

Tour Operators' Forum on the Silk Road
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“Development of Tourism on the Silk Road:



VISA, BORDERS & LOGISTICS”

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Silk Road Countries in Central Asia



Key obstacles of CA countries as destination

Main

- Visa
- Borders
- Logistics

Secondary

- Marketing
- Infrastructure
- Investments



MAIN obstacles of destination



Visas

- ❧ Impossible to obtain visa upon arrival at the country borders except for Turkmenistan.
- ❧ Heavy process to obtain visas for all CA republics upon arrival, for example in Tashkent. Since consular sections are not working everyday it takes up to 3 days to issue the visa to one country.
- ❧ Visa fees are reasonably high comparing to other destinations, to visit all Central Asian countries.

MAIN obstacles of destination

Borders

- ❧ No special check points or counters for tourists (Fast Track)
- ❧ No English speaking staff at the borders
- ❧ No porter services in Buffer zone
- ❧ No Public Transport from borders to city centers for FIT's
- ❧ No facilities like phone or toilet, internet access at the check points
- ❧ No information in English or other foreign languages
- ❧ Borders are not working 24 hour



MAIN obstacles of destination

Logistics

- ❧ Weak roadside infrastructure
- ❧ Absence of low-cost airlines for CA route
- ❧ High tariffs for air tickets on all major carriers
- ❧ Lack of express trains between major cities as alternative to flights.
- ❧ Weak appearance of Silk Road Brand



Proposed Solutions



Visa

- ❧ **Option 1:** Unique tourist visa for all Central Asia countries, code T-SR (Silk Road) 1 month multiple entry validity. For ex: if tourist has such visa to Uzbekistan, he should also be able to travel to other 4 countries with same visa. Each country Consular fee paid on arrival on spot.
- ❧ **Option 2:** Recommend to country authorities to simplify the procedure of getting visa up to 2 days for tourists who already obtained visa of one of 5 CA countries - Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan & Turkmenistan. For this purpose, CA governments approve list of countries which tourists fall under this procedure.
- ❧ Obtain entry visa at the country borders.
- ❧ Special low-cost visa Fee for TSR



Proposed Solutions



Borders

- ❧ Special check points or counters for tourists
- ❧ English speaking staff at the borders
- ❧ Allow to escort in buffer zone (for guides, drivers with
- ❧ badges)
- ❧ Public Shuttle service from borders to the city-center
- ❧ First aid facilities
- ❧ Signs & Boards in English
- ❧ Working hours 06am-Midnight



Proposed Solutions



Logistics and Investments

- ✧ More flights between major cities within CA republics.
- ✧ More direct flights to major world cities in Western Europe, APAC region
- ✧ Recommend major air carries of CA to conduct & sign mutual local Special-Pro-Rate-Agreements (SPA) to let tourists have all flights on CA route in one ticket issued on preferable airline. For ex: Rome - Tashkent - Urgench - Tashkent - Bishkek - Almaty - Rome on Uzbekistan Airways.
- ✧ Improve the roadside infrastructure
- ✧ Express trains between CA capitals as an alternative to flights



Proposed Solutions



Creation of new “5Stan’s” branding.

- Week appearance of “Silk Road” Brand allows to recommend for creation separate “5Stans” brand for 5 CA countries – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan & Turkmenistan.
- To develop official logo for new brand & initiate of its use by all Tour Operators of Central Asia.
- To promote new logo through advertisement campaigns on TV, Media, Information materials & e.t.c.
- Participation on united CA countries stand on WTA & ITB by Tour Operators representing the country under new “5Stans” brand & logo.



Possible Ways



- ❧ UNWTO recommendations to CA Republics on Boarder Crossing
- ❧ UNWTO recommendations to CA Governments on Unique Silk Road Tourist Visa
- ❧ UNWTO support at Worldwide arena promoting Silk Road Brand & New “5Stans” Brand
- ❧ Joint cooperation of National Tourism Boards with UNWTO
- ❧ Executive Training Programs for National Tourism Board staff



Thank you and Welcome to Central Asia

