



GENERAL INFO

Total area: 2680 km² (9% of the total area of Armenia)

Number of communities: 42

Settlements: 131

Urban settlements: 3

- Gyumri
- Artik
- Maralik

rural settlements: 128

border settlements: 15

mountainous settlements: 47

high mountainous settlements: 39

Shirak region is bordered by:

Georgia in the north (48 km)

Turkey in the west (117 km)

Population: 235.400 (the 4th region in Armenia)

Urban: 138000 people

Rural: 97400 people

The center of the Region: Gyumri (population: 114.500, the second largest city in the RA)



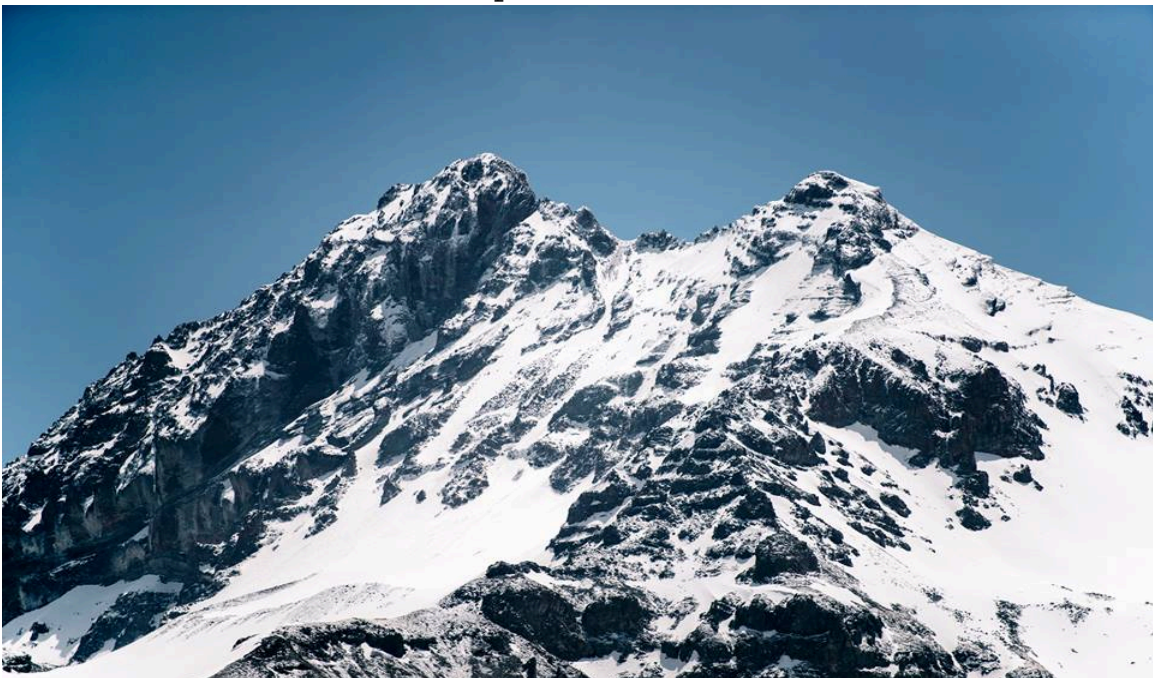
Marmashen monastery in Armenia, located in Shirak region

GEOGRAPHY

Shirak Province occupies the northwestern part of Armenia and covers an area of 2,680 km² (1,035 sq mi) (9% of total area of Armenia). It has borders with Lori Province from the east, Aragatsotn Province from the south, Kars Province of Turkey from the west and Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia from the north.

Historically, the current territory of the province mainly occupies the Shirak canton of Ayrarat province of Ancient Armenia.

Shirak is mainly dominated by the Ashotsk Plateau (1900 to 2100 meters height) at the north and the Shirak Plain (1400 to 1800 meters height) at the centre and south of the province.



Aragats mountain 4090m

The vast plains of the province are surrounded with the Bazum and Pambak mountains from the east, Javakheti Range and YeghnaKhagh

SHIRAK REGION

mountains from the north and the Aragats mass from the south. Akhurian River at the east, separates Shirak from the Kars Province of Turkey. Akhurian River with its reservoir is the main water resource in the province. Lake Arpi at the northwest of Shirak is the only lake of the province. The area is protected by the government as the Lake Arpi National Park.

