

Economical analysis of MICE tourism development in Kazakhstan

Análisis económico del desarrollo del turismo MICE en Kazajstán

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ABSTRACT:

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to develop MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism, which is now characterized by low level of service's quality in Astana. The purpose of this work is to test methodological and theoretical bases for studying MICE tourism market, to reveal the dynamics of its development from economical perspective, as well as to identify the problems and prospects for MICE travel in Astana. Leading methods of the research are economic analysis, marketing research and content analysis.

Keywords: MICE tourism, development, low level of service's quality, Astana

RESUMEN:

La relevancia de este estudio está determinada por la necesidad de desarrollar el turismo MICE, que ahora se caracteriza por un bajo nivel de calidad de servicio en Astana. El propósito de este trabajo es probar las bases metodológicas y teóricas para estudiar el mercado turístico de MICE, revelar la dinámica de su desarrollo desde una perspectiva económica, así como identificar los problemas y las perspectivas de los viajes de MICE en Astana. Los principales métodos de investigación son el análisis económico, la investigación de mercado y el análisis de contenido.

Palabras clave: MICE turismo, desarrollo, bajo nivel de calidad de servicio, Astana.

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourism has turned into one of the most profitable and intensively developing branches of the world economy. According to UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2018 Edition, this is evidenced by the fact that tourism gives each tenth job, it accounts for about 10% of the world's gross national income, 7% of capital investment (UNWTO, 2018). Every year, business, cultural and scientific ties between regions and countries are becoming more intense. In this regard, the development of the business tourism industry is an indispensable condition for successful business and has a significant impact on the development of the national economy and its integration into the world market.

At the beginning of the 21st century, MICE tourism (each capital letter of the abbreviation stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) has become established in many countries as the fastest growing economic sector, which provides foreign exchange and job creation, increased demand for various sectors of the tourism industry, development of the economy, science, education, culture and health. International business tourism plays an important role in raising the rating of the relevant city and can help position it and the surrounding region as a center of quality in a certain sector of the economy.

Business tourism is perhaps the most stable and highly profitable branch of the world tourism, though it is one of the youngest. All over the world business tourism stood out as an independent type of tourist business in the 1970s. In connection with the growing role of MICE tourism, there is a need for its research, as well as identifying the main problems and prospects taking place in this sphere. This is especially true for the image and reputation of business travel, since this issue is most acute in this sector of tourism.

The purpose of this work is to test methodological and theoretical bases for the study of the MICE tourism market, to study the dynamics from economical perspective of its development, as well as to identify the problems and prospects for MICE travel in Astana.

1.1. The essence of business tourism and its importance for the global economic entities

In present days, each fourth individual who leaves his or her home each day to go on journeys to near or far, short-term or long-term ones do it for official needs. The entire immense segment of journeys, made up with a wide assortment of business purposes is called MICE tourism (Alexandrova A.Yu, 2010). Unlike mass tourism, the choice to movement, sources and measures of its financing is normally taken in view of business need. Regularly the choice is made not even by business travelers themselves, who perform their expert obligations outside the typical condition, yet by different people (the head or proprietor of the organization, the leader of the company's department, and so on).

Ideas of business and corporate tourism appeared in reference to the globalization of the sector of financial system. In developed overseas nations, this occurred during the 1970-1980; however, in Kazakhstan it began to be admitted that business tourism is the most effective during the early 2000's. It was at this time when Kazakhstani companies were able to reach the world level (Osmanov G.M., 2013).

Specialists frequently use the English abbreviation MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) instead of the term «business tourism» in Kazakhstan (Tourism: practice, problems and perspectives, 2007). The concept of business tourism includes the organization and support of both private business visits and the work of hundreds of international congresses, symposiums, conferences, exhibitions and fairs. To be quite accurate, the term MICE is mainly used by corporate consumers. A certain part of the offers providers prefer to use some other common related and more academic term – Meetings, hence the Meeting Industry. Therefore, when talking about the travel industry with service purposes, it is equally possible to use three terms: business tourism, the MICE industry and the industry of meetings.

Summing up, the concept of business tourism includes the organization and assist visits and the work of thousands of worldwide congresses, symposiums, conferences, exhibitions and fairs (Tourism: practice, problems and perspectives, 2007).

MICE tourism positively affects those countries where it is actualized. Fundamentally, this impact is similar to that of other types of tourism; however, there are some significant differences. Firstly, travel is expensive and, therefore, is profitable. Most of the business travelers are top and middle managers of companies, so sellers of luxury, high-quality services have the greatest benefit. The World Tourism Organization calculated that business people spend three to four times more than ordinary citizens on vacation. The annual cash turnover in this sphere is predicted at tens of billions of dollars. (Rybakov F.F., 2010). Secondly, numerous business trips are made in the period that is not extremely occupied for the tourist center, which is the reason they generally rely on business visitors paying little respect to regularity. MICE tourism can be a source for overcoming seasonality, since MICE tours can take place regardless the season. Thirdly, tourists making business trips are not as much as other tourists related with nature. Most of the time they spend at meetings, discussions of various issues, so they have little time to visit beaches, amusement regions, recreation areas, ski slopes and etc. MICE visitors do not consume much room in local transport and do not make pointless lines in stores or at the mail station.

Finally, business tourists are good ambassadors for the touristic center they visit. Regularly these are extremely well known individuals, whose assessment can fundamentally influence the development of the image of the tourist center in their home country.

1.2. Types of MICE tourism

MICE tourism encompasses travel with official or professional purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited during brief residence as mentioned previously. MICE tourism comprises business trips of businesspersons and entrepreneurs, congress, exhibition, incentive tourism and events (Babkin A.V., 2008).

Congress and exhibition tourism is the most unique segment of the business travel market. Under congress and exhibition type of tourism the activities related with the association of congresses, displays, fairs, gatherings and different occasions are comprehended.

