Grow-up Opportunities for Tourism Industry and Agritourism

One of the opportunities to promote tourism in Kazakhstan in recent years is that the number of domestic tourists is growing due to the inability to travel abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 6).

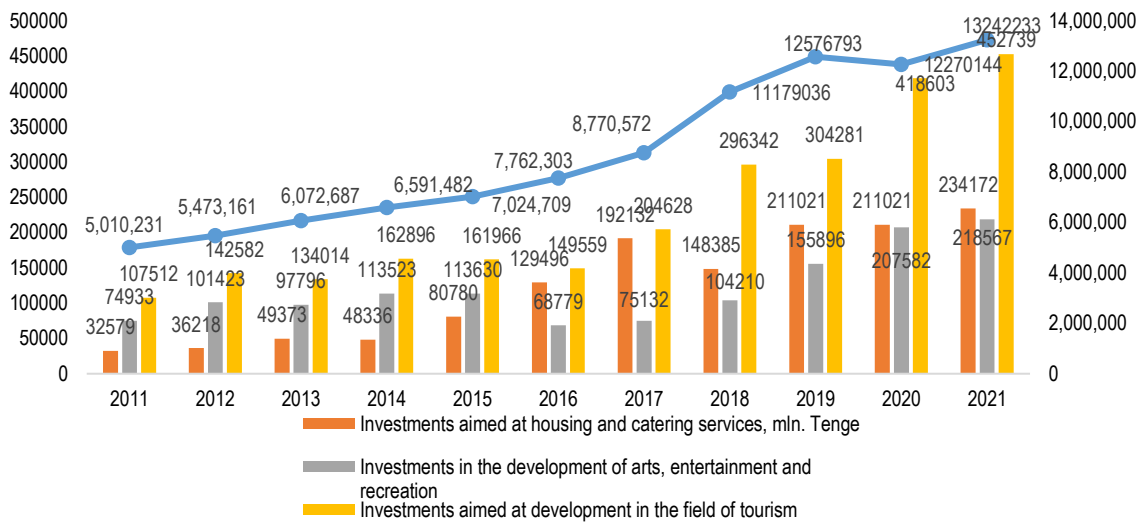
Figure 6. Innovative finance in tourism



Source: compiled by authors according to <http://www.stat.gov.kz>

The number of enterprises in the field of accommodation and food services, art, entertainment and recreation has been on the increase over the past 10 years. Despite the pandemic, in 2020, according to the indicators considered, the number of enterprises in the industry as a whole is growing (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Innovative finance in tourism

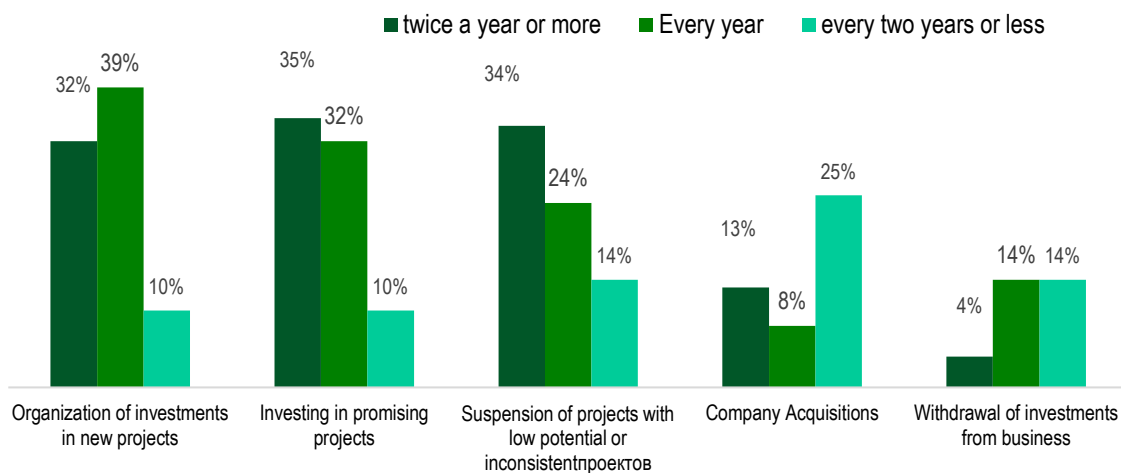


Source: compiled by authors according to <http://www.stat.gov.kz>

The tourism and travel industry are closely interconnected with other industries, which increases its importance for the economy. In countries with a priority development of tourism, such as Georgia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Turkey and others, the industry's total contribution to GDP exceeds 15%. In Kazakhstan, this figure is lower. Prioritizing tourism in a country development strategy can increase these numbers. The State Program for the Development of the Tourism Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan sets a goal - to ensure the share of tourism in GDP of at least 8% by 2025, as well as an increase in the number of people employed in the industry up to 650 thousand people. This will mean the growth of the industry, on average, 2 times the growth of GDP. Essential elements for success in achieving such targets include prioritization and targeting of resources, such as identifying a few top destinations. Effective government support through targeted, catalytic infrastructure investments is critical. Work needs to be done to attract and support private investment in the sector and to develop a holistic tourism promotion marketing strategy.