CLIMATE

Shirak is one of the coldest regions in Armenia with an average daily high temperature of only 11 degrees centigrade. The climate is characterized with cold snowy winters and hot summers. The annual precipitation level can reach up to 700 mm (28 in).

The climate widely corresponds to Central European weather conditions. It is cold, wet and a few beautiful summer months are also happening during a year. Due to the warmer temperatures the best time for traveling is from May to September. Winter athletes will find their favorite weather conditions from December to March.



Gyumri in January

FLORA AND FAUNA

Shirak region has a variety of vegetation, which is conditioned by the peculiarities of natural conditions. The diversity of vegetation is particularly influenced by the surface of the marz. In the Shirak region, the following types of vegetation follow one another:

1. Mountain steppe vegetation. Formed in temperate and dry climates, it covers a wide area extending from the lower regions of the province up to 2300-2400 m. It has a rich diversity of different types of herbs. Various herbs are used: hornbeam, cormorant, frond, butterfly, bean, as well as wormwood, perennial, etc.
2. Meadow steppe vegetation. It is spread over 2300 m in relatively humid areas, due to it, it is rich lush and juicy grasses. It is divided into two sub-zones: the lower or the subalpine and the upper or the alpine. The subalpine meadows play a transitional

SHIRAK REGION

role and consist of high grasses. This subzone occupies altitudes of 2800-2900m. In the sub-alpine zone, scabies, beans, as well as clover, chutney, cloves, etc are widespread.

The alpine vegetation itself extends over 2800-2900 m. It is covered with large, bright flowers that are often so dense and colorful that they look like carpets and are called "alpine rugs".



In terms of geographical location, the Shirak region lies between the Caucasian and Asia Minor zones. The diversity of fauna is related to the diversity of vegetation. Some animals, due to their mobility, are found in almost all zones. These include rabbit, wolf, fox, weasel, and so on. Some types of animals change in upward zones.

1. The steppe zone is primarily characterized by rodents, such as jerboa, squirrel, blind mouse, etc.
2. There are several species of birds in the sub-alpine and alpine zones: eagle, turkey, sparrow, and lark. There are many insects and butterflies. Among the mammals the wild sheep (mouflon) and the Bezoar goat are sometimes found.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Shirak region is rich with national resources due to the geological diversity of the territory of this province. Tuff, pumice, basalt, andesite, limestone, perlite, limestone, volcanic slag, various clays and many other building materials are widespread in the region. The province takes the first place with the resources of tuff in the country. Artik, Anipemza, Pemzashen and Gyumri tuff mines are best known in the country. The resources of pumice in Shirak province are estimated about 100 million m³. The province is also well known with its resources of diatomite, limestone and different kinds of clays.

HISTORY

Many ancient human settlements were found at the Akhurian valley dating back to around 9000 BC. The territory of Shirak has been settled since the early Stone Age.

In 720 BC, the Cimmerians conquered the region and probably founded the Kumayri

settlement (now Gyumri), which bears phonetic resemblance to the word used by ancient Armenian in reference to Cimmerians. Historians believe that Xenophon passed through the territories of Shirak during his return to the Black Sea, a journey immortalized in his *Anabasis*. By the second half of the 6th century BC, Shirak became part of the Achaemenid Empire. Following the partition of Armenia in 387 between the Byzantines and the Persians, and as a result of the fall of the Arsacid Kingdom of Armenia in 428, the region of Shirak became part of the Sasanian Empire of Persia.

However, Shirak is home to many early examples of the Armenian church architecture dating back to the 5th century, including the Yererouk, the Saint Mariné Church of Artik, and the Hokevank Monastery.

In 658 AD, during the height of the Arab Islamic invasions, Shirak - along with the rest of the Armenian territories - was conquered during the Muslim conquest of Persia, as it was part of Persian-ruled Armenia. It became part of the Emirate of Armenia under the Umayyad Caliphate. However, the Kamsarakan family continued to rule the region under the Arab Islamic rule of Armenia.