Congress tourism is another type of MICE tourism. The congress events are smaller in scale than exhibition; however, they have a more qualified and requesting participants. In terms of profitability, congress events are at the same level as exhibitions, since they are intended for fewer members. However, unlike the exhibitions, congresses, particularly global ones, are guided by elite service, in this manner guaranteeing the stacking of the best lodgings in the city. Congress and business hotels able to host up to at least 2,000 guests have turned into a well-known marvel in America, China, and Singapore.

Along with the journeys to congresses and exhibitions, MICE tourism includes incentive tours. The concept of «incentive» is interpreted as a motivation, encouraging. This type of tourism means journeys through which industrial companies praise their personnel for high performance or encourage them for efficient work in the future, as well as undertaking discipline seminars, conferences and meetings (Jeffrey, Dickinson & Einarsson, 2013).

Summing up, there are many types of MICE tourism; four types of MICE were discussed, namely: congress tourism, business meetings and trips, incentive tours and events such as concerts or exhibitions. In the simplest case, an incentive tour is a normal visit with convenience in a four – or five-star hotel and a busy outing program. American sightseers, oddly enough, regularly request such standard programs (Shinew K. and

Backman S., 1995). The increase in the quantity of incentive journeys served as an impetus to the expansion of the congress exhibition activities and the holding of specialized forums on incentive tourism. This development involved the association of college training classes for this segment of the MICE tourism, promoted the formation of numerous affiliations, associations, societies, and so on. One of them is the Society of Incentive Travel Executives - SITE, which is situated in New York (SITE, 2014). Today, SITE has 18 committees, operates the University of Incentive Tourism, and conducts regional meetings, seminars and trade exhibitions (Assylkhanova & Mussina, 2018). Experts point out that incentive tourism anticipates an extraordinary future. In the mid XXI century, it will end up being the principle type of empowering specialists in the main segments of the world economy (Xiang Z. and Formica S., 2007). Programs of incentive tours rely upon the specialization of the coordinators of the trip and the region (Assylkhanova & Mussina, 2018). The most well-known regions for conducting incentive trips are recreational and business centers (Tourism: practice, problems and perspectives, 2007).

1.3. Bleisure - a new trend for business people

As content analysis revealed, recently, the segment of trips that combine the business direction with rest is called «bleisure», demonstrates significant growth. Thus priorities and proportions here can be different. This can be, first and foremost, recreation, having a business component, and a business trip, in which time is reserved for rest.

For the world market, bleisure is not new. In 2014, Bridgestreet Global Hospitality research dedicated to this phenomenon was published. According to the figures, for many this kind of travel have become a way of life, while 78% of respondents say that such trips make them much more loyal to their work, but less than 14% of respondents considered bleisure to be more or less officially regulated in the company (Kryazhev M., 2017).

According to a recent study of Booking.com , bleisure's popularity continues to grow. This applies not only to the merger of work and rest: the possibility of such trips contributes to the loyalty of employees. Now, going on a business trip, people preparing not only presentations and business suits, but also plans to get acquainted with the place where they go, and the amount of such business travelers, according to the study, is already at the level of 49%. Also about 75% of the survey participants plan to make as many trips as possible in the near future. If earlier bleisure was not paid much attention, believing, sometimes rightly, that it was a waste of time and could even damage a career, but now the angle has changed. Bleisure provides an excellent opportunity to expand horizons, look at some things differently and eventually achieve more in the work. Moreover, for 30% of bleisure respondents, it is so attractive that they are willing to accept less paid jobs in order to be able to travel (Kryazhev M., 2017).

In turn, Expedia conducted a study to create a profile of American business travelers practicing bleisure. It turned out that 43% of all business trips are bleisure trips. That is, in the US market it is quite common practice. According to the figures, the decision to add to the trip a day or two of rest is very dependent on its objectives. Most often, it is done by those who go to the conference (43%), with a slight lag there are meetings with customers (34%), 24% for team building, 9% for sales and other purposes. The place where a person goes on a business trip is most often the determining factor for bleisure (Kryazhev M., 2017).

Travel Weekly's 2016 Consumer Trends published a report on the growth of the «bleisure» segment in 2016 by 17%, while in 2015 it witnessed a growth of 14% ("«Bleisure» - a new fast-growing segment in the hotel business ", 2018). That is, the trend of significant growth is observed over a long period. Of all the representatives of the business community surveyed, 67 percent say they want to add rest to the business trip, while 36 percent say they did so within the last three months. The most popular types of recreation are still short sightseeing tours, getting acquainted with local cuisine and the study of unique local cultural traditions. As a rule, such bleisure-trips are planned in a short time (Yana Property, 2017).

MICE tourism currently is actively developing in 115 countries. Every year on the planet more than 100 million trips are made with business purposes. Their regional conveyance is described by extraordinary unevenness. The greater part of the travelers with business purposes are sent to Europe. In the structure of business trips on the European continent, congress visits, trips to exhibitions and fairs, incentive tours for representatives of firms have the most shares (Hall C.M., 1994).

Europe being on the primary place by the number of landings quantity and a cost for MICE tourism, in any case, step by step loses its leading position in this segment of the tourist market. In terms of growth in business tourism, it falls behind different areas of the world.

An ordinary tourist traveling with business purposes is a middle-aged man with an advanced education, a qualified master or a supervisor. For business tourism, English is an absolute must-know language.

The primary «supplier» of MICE vacationers in Europe is Germany. Annually more than 5 million Germans go on business journeys, 3% of them go abroad from enterprises, 21% travel abroad, and 76% of tourists all over the world travel to Germany ("Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, 2017 Edition | World Tourism Organization UNWTO", 2018).