Among the companies of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of investment activities, a survey was conducted that characterizes the frequency of attracting investments in the tourism industry, as a result of which it can be noted that many companies attract investments twice a year, or even more often (Figure 8).

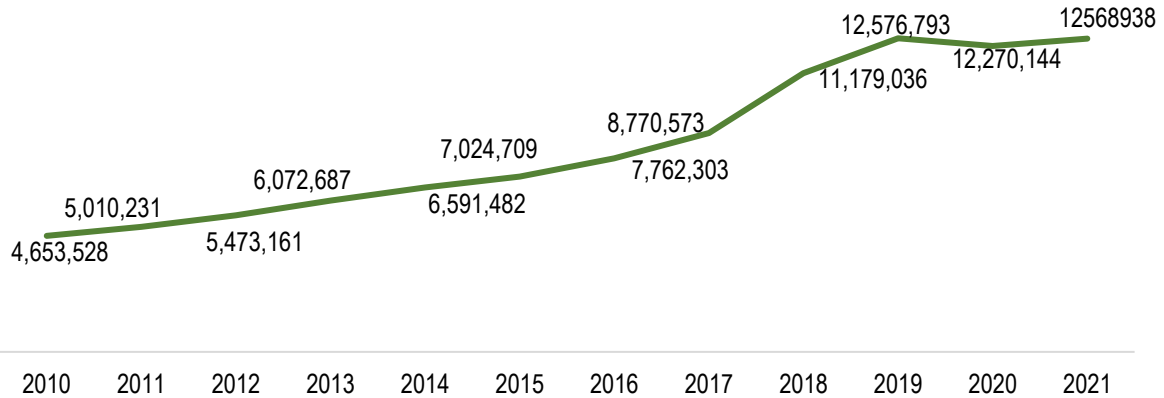
Figure 8. Companies attracting investments in the tourism industry



Source: compiled by authors according to <https://www.pwc.com/kz>

Thus, the volume of investments in fixed capital of agriculture increased by 33.3% and amounted to 773.2 billion tenge, in food production increased by 3.1% and amounted to 114.4 billion tenge. Figure 9 presents data showing the dynamics of the development of investments in fixed capital in the field of forestry, agriculture and fisheries in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period from 2010-2021 (Figure 9).

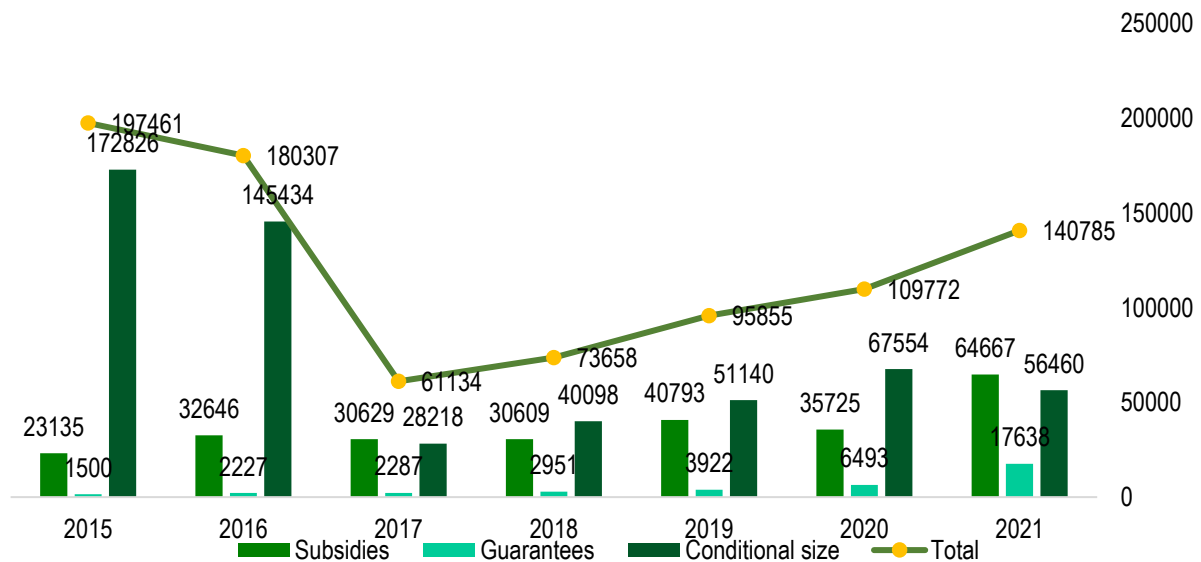
Figure 9. Investments in fixed capital, forestry, agriculture and fisheries, million tenge