By the foundation of the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia in 885, Shirak entered a new era of growth and progress, particularly when the city of Ani of Shirak became the capital of the kingdom in 961. By the second half of the 10th century, Shirak was under the influence of the Armenian Pahlavuni family, who were descendants of the Kamsarakans. The Pahlavunis had a great contribution in the progress of Shirak with the foundation of many fortresses, monastic complexes, educational institutions, etc. The monasteries of Khtzkonk, Harichavank, Marmashen and Horomos were among the prominent religious and educational centers of medieval Armenia.

In 1501, most of the Eastern Armenian territories including Shirak were conquered by the emerging Safavid dynasty of Iran led by Shah Ismail I. In 1837 Russian Tsar Nicholas I arrived in Shirak and re-founded the city of Gyumri as Alexandropol. The name was chosen in honor of Tsar Nicholas I's wife, Princess Charlotte of Prussia, who had changed her name to Alexandra Fyodorovna after converting to Orthodox Christianity. In 1849, the Alexandropol Uyezd became part of the Erivan Governorate, and Shirak became an important outpost for the Imperial Russian armed forces in the Transcaucasus where their military barracks were established.

Under the Bolsheviks, Alexandropol was renamed Leninakan in 1924, after the deceased Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin. Shirak became a major industrial region within the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. Leninakan was the second-largest city, after the capital Yerevan. However, Shirak, and particularly Leninakan, suffered major damage during the 1988 Armenian earthquake which devastated many parts of northern Armenia. The earthquake occurred along a known thrust fault with a length of 60 kilometers (37 mi). Its strike was parallel to the Caucasus range and dipped to the north-northeast.

From 1930 until 1995, modern-day Shirak was divided into 5 regions and 1 city of republican subordination within the Armenian SSR: Amasia, Ghukasyan, Akhurian, Ani, Artik and the city of Leninakan. With the territorial administration reform of 1995, the 5 regions and the city of Gyumri (Leninakan) were merged to form the Shirak Province.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2011 official census, Shirak has a population of 251,941 (121,615 men and 130,326 women), forming around 8.3% of the entire population of Armenia. The urban population is 146,908 (58.3%) and the rural is 105,033 (41.7%). The province has 3 urban and 116 rural communities. The largest urban community is the provincial center of Gyumri, with a population of 121,976. The other urban centers of Artik and Maralik have a population of 19,534 and 5,398 respectively. With a population of 4,838, the village of Azatan is the largest rural municipality of Shirak.

The dialect of Shirak is a variant of Karin dialect, closely related to Western Armenian.

INDUSTRY

During the Soviet period, the region was a major industrial hub within the Armenian SSR. After the independence, the industrial sector of the region has drastically declined. Currently, the province contributes by 3.5% in the annual total industrial product of Armenia. Shirak is the largest producer of building materials in Armenia, mainly tufa stones and pumice.

- The industrial sector in the provincial center Gyumri includes the production of building materials (tufa and basalt), hosiery and textile manufacturing, food processing and dairy products, alcoholic drinks, electronic machines, etc. The largest industrial plant in Gyumri is the Gyumri-Beer Brewery opened in 1972. The factory produces a variety of lager beer under the brands Gyumri, Ararat and Aleksandrapol. The city is also home to the "Factory of Bending Machines" opened in 1912, the "Arshaluys" hosiery manufacturing enterprise established in 1926, the "Karhat" machine tools plant opened in 1959, the "Chap Chemical LLC" since 1999, the "Armtex Group" clothing factory since 2000, and the "Lentex" hosiery manufacturing plant is operating since 2001. Other industrial firms of the city include the "Aleqpol" factory for dairy products, the "Anusharan" confectionery plant, and the "Gold Plast" plant for building materials.



- The town of Artik is famous for its tufa stones. It is home to many stone-processing plants that produce travertine, tufa and basalt,

SHIRAK REGION

including the "ArtikTuf" form established in 1928, the "TufaBlocks Factory" founded in 1997, and the "Karastgh" stone-processing factory operating since 2005. Artik is also home to the "Vartan-Anahit LLC" for metal-plastic products, the Artik Cheese Factory, the "Eliz Group" for dairy products, the "Artik Factory for Vacuum Stoves", and the "Artik Steklomash" metal casting factory.