The average duration of a business trip to countries located on another continent is 12-13 days, inside the particular region – 5-6 days, and for inner state trips – 3-4 days (UNWTO, 2018).

2. Methodology

Several methods such as economic analysis including classification and marketing research including survey were

employed in this paper. Economic and statistical analysis is used for the purpose of investigating mass socio-economic phenomena. Economic analysis studies the relationship and interaction between the state of the environment and economic phenomena.

In the method of classification, these types of groupings are used:

- typological (for example, grouping of organizations by type of ownership);
- structural - to assess the internal structure of indicators;
- analytical groupings - to study the relationship between factor and performance indicators.

The grouping method is the main method of ordering. It assumes the division of the studied set of objects into qualitatively homogeneous groups according to the corresponding characteristics. Classifications are used to identify the relationship between individual phenomena in order to study the composition, structure and dynamics of development, the determination of average values. (Bhattacharjee, 2012)

Grouping involves both the classification of phenomena and processes, as well as the causes and factors that determine them.

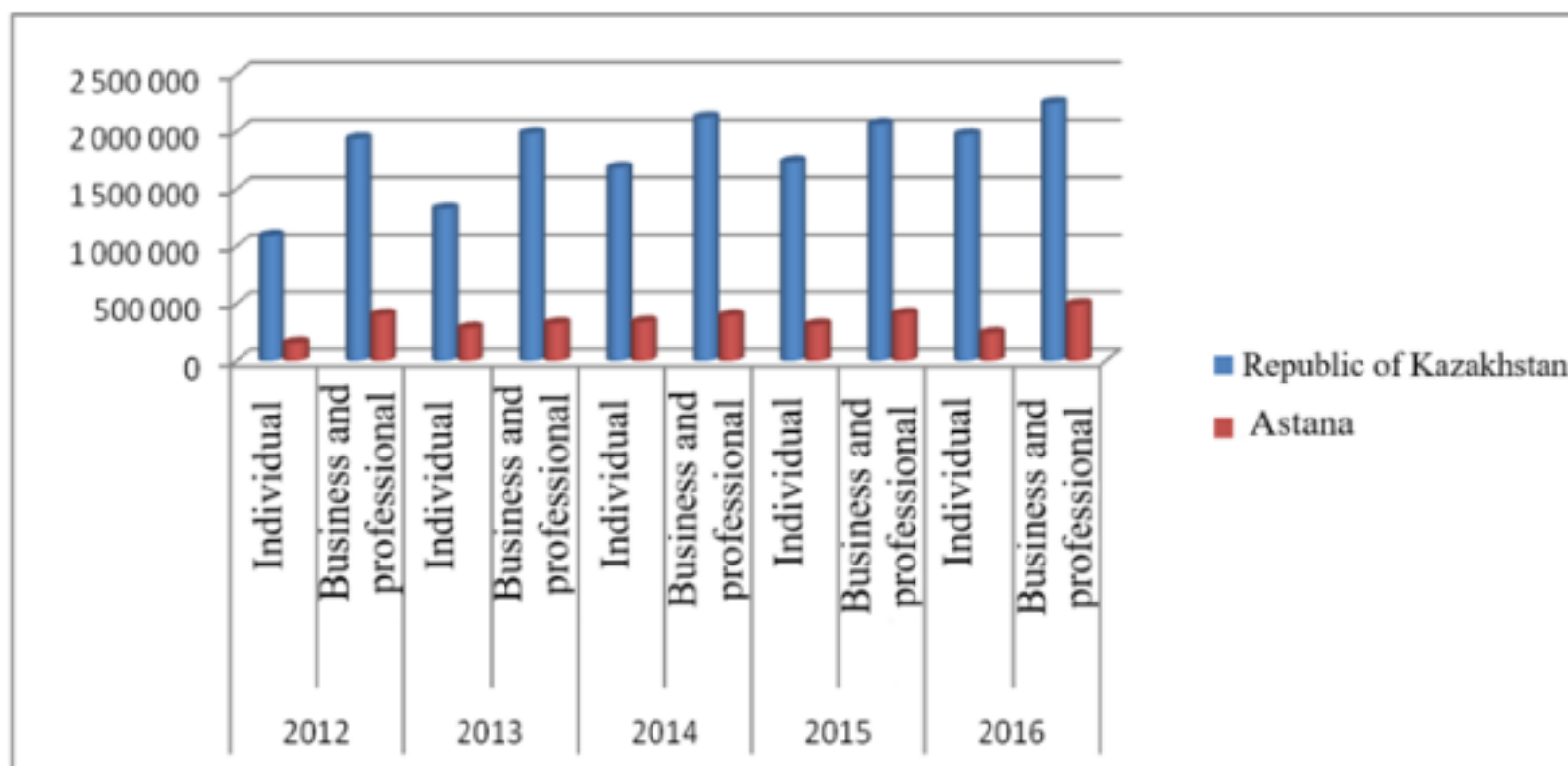
Content analysis is a special methodical procedure for analyzing the core of communication, what lies between the communicator and the audience, between the author of the message and those to whom this message is addressed (Semenov A.V., Korsunskaya M.V., 2010). In other words, the content analysis allows the researcher to make a conclusion about various socio-economic, sociocultural phenomena, using a large textual array, highlighting information aspects in it, not staying on the surface of the purport.

3. Results

Over the years of independence, the tourist sphere of Kazakhstan has undergone many changes. So, a number of legislative acts and program documents regulating tourism activities were adopted, which had a positive impact not only on the development of the industry itself, but also had a positive effect on the country's international image.

