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Article

Institutional Governance Systems and Development Mechanisms of Tourism Destinations: A Comparative Analysis of Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand

Bekberganov Izzat Hurmat o'g'li*¹

1. Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies Doctoral student of the Department of Foreign Economic Activities

Abstract: Institutional governance is a critical factor influencing the competitiveness, sustainability and development of tourism destinations. Effective destination governance requires coordination among government institutions, tourism businesses, local communities, investors and other stakeholders. This study comparatively examines the institutional governance systems and development mechanisms of tourism destinations in Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand. The research applies institutional, comparative and content analysis methods using academic literature, national tourism institutions and international policy reports. The analysis focuses on institutional architecture, strategic coordination, destination management, stakeholder participation, investment, marketing, digitalisation and sustainability. The findings indicate that Türkiye has developed a relatively integrated model combining central tourism governance, destination promotion and sustainability mechanisms; Egypt relies more strongly on centralized coordination supported by public-private consultation and financial instruments; while Thailand demonstrates a more decentralized and multi-level governance model emphasizing local participation, community-based tourism and digital management. Despite these differences, all three countries demonstrate a transition from traditional administrative management toward coordinated, stakeholder-oriented and destination-based governance. The study concludes that Uzbekistan can benefit from adapting selected elements of these models, particularly destination-level coordination, public-private partnerships, sustainability mechanisms and digital tourism governance.

Keywords: tourism destination, institutional governance, destination management, tourism policy, stakeholder cooperation, destination competitiveness, Türkiye, Egypt, Thailand

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1. Introduction

Tourism destinations represent complex socio-economic systems in which natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, businesses, public institutions and local communities interact. Therefore, destination competitiveness depends not only on the availability of tourism resources but also on the capacity of institutions to coordinate stakeholders, mobilize investment, provide infrastructure, manage tourism impacts and develop competitive tourism products. The growing complexity of tourism has increased the importance of destination governance. Contemporary tourism governance increasingly involves cooperation between

national and local governments, destination management organizations (DMOs), businesses, communities and other stakeholders. UN Tourism emphasizes that effective destination management requires coordination, collaboration, stakeholder participation and adequate institutional capacity. Similarly, the OECD identifies multi-level governance, stakeholder engagement, digitalisation, sustainability and destination-level management as major directions of contemporary tourism policy. Destination Management Organizations have an important role in this process because they can connect national tourism policy with destination-level implementation. Volgger and Pechlaner argue that networking capability and organizational authority are important determinants of DMO effectiveness and destination governance. Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand provide useful cases for comparative analysis because all three have internationally significant tourism sectors but different institutional governance arrangements. Türkiye combines strong central tourism administration with the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), destination promotion and sustainability certification. Egypt has a highly centralized tourism governance structure supported by national promotion institutions, financial mechanisms and private-sector consultation. Thailand has developed a more diversified governance structure involving national institutions, local authorities, tourism organizations and communities [1].

The research objective is to identify the main institutional characteristics and development mechanisms of tourism destinations in Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand and determine which practices could be adapted to strengthen destination governance in Uzbekistan [2].

The study addresses three questions:

1. How are tourism governance systems institutionally organized in the three countries?
2. What mechanisms connect institutional governance with destination development?
3. What international practices are potentially applicable to Uzbekistan?

2. Materials and Methods

The study employs a qualitative comparative research design based on institutional, systemic and comparative approaches. Content analysis was used to examine tourism governance structures, policy documents and institutional responsibilities. The principal international source is the OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2026, supplemented by official information from national tourism institutions and academic publications. For comparative purposes, eight dimensions of institutional governance were selected:

Table 1. Dimensions of Institutional Governance Used for Comparative Analysis

N	Dimension	Main analytical focus
1	Institutional architecture	National, regional and local institutions
2	Strategic governance	Tourism strategies and policy coordination
3	Destination management	DMO and destination-level structures
4	Stakeholder participation	Government-business-community cooperation
5	Investment	Public, private and PPP mechanisms
6	Marketing	Destination branding and promotion
7	Digitalisation	Data systems and digital management
8	Sustainability	Environmental, cultural and social management

The analytical assumption is that institutional governance affects destination competitiveness indirectly by improving coordination, investment mobilization, infrastructure, innovation, stakeholder participation and sustainable resource management. The conceptual relationship can therefore be expressed as: Institutional governance → coordination → investment and resource mobilization → destination development → attractiveness and competitiveness → tourism and socio-economic outcomes.

3. Result

Türkiye has a strongly coordinated national tourism governance structure. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the principal institution responsible for tourism policy, development and regulation. An important institutional innovation is the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), established in 2019 to strengthen Türkiye's international tourism brand and promote tourism destinations and products. TGA has contributed to integrating destination promotion with tourism development. Its activities extend beyond traditional international marketing and include destination development and provincial promotion. This creates stronger connections between national tourism strategy and individual destinations. Sustainability has also become institutionalized through the Türkiye Sustainable Tourism Program, which establishes criteria related to sustainable management, socio-economic impacts, cultural heritage and environmental protection. Consequently, the Turkish model can be characterized by: central strategic coordination + destination promotion + private-sector participation + sustainability governance. Its principal strength is the integration of tourism marketing, destination development and sustainability within a coordinated institutional framework [3].