- During the Soviet period, the town of Maralik had many large industrial firms with a lights and electronics factory and 3 plants for building materials production. Currently, the only surviving plant in the town is the Maralik cotton-spinning factory.
- Factories for dairy products are also found in Shirak, with the largest 2 firms are located in the villages of Azatan (Igit Dairy Factory since 1993) and Musayelyan (Ashotsk Cheese Factory since 1996). The village of Akhuryan is home to the "Lusastgh-Sugar" factory (opened in 2010), the largest sugar producers in the Southern Caucasus region. The village of Shirakavan is home to the "Shirak Wine Factory" opened in 2009.

AGRICULTURE

The economy of the province is mainly based on agriculture, including farming and cattle-breeding. It has a share of 11.6% in the annual total agricultural product of Armenia. Around 80% (2,145.5 km²) of the total area of the province are arable lands, out of which 36.7% (787 km²) are ploughed.

The fertile Shirak plain is the largest producer of grains and potato in Armenia. The irrigation system in the province is highly developed. 9 water reservoirs of different sizes -with a total capacity of 673,000,000 cubic metres (2.38×10¹⁰ cu ft) are able to irrigate around 300 km² (116 sq mi) of farmlands.

Shirak is the 1st among the Armenian provinces in cattle-breeding business. There are also fish farming ponds near Gyumri and many rural communities.



TRANSPORTATION

Air transportation

Shirak is served by the international Shirak Airport, about 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) to the southeast of the Gyumri city center. It was inaugurated in 1961 and is the second largest airport in Armenia.

SHIRAK REGION

It is considered an alternative hub for the Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan.

At the beginning of 2017, the government of Armenia focused on revitalizing the airport. Multiple new airlines began operating flights to the airport, including Taron Avia - a new Armenian airline based in Gyumri, and Pobeda which is a Russian low-cost airline and a wholly owned subsidiary of Aeroflot. In order to attract more customers, the Ministry of Nature Protection made meteorological services free for all airlines flying to Gyumri, lowering ticket costs. The Gyumri Technology Center also participated in helping revitalize the airport by adding interior design details to improve the airport's look.



Shirak airport

Railway

The railway junction of Gyumri is the oldest and the largest one in Armenia. It was formed in 1897 and the first railway link to Alexandropol that connected the city with Tiflis was completed in 1899. The rail line was then extended from Alexandropol to Yerevan (in 1902), Kars (in 1902), Jolfa (in 1906), and Tabriz. As a result, Alexandropol became an important rail hub.

As of 2017, the Gyumri Railway Station operates regular trips to Yerevan and Batumi. The South Caucasus Railway CJSC, is the current operator of the railway sector in Armenia. The Gyumri-Yerevan railway trip has many stops in Shirak Province, including the stations of Bayandur, Shirakavan, Isahakyan, Aghin kayaran, Jrapı, Bagravan and Aniavan.



Gyumri Railway station



Public vans and taxis

Public transport is available in the provincial center Gyumri. It is mainly served by public vans, locally-known as marshrutka. The central station of the city serves as bus terminal for inter-city transport,

SHIRAK REGION

serving outbound routes towards the villages of Shirak, as well as major cities and towns in Armenia and neighboring Georgia.

The M-7 Motorway passes across the province from east to west, connecting the city of Gyumri with the rest of Armenia.

TOURISM DIRECTIONS

Tourism in Shirak region should be developed in a balanced way in the following main directions:

Urban Tourism

Travel companies working in the region state that Old Gyumri make a great impression on tourists.

"Kumayri" State Historical-Architectural Reserve-Museum was founded in 1980 and covers the historic core of Gyumri. The territory of "Kumayri" State Historical-Architectural Reserve covers about 1,000 hectares, with more than 1,100 monuments of history and culture. At present, reconstruction works are being carried out in the historic core of Gyumri.



At the same time, it is necessary to take into account that the presentation of traditional culture should have not only an external component, but also an internal component, which is no less important. Old Gyumri should become a place to get acquainted with national culture and culture of Shirak.

First of all, it should represent local traditions, cuisine, crafts, the history of the region and its people. Foreign tourists almost always want to see the country's traditions.

The restoration of Old Gyumri and its activities as a whole is able to turn Gyumri into one of the priority tourist destinations in the country where the visit can be attractive for every tourist.

The tourists visiting Gyumri should also have an opportunity to get acquainted with the history and cultural life of the city. In this sense, timely and appropriate provision of systematic and accurate "packed" information is important.

The rich history of the city and region, make Gyumri and Shirak region a unique place for tourists interested in urban tourism.