The socio-economic and political development of Kazakhstan on the world arena has increased the interest of foreign businessmen in the sphere of business relations development, which, naturally, causes an increase in the number of trips with business purposes to Kazakhstan. One of the priorities of the economic development of the capital city is tourism. Increasing interest in the city as a young capital of our state, which has a modern look and infrastructure, is confirmed by many indicators characterizing the tourism industry. The flow of tourists arriving in Astana and Kazakhstan, in general, is increasing every year. Astana has become a place for regular large-scale business forums of international level. The distribution of visitors by purpose of travel in the locations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Astana for the period from 2012-2016 is shown on the figure 1.

Figure 1
Distribution of inbound visitors by destination of travel in the places of accommodation for 2012-2016 years, thousand peoples



Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the period from 2012 to 2016, there is a steady increase in tourist visits for personal purposes, from 1,090,471 people in 2012 to 1,972,662 people by 2016, thus accepting 2012 as the basic, basic rate of growth in the number of visitors, involved in tourism with personal goals is 80.9%.

In Astana, during the period from 2012 to 2014, there was a significant increase in the number of tourists traveling with personal purposes, while the basic rate of growth in the number of tourists in this segment was 116.57%, in absolute terms, from 155,467 people (14% from republican value) in 2012 to 336 696 people (20% of the total republican value) by 2014.

However, after 2014 in Astana, there is a tendency to reduce the number of tourists traveling for individual goals

to 241 495 people (12% of the total republican value). The base rate of growth (compared to 2012) was 22, 46%.

A slightly different situation can be traced as regards the number of visitors traveling with business and professional goals. In 2012, the number of tourists with business and processing purposes for the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to 1 935 756 people, increasing to 2 245 120 people, thus, the basic rate of growth was 15.9%. That is, despite the growth trend of this indicator, the growth rate of the number of tourists traveling with business and professional goals is much lower than the growth rate of tourists traveling with personal goals.

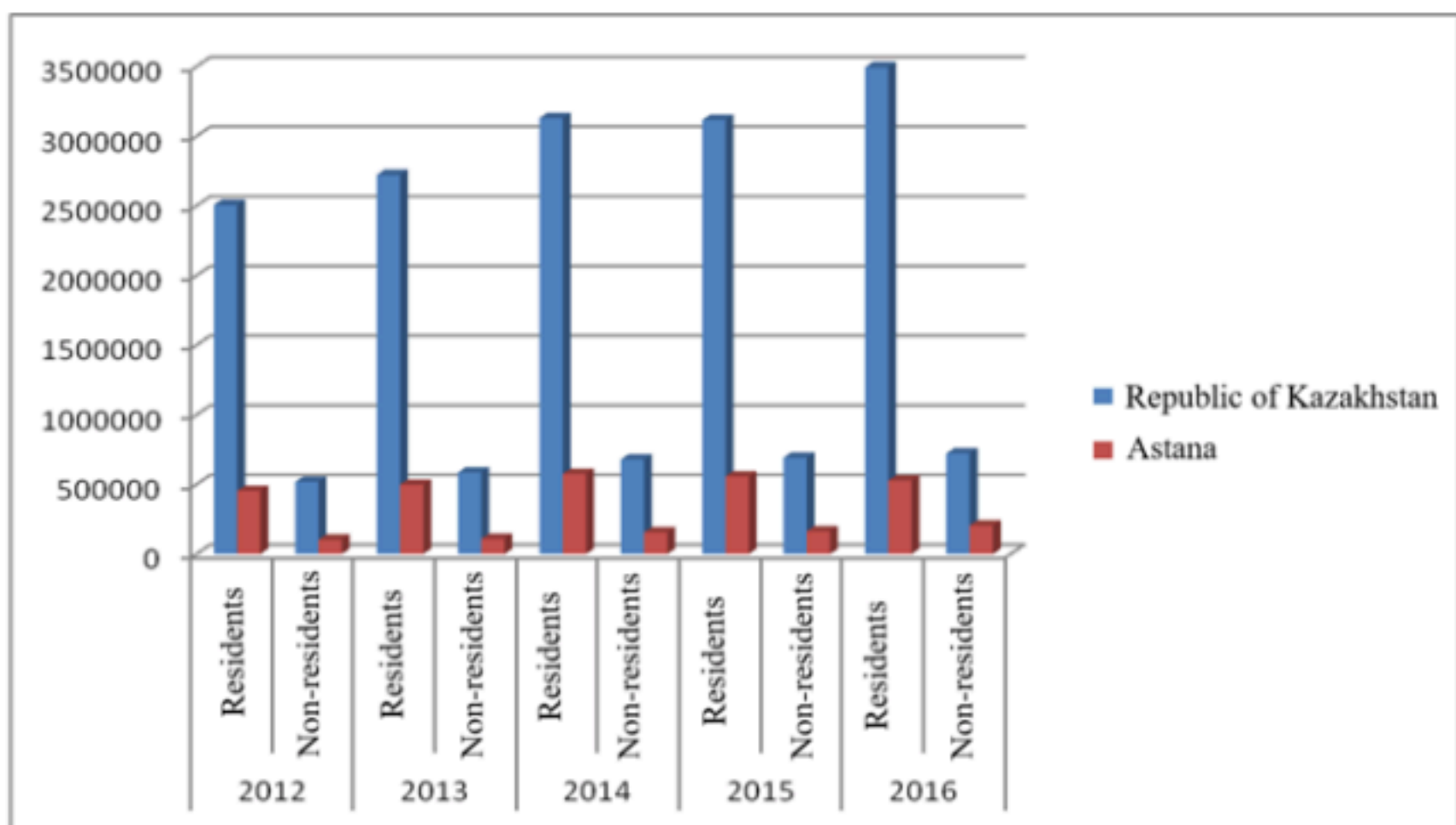
According to Astana, this indicator as a whole tends to grow, only in 2013 there was a decline in the number of visitors with business and professional goals from 401,163 people (21% of the total republican value) to 323,209 people (16% of the republic wide value) in 2013 year, which indicates that, on the whole, the number of "business" tourists in the republic grew during this period.