Egypt represents a comparatively centralized tourism governance model. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is responsible for tourism policy, regulation and development, while the Egyptian Tourism Authority performs major promotional functions. A significant element of the Egyptian model is the existence of dedicated financial mechanisms supporting tourism and antiquities. The Egyptian Tourism and Antiquities Support Fund can support promotional activities, heritage conservation, infrastructure and crisis-related measures. Egypt has also developed mechanisms for private-sector participation. Government-level tourism coordination and advisory mechanisms provide opportunities for tourism businesses and representative organizations to participate in policy discussions [4]. The Egyptian institutional model can therefore be expressed as: central government coordination + tourism promotion + financial support + public-private consultation. Its main advantage is the ability of central institutions to coordinate tourism policy and mobilize resources at the national level. However, compared with more decentralized systems, stronger destination-level and community-based governance remains an important area for further development [5].

Thailand demonstrates a more diversified and multi-level tourism governance structure. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports provides strategic direction, while the Department of Tourism, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration perform specialized functions. The National Tourism Policy Committee provides an important coordination mechanism, while the Tourism Council of Thailand represents private-sector interests. Regional and local authorities also participate in infrastructure, destination development, safety and community-based tourism. Thailand's tourism development policy places considerable emphasis on balancing economic, social and environmental objectives. Its "People-Profit-Planet" approach illustrates the integration of community welfare, economic value creation and environmental sustainability [6]. Another important feature is digital governance. Thailand has developed tourism databases and increasingly uses data

and artificial intelligence to improve evidence-based tourism management. The Thai model can therefore be summarized as: multi-level governance + stakeholder participation + community involvement + digital management + sustainability. Its major strength is the integration of national policy with local destination management and community participation [7].

The comparative analysis demonstrates both differences and common tendencies.

Table 2. Comparative Institutional Governance Profiles of Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand

N	Governance dimension	Türkiye	Egypt	Thailand
1	Central coordination	Strong	Very strong	Strong
2	Destination-level governance	Strong/developing	Moderate	Strong
3	Private-sector participation	Strong	Institutionalized	Strong
4	Community participation	Increasing	Developing	Strong
5	Tourism promotion institution	TGA	Egyptian Tourism Authority	TAT
6	Investment mechanisms	Developed	Strong	Diversified
7	Sustainability	Highly institutionalized	Strategic priority	Integrated
8	Digital governance	Developing	Developing	Advanced
9	Governance dimension	Türkiye	Egypt	Thailand

Source: compiled by the author based on OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2026 and official tourism institutions.

The first common tendency is the transition from traditional government administration toward collaborative governance. Second, destination-level management is becoming increasingly important. Third, private-sector and community participation is gaining institutional recognition. Fourth, sustainability is becoming an integral component of tourism policy rather than a separate environmental issue. Fifth, digital technologies and tourism data are increasingly being incorporated into destination management. These tendencies correspond with broader international developments in tourism governance identified by the OECD [8].

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that effective destination governance depends not simply on the number of tourism institutions but on their coordination capacity and ability to transform policy into destination-level outcomes. Türkiye illustrates the benefits of integrating national tourism promotion with destination development and sustainability [9]. The establishment of TGA has strengthened institutional capacity for destination branding and international promotion, while sustainability criteria provide an institutional mechanism for managing tourism impacts. Egypt demonstrates the importance of centralized coordination and financial mechanisms [10]. A strong national institutional structure can facilitate large-scale investment, infrastructure development, heritage conservation and international tourism promotion. However, stronger decentralization and local stakeholder participation could further improve destination-level governance. Thailand provides particularly relevant lessons concerning multi-level governance [11]. The participation of national institutions, local authorities, private businesses and communities creates a broader governance network. Its development of tourism databases and AI-supported management also demonstrates the

importance of evidence-based destination governance [12]. The comparative results suggest that no single foreign model should be directly transferred to another national context. Institutional systems depend on legal, administrative, economic and social conditions. Therefore, foreign experience should be adapted according to national institutional capacity [13].

For Uzbekistan, three elements appear particularly relevant:

1. Destination-level coordination: strengthening institutions responsible for managing individual tourism destinations and coordinating local stakeholders.
2. Public-private partnership: increasing the participation of tourism businesses and investors in destination planning and development.
3. Digital and sustainability governance: establishing destination-level data systems, tourism performance indicators and sustainability standards [14].

On this basis, an adapted institutional mechanism can be proposed:

National tourism strategy → regional destination governance → stakeholder network → investment and infrastructure → digital monitoring → sustainable destination competitiveness.

Such a mechanism would combine strong national strategic coordination with greater destination-level flexibility [15].

5. Conclusion

Institutional governance represents an important foundation for the long-term competitiveness and sustainable development of tourism destinations. The comparative analysis of Türkiye, Egypt and Thailand demonstrates that successful tourism governance increasingly depends on coordination between government institutions, tourism businesses, local communities and other stakeholders.

Türkiye demonstrates a relatively integrated model based on central strategic governance, destination promotion and sustainability. Egypt emphasizes centralized coordination, financial support and public-private consultation. Thailand provides a more multi-level model characterized by local participation, community-based tourism, digital governance and sustainability.

Despite institutional differences, the three countries demonstrate several common development trends: stronger destination-level management, increased stakeholder participation, integration of sustainability, greater attention to investment and infrastructure, and expanding use of digital technologies. The principal implication for Uzbekistan is that international experience should be adapted rather than copied. An effective national system should combine central strategic coordination with destination-level management, stakeholder participation, investment facilitation, digital monitoring and sustainability mechanisms. Thus, the proposed institutional development framework can be summarized as: Strategic governance + destination management + stakeholder cooperation + investment + digitalisation + sustainability = competitive tourism destination. Future research should quantify these institutional dimensions and construct a Tourism Destination Institutional Governance Index to empirically examine the relationship between governance quality, tourism investment, tourist arrivals, tourism receipts and socio-economic development.

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