Gyumri has always had its characteristic color, a mixture of old and new, including the heritage of the Soviet era. Gyumri and Shirak region have given a number of famous people, many of whom are well-known outside the country. Many creative people lived and currently live in the city.

SHIRAK REGION



Avetik Isahakyan, Hovhannes Shiraz, Mher Mkrtchyan, Minas Avetisyan, Armen Tigranyan, Guzh Manukyan, Georgy Gurdjieff, Sergei Mercurov and Gusan Sheram were born in Shirak region.

The restoration and integration of the well-known esoteric, philosopher and researcher Gurdjieff's historical and scientific heritage, symposiums related to his life, activity, works and philosophy can provide a large and steady flow of foreign tourists.

Many films that make up the golden stock of Armenian cinematography have been filmed in the city of Gyumri - "The Triangle", "Tango of Our Childhood", "Song of the Ancient Days", "Piece of Sky", "White Dreams", "Heghnar Spring", "Tzhvzhik" (Partial), "Happy Bus", "Dawn of the Sad Street".



The city has a glorious sporting history. Levon Ishtoyan, Alyosha and Furman Abrahamyan, Levon Julfalakyan, Yuri Vardanyan, Robert Emmiyan, Vardan Militosyan, Arthur Alexanyan, Gor Minasyan and many other talented athletes were born here.

Gyumri has its legendary entertainers - Poloz Mucuch, Jgher Khachik and Tsitro Alek.

Rustaveli street in Gyumri, which is part of Kumayri Reserve-Museum and embodies the old Gyumri, has its individual style. The street has been partly renovated and has a unique look.

Cultural, sports, culinary, humorous and other festivals are regularly organized in Gyumri (and in Shirak region) and their number is growing year by year.

There are various historical and cultural centers in the city and in the region - museums, theaters, exhibition halls. There are many

SHIRAK REGION

interesting people living and creating here - painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, craftsmen working on national style and traditions.



The collection, classification and development of a uniform system and mechanism for accurate presentation of information relating to buildings, museums (home-museums), cultural hearths, studios should become one of the most important components of tourism development.

Due to this rich legacy travel companies can afford to organize targeted domestic tourism and offer touristic thematic packages such as film tour, museum tour, studio and workshop tour, folk tour, etc.

Gyumri (Shirak region) with rich cultural and scientific heritage and traditions, as well as developed transportation infrastructure, is a very convenient platform for organizing various scientific, cultural, business meetings, events and festivals. Historical links of the region to other countries and cities can serve as a topic for the discussion. This also can contribute to the increase of the inflow of wealthy tourists to the region.



Thus, the directions outlined in the section and the existing cultural heritage are a powerful basis for the volumetric and contextual expansion and intensive development of urban tourism.

Culinary Tourism (Gastronomic Tourism)

It is known that there are great number of dishes and regional cooking methods of popular dishes in Shirak region.

Not only the famous and traditional dishes (Qyalla, Tatar-Boraki, Stone Kufta, Chanagh, Qhazan-Khorovac, Tail Khashlama, Chortan, Porridges and soups with vegetables and dried fruits, etc.), but also festive dishes prepared for different rituals and holidays (Kaghand Gata, Fasting Dolma, Various Sweets, Festive omelets and pies) historically take a great place in Shirak's native cuisine.

On this basis it is also necessary to restore folk rituals with a great culinary component and give them a commodity character. This can also be an important magnet for tourism.

Another crucial direction for gastronomic tourism is the promotion of the establishment and redeployment of food facilities representing local cuisine - creation of eco-ethnic food facilities.

SHIRAK REGION

Thus, the correct use of the endogenous rich cuisine may be another important advantage for the development of tourism and may serve as a basis for the development of culinary tourism.

It is important to organize "National Cuisine" Festivals and Traditional Household Exhibitions in both Gyumri and other communities of Shirak region.

A separate direction in the development of culinary tourism can be the opening and development of so-called "Lisbon style" markets in Gyumri and other parts of the region. The main idea is that in a certain ethno-concept, not only the sale of traditional fresh foods is organized, but also an interesting basis and an infrastructure base is established for preparing local dishes on the spot, developing folk crafts, organizing cultural events.