Then, from 2013 to 2016, changes in the number of tourists who have business and professional travel purposes in Astana, have a strictly positive nature, reaching in 2016 the level of 491 269 people (22% of the republic wide value). As a result, the base rate of growth in 2016 was 22, 46% compared to 2012.

Let us follow the dynamics of the distribution of visitors in the place of placement, taking into account their belonging to the category of residents or non-residents, as well as the purpose of travel in the locations for 2012-2016. Figure 2 illustrates the changes that took place in the period from 2012-2016 in general in Kazakhstan and in Astana.

Figure 2

Dynamics in the number of visitors (residents and non-residents) in the places of accommodation for the period from 2012-2016, people



Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics

As follows from the graph, the main flow of tourists in the places of accommodation is the residents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and this trend is typical for the Republic of Kazakhstan as a whole and for Astana in particular. It should be noted that in general in the period under review there is a flattening dynamics of the number of visitors from both the number of residents and the number of non-residents, with the exception of 2015, when there was a slight decline in visitors in both categories of tourists.

For a more detailed analysis, let us trace the changes in the number of visitors of residents and non-residents in the locations with the identification of the purposes of their trips - personal or business / professional. Data on this indicator are presented in Table 1.

The number of visitors from the number of residents registered in accommodation facilities traveling with personal purposes in the whole of the country tends to increase from 1,028.9 thousand people in 2012 to 1,859.7 thousand people in 2016, respectively, the basic rate of growth was 80.75 %.

Analyzing this indicator for the city of Astana, we observe a different dynamics. Thus, the number of resident visitors in places of accommodation with personal travel purposes in Astana tends to increase from 145,800 people in 2012 to 322,200 people by 2014, however, since 2014 the number residents who visit the capital for personal purposes are on the decline - up to 289.8 thousand people by 2015 and up to 213.2 thousand people by 2016. Thus, the peak of visits to the capital by residents for personal purposes fell on 2014.

Table 1

Distribution of resident visitors by purpose of travel in the places of accommodation for 2012-2016 years, thousand people

Year	Category	Personal	Business / Professional
2012	Residents	1,028.9	~900,000
	Non-residents	~150,000	~450,000
2013	Residents	~1,100,000	~1,700,000
	Non-residents	~150,000	~500,000
2014	Residents	1,859.7	~1,400,000
	Non-residents	~150,000	~600,000
2015	Residents	~1,800,000	~1,300,000
	Non-residents	~150,000	~500,000
2016	Residents	~1,859.7	~1,200,000
	Non-residents	~150,000	~500,000

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional
Kazakhstan	1028,9	1 478	1249,5	1472,2	1574,7	1555,2	1610,8	1504,7	1859,7	1635,5
Astana city	145,8	307, 6	258,9	239,5	322, 2	253,3	289,8	268,3	213,2	314,4

Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics

Let us follow the dynamics of the number of resident visitors, which indicated the business and professional goals of the trip. As can be seen from the data in Table 8, the number of tourists in this category is subject to constant fluctuations.

The number of tourists visiting the capital for business purposes decreased significantly in 2013 compared to 2012 by 22.14%. Further, there is a gradual increase in the growth rates of this indicator. The most significant increment was recorded in 2016 at 17.18%, thus returning to the level of 2012. It is interesting that the business purposes of travel in Astana prevailed over personal travel purposes only in 2012 and 2016, in other years the number of resident visitors with personal goals exceeds the number of residents having business purposes. While in the country as a whole, in 2012 and 2013 the business purposes of travel of residents were dominant, and starting in 2014, they gave way to personal travel goals. However, by summing up the number of resident visitors traveling with personal goals and business / professional goals, for the whole analyzed period (2012-2016) for the RK we get the following values: 7,323.56 thousand people and 7,645,772 people respectively; in Astana - 1 229, 8 thousand people and 1 383, 0 thousand people respectively. As follows from the presented observation, the distribution of resident visitors having personal or professional and business purposes is distributed quite evenly both in Kazakhstan and in Astana, with only a slight bias towards business trips.

By analogy, the analysis of the distribution of non-resident visitors on the purpose of travel in the locations for 2012-2016 is shown in the Table 2.

According to the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics, the objectives of non-resident tourists also differ in two categories - individual and business / professional.

Thus, the number of non-residents with personal travel purposes across Kazakhstan has steadily increased from 2012 to 2015, from 61,500 to 126,600, doubling in numbers. However, the number of tourists in this category went down in 2016 to 112.9 thousand people.

Table 2

Distribution of non-resident visitors by purpose of travel in the places of accommodation for 2012-2016 years, thousand people

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional	Individual	Business and professional
Republic of Kazakhstan	61,5	457,7	73, 9	512,1	109,1	569,9	126, 6	565, 6	112,9	609,6
Astana city	9,7	93,6	26, 2	83, 7	14,5	140,8	23,1	141,7	28,3	176, 9

Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics

Analyzing the same indicator for Astana, we observe the following: the number of non-resident tourists as a whole tends to grow, showing a decline only in 2014. The base indicator in 2012 was 9.7 thousand people, having increased by almost three to 28.3 thousand people by 2016.

