

Regional innovative tourism products *Entrepreneurship programme*



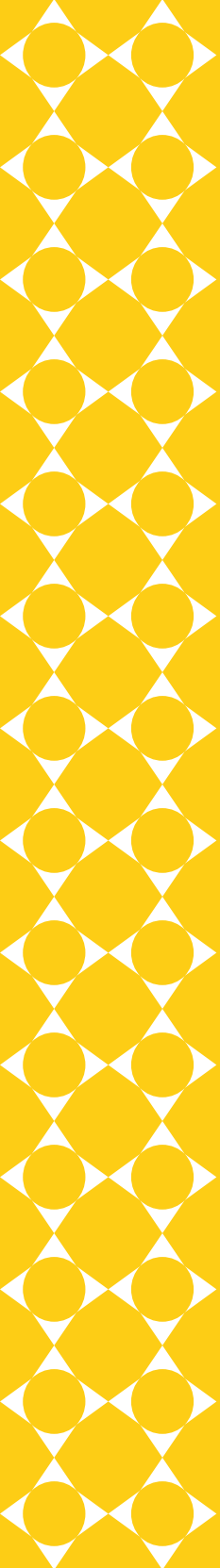
State Tourism Agency of
the Republic of Azerbaijan



azerbaijan
TOURISM BOARD



RITM
Regional Innovative
Tourism Product



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The State Tourism Agency and Azerbaijan Tourism Board’s Regional Tourism Entrepreneurs’ Progamme, branded “Regional Innovativ Turizm Məhsulu” (RİTM), aims to foster the sustainable development and revitalisation of the tourism and hospitality industry, through the creation of new businesses and employment opportunities in the regions of Azerbaijan and in Baku, with research indicating there is significant room to further enhance and diversify visitor experiences.

Purpose and *objectives*



The overall purpose of RiTM is to generate new interest and investment in tourism, and support the government to develop vibrant attractive & dynamic tourism experiences, products and activities in Azerbaijan's regional areas.

Key specific objectives of the programme include:

- To increase the number of tourism entrepreneurs and tourism products.
- To build regional capacities in tourism MSME development.
- To attract investors and IT engineers to sponsor and create innovative small business tourism products.

LOCATION

The RiTM programme is focused on the priority regional tourism corridors, clusters and regions of Azerbaijan prioritised in STA / ATB's Regional Tourism Strategy 2020-2023.

Start-up concepts that connect with the cities and their connected districts identified on the map are considered eligible for inclusion in the programme.

The cities marked with a pin are, in addition, designated as RiTM hub cities, and are the place where all the main events, incubation processes, and mentorship support happens. The cities (and their connected districts) marked with a dot, on the other hand, are places where we are also more broadly focused.



Key beneficiaries



Regional students and youth



Local community members with start-up ideas



Local unemployed people passionate about their region and tourism



IT sector members



People with disabilities

For partners and sponsors the programme will:

- Fulfill for partners' and sponsors' strategies for regional development and corporate social responsibility
- Provide access to numerous entrepreneurship-oriented activities and events
- Generate significant PR and media attention and position the sponsor / partner as a leader in the tourism sector
- Will give opportunity to be one of the first companies to invest in the establishment and benefit from the growth of the new tourism start-ups

For government and local communities the programme will:

- Increase employment in regional areas through the development of new or improved experiences, services, and ways of doing things that generate increased sales and income
- Involve women and youth who are sometimes not a strong part of the regional workforce
- Help mitigate rural-urban shift and social pressures placed on the capital city Baku
- Improve capacities of local people in business



Components of RiTM

COMPONENTS OF RiTM

1. Research and awareness campaign

During this stage tourism product gaps and visitor profiles are analysed with priority business opportunities for entrepreneurs identified in each region of Azerbaijan. Following this, a comprehensive range of presentations and meetings will be held in key regional cities to build awareness about RiTM and its benefits.



2. RiTM start-up idea bank and online platform

The tourism business concepts of Azerbaijan’s budding entrepreneurs will be collected and stored in a dedicated “Tourism Idea Bank”, ready for evaluation by a panel of experts. On the other hand, the RiTM online platform will function as a key online hub for the participants to access information, to communicate with each other and with mentors, and to learn about news and events.



3. RiTM start-up competition

The most promising concepts from each region will be selected by a panel of experts who will then have the opportunity to pitch their ideas at the Regional Demo Days. The entrepreneurs who succeed shall then gain access to the RiTM incubation programme.





4. RİTM start-up incubation programme

During the incubation programme entrepreneurs will participate in a comprehensive training programme involving international and local start-up experts, be appointed a personal mentor who shall guide them through the start-up process, and participate in a range of workshops and seminars that will give the entrepreneurs the best chance of success.

5. RİTM digital marathon

Computer programmers and other “techies” will be brought together over a number of months to develop digitally based disruptive ideas or products that can solve a topic or problem relating to the tourism industry in Azerbaijan. Participants will be exposed to a range of workshops and special courses and receive support to build the infrastructure and bring it to life as a viable business.



6. RiTM start-up idea camp

This 2-3-day camping event will involve an intensive programme of workshops and team building and networking activities that will help with the sharing and development of ideas.*

**The implementation of the idea camp will be dependent on the lifting of COVID-19 quarantine restrictions on public gatherings as well as a general stabilisation of working environments.*



7. National finals

The culmination of the programme is the National Finals. Held in Baku, the day brings together the finalists from across the country who shall compete on the stage for a place in the top three and shall be awarded their first financial investment.

Program coverage

clusters



Rural tourism

agritourism,
ecotourism,
etc.



E-commerce

any product selling
platform/app,
etc.



Infrastructure

transportation,
waste management,
etc.



Technology

smart problem
solutions,
etc.



Gastronomy

culinary master classes,
fast food spots, gastronomy
tours, etc.



Tourism and hospitality

accommodation services,
health tourism,
etc.



Tourism experience and products

camping, hiking,
sport activities, etc.



Social development

events calendar, tourism
education and recruitment
platforms, social network etc.



RİTM

subbrands

RİTM SUBBRANDS

Along with the creation of start-up projects in the field of tourism in the regions, the RİTM program will support community-based tourism activities under the RİTM Business sub-program, and the formation of new and diverse tourism products in Baku under the RİTM Baku sub-program.

RİTM Business programme

RİTM will also support existing SMEs through the RİTM Business Programme which will provide Business operators with trainings and seminars that will strengthen or diversify their products.

The goal of the programme is to support local tourism businesses to fill the gaps in the regional packages and tour itineraries of Azerbaijan's tour companies (DMCs).

RİTM Baku

With its dynamic environment and wealth of tourism resources, the RİTM programme is also offered to entrepreneurs in Baku and Absheron through RİTM Baku, a dedicated sub-brand of the programme. Participants of RİTM Baku gain access to the same range of components and benefits of the RİTM start-up programme, including focusing on business concepts that can fill priority tourism product gaps, and the opportunity to compete for an angel investment prize. Due to their stronger access to education, resources, and a unique citybased product mix, RİTM Baku participants will however progress through the start-up process in parallel to the regional program and need to meet a higher level of entry requirements as well as submit more developed or sophisticated business concepts. To balance these additional requirements, the prizes offered to RİTM Baku participants will likewise be higher.



Outcomes



Disclaimer:

RiTM program organizers reserve the right to cancel, postpone or change the content of the program if internal and external conditions affect the effective implementation of the program in the existing format.



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