Source: compiled by authors according to <http://www.stat.gov.kz>

The main areas of state support for SMEs in Kazakhstan include financial support, which includes subsidizing rates, guaranteeing loans and conditional placement of funds for financing SMEs. In 2021, 104.4 billion tenge (104.3 billion tenge for local implementation) were allocated to the program of investment grants, 24,189 investment projects in agriculture were subsidized and 20,183 jobs were created. Investment grants cover 34 priority areas in the agricultural sector. The implementation of the investment subsidy program shows that a significant part of the budgeted funds, on average 50%, is spent on modernization of agricultural machinery. The growth of budgets and results of programs implemented through the Damu Fund is carried out with the help of the amount of funds raised for SMEs, loans issued to participants in the programs of the Damu Fund (Figure 10).

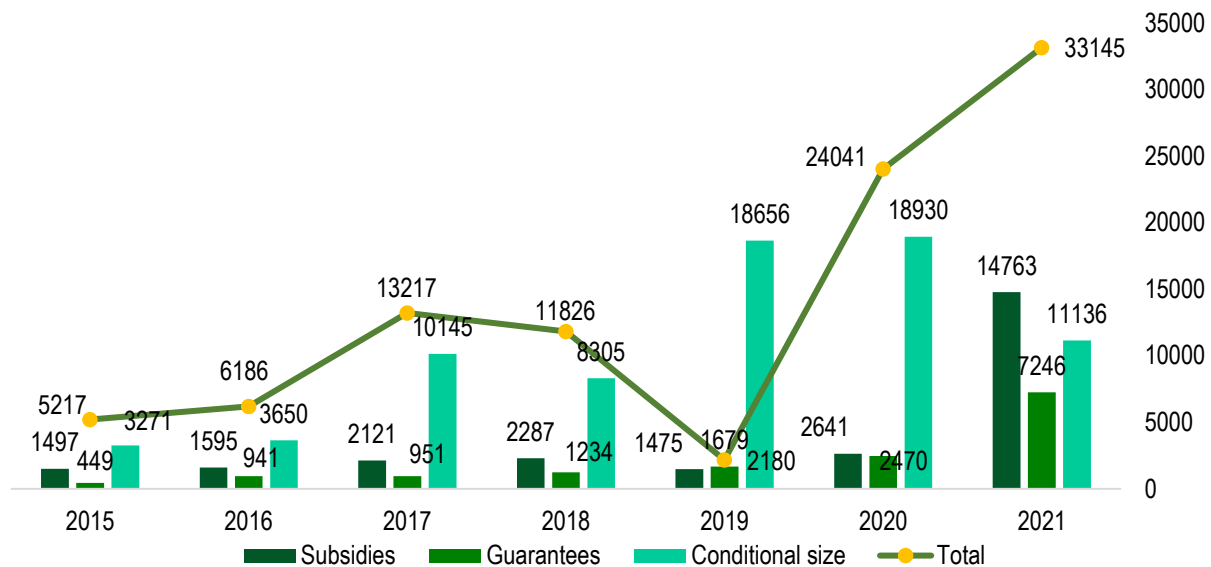
Figure 10. Growth of budgets and results of programs implemented through Damu Fund 2015-2021, million tenge



Source: compiled by authors according to <https://damu.kz/>

At the end of 2021, the bulk of budget funds, more than 67.7 billion tenge, or 65%, fell on subsidizing the purchase of agricultural machinery (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Number of funded projects for 2015-2021, million tenge



Source: compiled by authors according to <https://damu.kz/>

All types of financial services in the development of the agro-industrial complex are aimed at maintaining and increasing the gross production of agricultural products (services).