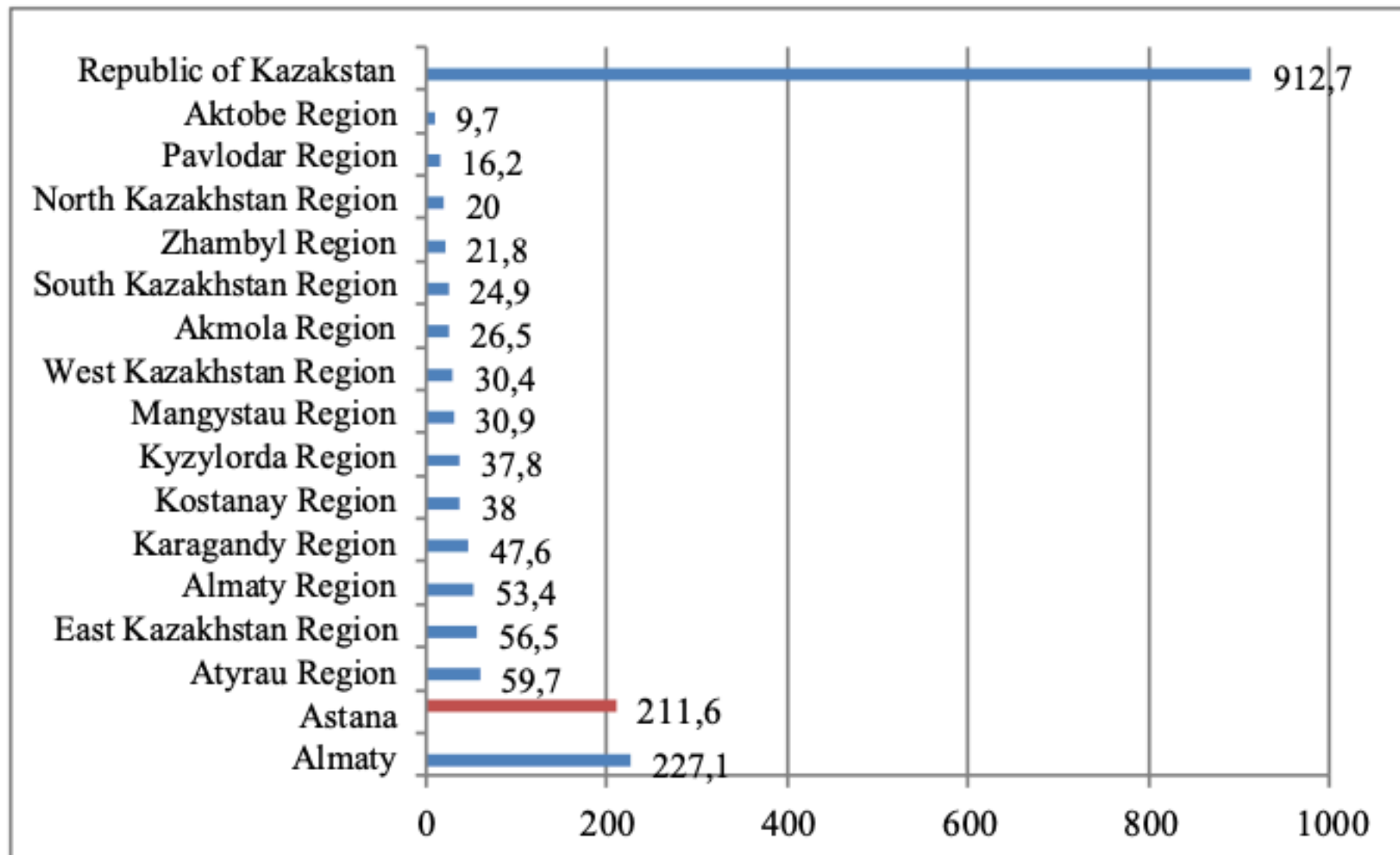
According to the following category - business and professional goals, in general, growth in the RK for the period from 2012-2016, with a slight decline in 2015, was recorded, constituting a basic growth rate of 33.19%.

The city of Astana is also characterized by a tendency to increase the number of non-resident tourists with professional and business travel purposes for the period analyzed, with a slight decrease in 2013 in relation to 2012. The number of visitors in this category grew from 93.6 thousand people in 2012 to 176.9 thousand people in 2016, increasing by 89% in total.

Summing up the number of non-residents for the entire period for the corresponding purposes of travel, we have

the following: for Kazakhstan - the number of non-residents traveling for personal purposes - 484.12 people, with professional and business purposes - 2 714.93 thousand people. Thus, the excess of the number of "business" non-resident tourists over the number of non-residents having personal travel purposes is 5.6 times. According to Astana, the total number of non-residents traveling for personal purposes reached 101.81 thousand people, less than the number of non-residents with business and professional at 6.25 times, the absolute value of which was fixed at 636.74 thousand people. Thus, it can be concluded that if among the residents the distribution by purpose of travel is fairly uniform, then among the non-residents the most popular trips are for business and professional purposes.

Figure 3
Distribution of inbound visitors' expenditures for January 2016 in regional breakdown, million tenge



Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics for 2016

When considering the data about quantity of visitors of Kazakhstan overall, or Astana in particular, it is interesting to know how much money those tourists spend in these days which is illustrated on the Figure 3. It demonstrates that tourism receipts in Astana in January 2016 amounted to 930 thousand tenge. According to the Metropolitan Tourism Association, in the first half of 2015, 491 entry visitors participated in a sample survey of the costs of services during the trip. In the gender aspect, 371 (75.6%) men and 120 (24.4%) women participated in the survey from the total number of non-residents. Non-residents who took part in the survey spent 53.2 million tenge on the territory of Astana including: transportation costs for international flights amounted to 23.5 million tenge. The number of inbound visitors travelling with personal purposes amounted to 353 people (71.9%) and pursuing business and professional purposes accounted for 138 (28.1%).