Such key spots are very interesting for tourists, especially if we take into account the idea that the most interesting place in the country is the market, rooted in the international tourism culture. Therefore, most tourists, finding themselves in a new settlement, start to look for a market that reflects the local culture.



Historical-Architectural Tourism

There are more than 200 historical monuments in Shirak marz, many of which have a thousand-years-old history and represent both pagan and Christian periods.



Harich monastery complex, Marmarashen monastery, Lmbatavanq, Yereruyq temple, Jrapı inn, Sev fortress, numerous cyclopean castles and pagan monuments are located in the marz.

Dozens of packages can be formed to these directions of the marz, moreover, some historical-cultural monuments (e.g. Harich monastery complex) can serve as a separate sub-direction.



Shirak marz of the Republic of Armenia is rich in pre-Christian ancient sites, tomb fields, fortresses, cyclopean castles, cave complexes and more. Pre-Christian monuments and ancient sites in the marz are numerous, many of them need excavation, improvement, construction or repair of roads leading to them.

It is worth to mention the Benjamin antique farmstead, the primeval spacious settlement between the villages of Horom and Vardagar, the territories, including Urartian cuneiform inscriptions, located in the villages of Spandaryan and Vahramaberd, Haykadzor caves and so on.

The fact of proximity to Ani capital and the opportunity of provision of wide view for observation can contribute to the development of one more popular and interesting direction in the marz.

The most convenient territories and the closest points for the observation of Ani ruins are located in Shirak marz. These directions are very interesting even nowadays, especially among the Armenians who have arrived in Armenia from Diaspora.

In case of proper presentation this direction can be very interesting to both foreigners and domestic tourists.

The historical-architectural tourism direction can be also a base for development of spiritual and pilgrim tourism.



Active Tourism

Active tourism is becoming more and more popular nowadays. Rapid growth of urban population, massive pollution of the environment and the global climate change have led to the fact that demand for this direction has been continuously growing over the past decade and has a strong trend of further development.

One of the features is that urban population, which is the main consumer of products of this tourism branch, are relatively wealthy.

This means that in the case of quality development of active tourism, it is possible to have a considerable and sustainable inflow of funds, as well as a rapid return on investment programs.

Below are the main directions of active tourism:

Agricultural Tourism (Agrotourism)

This direction is rather broad and mixed. It includes several interconnected sub-branches - ecotourism, rural tourism, ethno tourism, ecotourism, travel outside of city.

SHIRAK REGION

As it was mentioned, agricultural tourism is one of the popular directions in the world nowadays. People, especially urban population, are ready to pay in order to live in rural areas for some time, to eat organic and ecologically clean food, to experience nature, to discover new, difficult to access or farther sites.

Many tourists wonder how cows are milked, how sheep, goats are fed, how horseshoes are put for horses, how plowing and sowing, harvest are carried out, how agricultural products are made, what interesting sites there are near rural areas, etc.

Agricultural tourism is a pledge for prosperity for numerous big and small villages, farms, small farmer's economies all over the world. This direction has already greatly developed and has traditions in Europe and North America, and it begins to develop also in Latin America and Asia.

Nowadays agricultural tourism is based on numerous interconnected and popular services, some of which are:

- Provision of active involvement in agricultural works (plowing and sowing, harvest, animals care, milk, processing of agricultural products). Moreover, goat breeding farms are rather respected among tourists due to the delicacy of their products;

- Provision of active recreation in ecologically clean areas which is combined with visits to rural sites and environment, proximity to nature;

- Provision of accommodations in rural houses and/or at small guesthouses in farm territories, and creation of opportunity for a rural population to live a full life;

- Creation of opportunity to participate in traditions, actions, events containing ethnic elements. That is the creation of opportunity to fully get acquainted, participate and directly connect to folk crafts, culture, traditions, rituals, cuisine and dishes, thematic ethno-festivals;

- Bee breeding has been greatly developed, when tourists take part in bee breeding process, taste and/or buy ecologically clean honey and bee products with healing properties;

- The other popular direction is involvement of tourists in olive cultivation. This direction is similar to bee breeding due to its character and outcomes.

Previously mentioned were only some of the services, while agricultural tourism is distinguished by its diversity, broad opportunities and infinite creativity.