## Conclusion

Based on the insignificant experience of introducing agrotourism in Kazakhstan, it is logical to make more attempts to attract tourists. Therefore, this study examines the economic and cultural problems of the development of agrotourism to promote agrotourism in rural areas. The research focuses on monitoring the quality of farms, providing subsidies to farmers and planning the development of agrotourism. Moreover, innovations in agrotourism that involve various stakeholders and reduce the negative impact on society will lead to the sustainable development of agrotourism. However, there are a number of challenges for the successful development of agrotourism, including the need to create infrastructure, proper education and training of farmers, allocate adequate budgets, improve waste management and protect the rural environment.

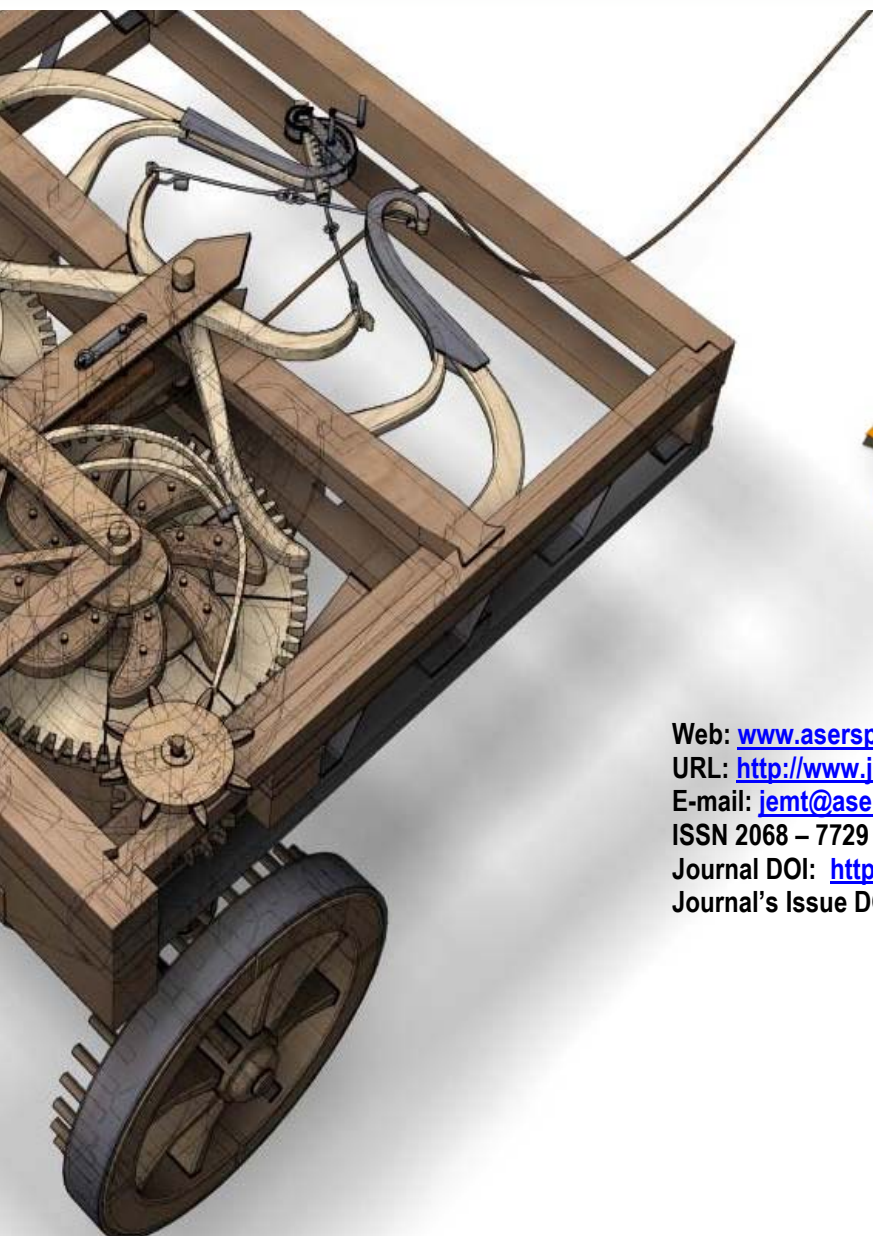
The study confirmed that the objects of agrotourism have a great potential to attract tourists. Agrotourism is relatively cheap compared to other forms of travel, which provides opportunities for local tax revenue and can increase the resilience of communities during recessions. Although this paper presents an analysis of the impact of the integration of agrotourism on the environmental performance of agriculture, there are still important issues that require attention.

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