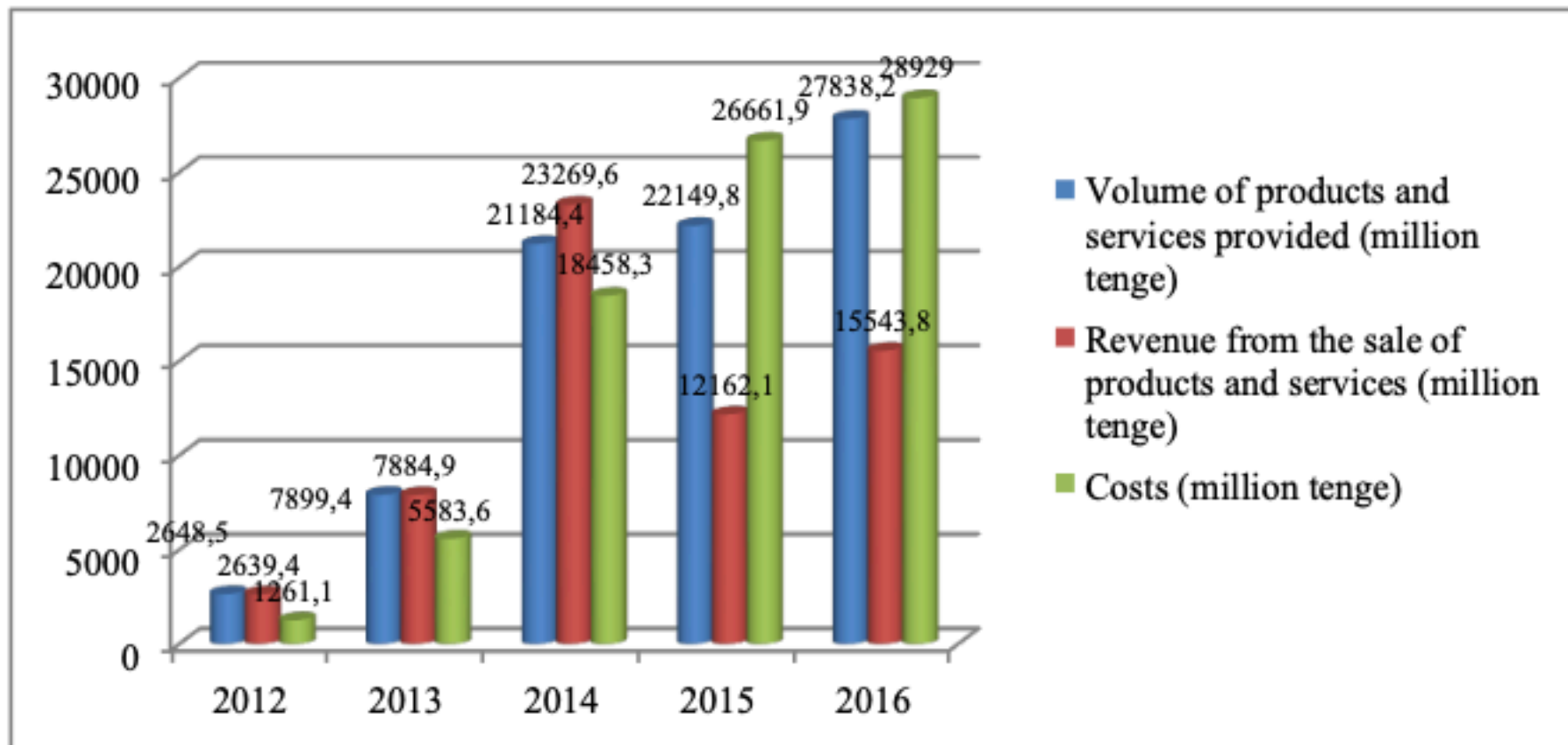
While conducting economic analysis of MICE industry in Astana, it is necessary to consider the quantity of events organized (which is shown on the Figure 4).

Figure 4 illustrates financial and economic indicators of cultural institutions in the organization of MICE between 2009 and 2013 years. Years are shown on the X-axes while the amount of money is illustrated on the Y-axes. Blue column represents volume of products provided, red stands for revenue generated from the sale of products and services, and green column shows costs.

Due to the fact that volume of products and services provided increased sharply from 2012 to 2016 years, it is obvious that number of meetings, incentive tours, conferences and events organized was rising overall in Kazakhstan and particularly in Astana. On the other hand, revenue taken from the organization of MICE had dropped to 12162,1 million tenge from 23269,6 million tenge in 2015. Except the red column of revenue, trend of costs and volume of services provided was almost the same; they were rising gradually between 2012-2016.

Note – compiled by the authors on the basis of the data of the Ministry of national economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on statistics

Figure 4
Financial and economic indicators of cultural institutions in the organization of conferences and trade shows between 2012-2016 years, million tenge



Thus, the development of international tourism in the capital is determined by business activity. The number of tourists making short but frequent trips to Astana is increasing. The rapid development of the national economy and its integration into the world market are simply inconceivable without business tourism. Moreover, it is necessary that it also develop in all directions. It carries a number of positives, while business, cultural, scientific ties become especially tight, and their intensity increases. This is of great importance both on a regional and global scale.

3.1. The main tendencies and problems of the MICE tourism development in Astana

The analysis of the MICE tourism development in Astana allowed identifying the following problems and determining the main directions of development of business tourism in Astana. The results of the study are presented in the Table 3 below.

Table 3
Identified problems and main directions of business tourism development in Astana

Objects	Identified problems	Solutions to problems
Tourism organization	Insufficient number of the tourist companies focused on reception of business tourists in the city and the region	Development of special packages of services focused on MICE tourism
The transport sector	The problem of transport accessibility of a number of attractions, especially suburban, in terms of opportunities to organize large group tours in terms of providing appropriate Parking (Parking) for tourist transport	- Formation of special routes and signs; - creation of special stopping points at the most visited sites of tourist interest
Hotel and restaurant business	- high prices for food and accommodation services, especially in the season, with a low level of quality; - lack of accommodation facilities and catering facilities, focused on the middle and economy class	- construction of new catering facilities and accommodation of economy class
Information support	Underdeveloped information support for tourists, especially foreign tourists	Optimization of work
Exhibition centers and complexes	- A small number of modern world-class exhibition complexes	- Modernization of existing and construction of new complexes
Note – compiled by the authors		

According to the Table 4, the main components of effective, high-quality activities of the company in tourism and

competent management are considered to be the staff, management and resources (key positions, communications in the areas of sales of air, rail, hotels, accreditation, etc.).

