

KEY DRIVERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GABALA: TOURISM AND INNOVATION

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This article explores the role of tourism and innovation as key drivers of entrepreneurship in Gabala, Azerbaijan. Located in a scenic region, Gabala has become one of the most dynamic tourism areas in the country, attracting both domestic and international visitors through investments in infrastructure and cultural heritage. This study highlights the development of Gabala's tourism sector, including the creation of modern facilities such as hotels, resorts, cable cars, and sports venues, which enhance the region's appeal. With a focus on an innovative approach, the article discusses the integration of digital technologies to improve tourist services, enhance accessibility, and attract eco-friendly startups to the area. The article also includes a comparative analysis of tourism practices in other countries, such as the UAE, Turkey, and Georgia, to identify successful strategies that could be adapted to Gabala's tourism sector. Key recommendations are presented, including the development of digital tools such as mobile applications, interactive kiosks, IoT-based visitor management systems, eco-tourism platforms, and targeted digital marketing initiatives. By leveraging both innovation and international best practices, Gabala has the potential to establish itself as a year-round tourist destination, thus boosting local entrepreneurship and contributing to Azerbaijan's economic growth.

The Gabala tourism zone, located in a picturesque region of Azerbaijan, is one of the country's fastest-growing areas for tourism. Over recent years, due to investments in tourism infrastructure and cultural heritage, Gabala has become an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists. The development of the Gabala area is focused on creating modern conditions for leisure and wellness, including the construction of hotels, resorts, cable cars, and sports facilities. Numerous tourist routes in the region lead to historical monuments, nature reserves, and mountain ranges. An essential part of Gabala's tourism includes cultural and sports events, such as the annual international music festival, which attracts many visitors [1-3]. The future prospects of the Gabala tourism zone are linked to expanding an innovative approach, including the integration of digital technologies to improve service quality and increase the accessibility of tourism services. New platforms and applications are emerging, allowing tourists to plan routes, book tours and hotels, and utilize virtual guides. This promotes entrepreneurial activity in the region and attracts startups focused on eco-tourism and sustainable development. The future development of the Gabala tourism zone aims to increase the number of international partnerships, improve transportation

accessibility, and create new entertainment and educational projects that will help attract visitors year-round.

Azerbaijan is actively developing its tourism sector, aiming to become an attractive destination for international tourists by leveraging its unique cultural, historical, and natural resources. The successful promotion of Azerbaijan as a tourist destination is strengthened through national holidays, festivals, and infrastructure modernization, including transportation and hospitality sectors (Table 1).

Table 1 - Comparative Analysis

Criteria	Azerbaijan	UAE	Turkey	Georgia
Main focus areas	Eco-tourism, cultural tourism, event tourism (Formula 1), wellness tourism	Luxury tourism, event tourism, business tourism	Cultural tourism, beach tourism, medical tourism, all-inclusive system	Eco-tourism, gastronomic tourism, cultural heritage
Infrastructure	Improvement of transport and hotel infrastructure, creation of ski resorts and balneological centers	Development of world-class attractions hotels, and malls	Developed infrastructure in coastal areas, large hotel complexes	Improved roads, development of small hotels, infrastructure for eco- and gastro-tourism
Support measures	Government support, promotion through national holidays, international festivals	Government initiatives to attract investment, innovations, and incentives in tourism	Incentives for investors, programs to promote medical tourism	Visa facilitation, support for small businesses in tourism
Events	International festivals, sports competitions	Exhibitions, festivals, international sports events	Annual festivals sports events	Cultural events, wine festivals, event tourism
Innovations	Integration of digital technologies	High level of technological innovation in service and security	Promotion through online platforms, digital transformation in hospitality	Use of digital platforms for tourism promotion

This table highlights key areas and results of tourism development in Azerbaijan and several leading countries, demonstrating opportunities to adapt international experience to the country's unique characteristics and needs.

To develop tourism in Gabala, the following digital and innovative solutions are proposed:

1. Mobile application for tourists – An app with interactive maps, routes, and recommendations for attractions, along with options for booking tours, hotels, and restaurants, and obtaining discounts on services.
2. Interactive information kiosks – Installation of kiosks with touch screens in key tourist areas to provide quick access to information in multiple languages.

3. Smart tourist flow management systems – Use of IoT sensors to monitor congestion in tourist areas and manage visitor flow, preventing overcrowding and enhancing comfort.

4. Eco-tourism platform – An online platform offering eco-friendly tours, information on local natural attractions, and services by local guides, supporting sustainable tourism.

5. Digital marketing and promotion – Active use of social media, virtual tours, and interactive content to promote Gabala to international tourists.

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DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIG DATA TECHNOLOGIES

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This article explores the development of innovative entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan through the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data technologies. It highlights the relevance of adopting these technologies to enhance the competitiveness of the economy, create new job opportunities, and stimulate the growth of startups. Special attention is given to the need for government support, the establishment of appropriate digital infrastructure, and the development of educational programs to train specialists. The article also analyzes international experiences, focusing on successful cases of AI and Big Data utilization in various countries, as well as potential opportunities for Azerbaijan in this field. The conclusion presents a comprehensive strategy, including measures for building an effective innovation ecosystem, integrating new technologies into public services, and promoting partnerships with international companies and startups.

The "Development of Innovative Entrepreneurship Using Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Technologies" centers on the concept that digital technologies are becoming the foundation for business and economic transformation. In recent years,