Today the marz has all the prerequisites for the development of this direction. There are several climate zones here, which provide the diversity of cultivated and suggested nutritional culture, there are difficult to access, handmade and nature monuments, numerous ecologically clean alpine meadows, beautiful nature sites, developed agricultural infrastructure. Various elements of national culture are preserved in many of villages.

One of the primary measures contributing to the development of this direction can be mentioned: collection, revelation, identification and production of advantageous elements, development and establishment of typical business-models, introduction of service and hygienic standards, solution of the issue of basic knowledge of foreign languages, development and introduction of pricing guidelines, constant organization of trainings, awareness raising and quality control measures.

All-Year-Round Adventure and Sports Tourism

Shirak marz is suitable for both summer and winter tourism development. This is a very important circumstance because the tourism

SHIRAK REGION

field of Armenia is characterized by strictly highlighted seasonality when the flow of tourists drastically declines in winter.

Overcoming the seasonality problem will allow to increase the income of the marz (RA) as well as it will increase the investment attractiveness of the tourism field providing faster returns.



In terms of the development of winter tourism, marz has several indisputable advantages, the main ones of which are: persistent snow in the season, many sunny days in winter which mitigate the factor of cold, suitable natural landscapes for the development of winter sports, developed road-transport infrastructure and geographically favorable location.

As it was mentioned, there are many high, hard-to-reach and virgin sites, natural monuments and alpine zones in the marz. In many difficult-of-access areas there are monuments of pagan era, cyclopien castles, caves and gorges. Arranging hike and camp recreation in these areas can be of great interest and demand among tourists.



Recently the first skiing festival in Armenia was held at the Ashotsk ski center in Shirak marz on the initiative of the European Union Delegation and the Armenian Ski Federation. This is an important precondition for the development of sports tourism in the marz.

The most important component of the development of sub-branch is creation of culture of organization of hiking and appropriate business-models. The marz has great opportunities and hidden potential in this respect. Hikes can be organized to Trchkan Waterfall which is one of the most beautiful natural wonders of northern Armenia, to Arpi Lake, hikes to the Jradzor - Ani caves and other cave settlements in Akhuryan Gorg. In general, several dozens of hiking routes can be developed.

DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES OF THE PROVINCE



Tigran Petrosyan: Governor of Shirak region

Overall vision

To become one of the leading provinces in the Republic of Armenia, ensuring sustainable socio-economic opportunities in the communities, having a competitive economy and a high level of employment.

In order to reach the above-mentioned vision, the following goals are set:

1. To increase the competitiveness of the Shirak region and to diversify the economy based on their internal potential; by 2025 the number of the people having vocational and higher education, non-agricultural formal jobs and active organizations will grow by at least 10%; by 2025 the GDP per capita in Shirak region will exceed the average GDP per capita in the RA which is 60%.

Justification: Shirak region has a clearly expressed monetary development (in 2015, 50% of the economy was agriculture). Such a structure of economy contains risks, and there is a need to promote the development of sectors of the economy that are not directly linked to agriculture, that is, to diversify the economy.

2. Ongoing, comprehensive and sustainable economic growth and a high level of equity in the province, with a particular focus on the least developed areas and border communities, diversification of income sources, and poverty reduction by 10% by 2025.

Justification: Small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) play key role in the development the economy, raising the living standards of the population, forming a middle class, ensuring social and political stability Shirak province. Within the framework of the sustainable economic growth SMEs are to ensure the sustainability of the development of Shirak region making its economy more innovative and flexible. This goal is in line with the objectives 1 and 2 of the Regional Development Strategy 2016-2025.

3. To increase the engagement of the regional and local stakeholders and to improve human resources management skills during the implementation of the regional development policy.

SHIRAK REGION

By 2025 the whole province will be managed by 11-15 consolidated community administrations instead of 79 in 2016.

Justification: High quality human capital and its effective management are very important in the development of modern economy. Human capital, as an individual's ability to generate income, is seen as a primary factor in increasing the effectiveness of the management both in macro and micro levels. In the face of increasing global competition, the key factors for national competitiveness are not land, capital and natural resources, as it was considered in classical economics, but High-quality human resources and scientific potential. This goal is in line with the objective 3 of the Regional Development Strategy 2016-2025.

Overall objective 1

Development of information and communication technologies.

Overall objective 2

Modernization of agricultural technologies and development of rural communities.

Overall objective 3

Promotion and support to the SMEs activities, tourism development.