As we can see from Table 4, training of personnel in tourism is an important and fundamental issue. Employees in the industry are considered to be the most important part of the product, cannot be an auxiliary component, the main of the basic competitive advantages, the quality of service in the organizations directly depends on the skill and consciousness of employees.

The training of such personnel is also aimed at the active attempts of Kazakhstani specialists-practitioners of tourism, in particular within the boundaries of the Kazakhstan Association of business tourism agencies, aimed at creating a special school of tourism, the organization of its activities on the basis of a specially created together with domestic universities program. This program determines the receipt of theoretical and practical knowledge directly from domestic and foreign teachers, defines internships, employment in travel agencies and organizations.

The general educational and research activity of MICE and universities in the field of tourism is important, within the framework of which it is important:

- To track trends in the creation of business tourism, meetings industry in Kazakhstan, its regions and other countries of the world;
- To develop programs for education in tourism, to publish methodical literature, manuals using communication technologies: audio, video lectures, research of business games, etc.;
- To carry out business events, research industry associations, to create study tools (software, questionnaires, etc.) for use in the resolution of problems;
- To establish an international exchange of specialists in MICE tourism, the main in this area;
- Invite tourism practitioners, entrepreneurs to speak at such business schools at practical conferences.

The world is engulfed in continuous learning. It is necessary to assume that education will be more interesting, attractive, practical and will lose the academic flavor.

The problems that strongly inhibit the improvement of business tourism in Kazakhstan are the high level of open benchmarking, comparison of the efficiency of business processes with the necessary indicators.

Benchmarking is a way to study the activities of business entities, especially competitors, in order to use their positive experience in their work. Organizations solve the problem by participating in exhibitions. They are a powerful mechanism of benchmarking, the main channel of communication.

It should be remembered that with careful preparation, professional implementation of the exhibition, post-exhibition work, the price of reaching contacts, the results are 5 times lower than during the use of other activities, for example advertising. It is necessary to exclude from practice underestimation of the importance of exhibitions, participation in business programs.

It is necessary to formulate such main directions of improvement of tourism in Kazakhstan:

1. Recognition of importance, understanding of tourism as an industry, specialty on the country criteria.
2. Development, implementation of programs to support and stimulate the industry.
3. Professional training, retraining, advanced training of such personnel.
4. Further improvement of business and tourism infrastructure.
5. Competent, active promotion of domestic business tourism (exhibitions, congress events, seminars, media, etc.) (Benchmarking as a function of market research).
6. Development, optimization of the general calendar of domestic industry events, exhibitions.
7. Improvement of broad cooperation in many areas, within the boundaries of major industry exhibitions, the work of global associations, expert committees.
8. The emergence of a legal framework to improve domestic business tourism.
9. Development of data collection and analysis.
10. Simplification of formalities associated with the travel arrangements and the implementation of the convention and exhibition activities.

The development of inbound tourism is an economic priority. For many regions of Kazakhstan, inbound tourism can be a major step in the development of the economy. In this regard, a program was developed to serve foreign business tourists.

4. Conclusions

Today's market has become disproportionately more general than several decades ago. On the one hand, financial activities and business acquire a more international character, and with the development of business contacts, tourist flows expand, interethnic and cultural ties are strengthened, and a surge in business activity and investment flows is observed. In this context, business tourism is a factor contributing to the development of Kazakhstan's economic potential and its integration into the world community, and, importantly, having high profitability. On the other hand, the progress and integration of the national economy is also inconceivable without the scope of business tourism. This is one of the actual resources for the development of enterprises and companies, strengthening their positions in the Republic of Kazakhstan and international markets through participation in exhibitions and congresses, through business education.

It should be noted that the costs of a business traveler on average triple the costs of an ordinary tourist. As the economic research shows, unlike other types of tourist trips, business tourism provides year-round loading of hotel enterprises, which is especially important during the low season. In times of any economic downturns and crises, the sphere of business tourism suffers the least, and sometimes even increases its volumes. On average, the service of corporate business tourists brings hotels up to 40-50% of income and significantly increases their competitiveness. Such indicators are typical for business hotels with a developed infrastructure of related services.

All this makes MICE tourism one of the leading and most developing branches of the world economy, which makes it possible to recognize it as an economic phenomenon of the 20th and 21st centuries. Overall, having performed in depth evaluation of MICE tourism in Kazakhstan and abroad, it may be concluded that Western corporations have lengthy mastered this type of events as commercial enterprise tourism. However, Europe continues to occupy a leading position in the variety of MICE journeys.

In present times, tour operators of Kazakhstan are skeptical. Only a few travel companies offer MICE tourism as a separate direction. This is due to the reality that in Kazakhstan MICE tourism started out to expand inside the closing vicinity among all sorts of tourism and is currently at the improvement level. Tour agencies are guided typically by the requests of clients. They are able to offer a business excursion or prepare a collective trip inside the framework of the individual tour; however, as a separate sort of traveler offerings to promote MICE tourism is unprofitable.

In any case, MICE tourism in Astana can be a very profitable direction but that is the simplest within the very remote future. MICE tourism in Astana without delay relies upon on the improvement of domestic tourism in general, that is, the nation itself ought to be interested in the development of domestic tourism. The analysis revealed the problems of MICE development. First of all, the need to improve the professionalism of the staff. To date, there are almost no educational programs that provide basic education for specialists in this industry. Basically, everything is limited to some courses to improve professional skills or retraining.

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