



VISTAwards!

Vision for Innovation in Sustainable
Tourism Awards

SPOTLIGHT ON
UNSUSTAINABLE TOURISM

REPORTING IRRESPONSIBLE TOURISM



VISTAwards – Examples of Unsustainable Tourism: Submission Form

In the VISTAwards, bad practice as well as good practice is being showcased - a spotlight will highlight nominated tourism-related unsustainable and irresponsible stakeholder actions related to any given destination. Examples might be: a piece of unjust government policy, poor governance, inappropriate property or destination development, corporate greed, harmful environmental business services/practices, oppressive and unfair social behaviour, unsustainable use of technology, etc...

Submit Your Own Example

In order to submit an example of irresponsible or unsustainable tourism activity to the VISTAwards you have to fill in the following information form. The form asks you questions that cover an *Agenda 21*-based analysis of the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and institutional processes of sustainable development in general. The questions focus this broad *Agenda 21 Sustainable Consumption and Production* framework through the lens of the tourism sector-specific *Global Sustainable Tourism Council's* criteria for sustainable tourism, and are formulated according to knowledge needed for preparation of a case for the purposes an EU impact assessment (IA) /, national environmental impact assessments (EIAs), national/regional strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and territorial planning decision support.

Legal Notice

When you submit an Unsustainable Tourism Development Form you should avoid publishing any material which is abusive, vulgar, defamatory, inaccurate, harassing, hateful, threatening, invading of others privacy, or violates any EU or national law.

DestiNet does not accept any responsibility for the content of your information, and you agree to indemnify and hold the Portal and its agents harmless with respect to any legal or financial claim based upon your submission.

Please note that the structure of the form allows for a short summary (Qu11 A and 11B) or more detailed description of the issue (Qu 12 onwards). Therefore allow 20 minutes to 2 hours to fill in the form once you have the information. Read all the questions first, then fill in the form. It is likely that you will not have all the information to hand, but you should answer all compulsory questions (marked with an *asterisk).

A: IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

1. TITLE OF REPORTED IRRESPONSIBLE OR UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY/BUSINESS:*

"Kok-Zhailau" ski resort

2. DATE OF SUBMISSION:* March 3, 2014

UPDATED:

3. INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY:*

Zhamilya Zhukenova

4. REPRESENTATIVE OF (IF APPLICABLE):*

"Protect Kok-Zhailau" Initiative Group

5. CONTACT EMAIL:*

zhamilyazhukenova@gmail.com

6. NAME OF PROJECT/BUSINESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITY:*

"Kok-Zhailau" ski resort / Almaty city council – Tourism office, "Capital Partners" real estate development company

7. ADDRESS:*

4, Republic Square, Almaty, Kazakhstan

8. LOCATION:*

The planned resort is to be located on the territory of Ile-Alatau National Park, Almaty region, Kazakhstan

43°08'32.4"N 77°00'08.2"E

9. WEB ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE):*

<http://www.kokzhailauski resort.com/index.html>, <http://www.almaty.kz/page.php?lang=2>, <http://capitalpartners.ws/en/#!/about>

10. CONTACT PERSON (IF KNOWN):*

Bekzhan Idrissov, press secretary (+7-777-384-7871, e-mail: bidrisov@yandex.ru)

B SUMMARY:*

11A. NATURE OF UNSUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY (-IES)* (Please state nature and extent of the problem(s))

Kok-Jailau valley located to the south of the city of Almaty – is one of the most accessible and beloved recreation places for the residents of Almaty who like hiking, bicycling, skiing, and horse riding tourism.

*Today one of the main ecological problems in Kazakhstan is a plan of officials to build a ski resort on the territory of Ile-Alatau National Park in Kok-Zhailyau gorge – home to a number of globally and locally endangered species listed in the Red Book of Kazakhstan. Plans for construction encompass huge territory up to the border of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which is the prime habitat of extremely rare snow leopard (*Panthera uncia* or *Uncia uncia*), Turkestan lynx (*Lynx lynx isabellinus*), Ibis bill (*Ibidorhyncha struthersii*), *Tetraogallus himalayensis*, Menzbier's Marmot (*Marmota menzbieri*) and others (you may learn more about the issue at http://kzh.kz/?page_id=276, <http://www.greensalvation.org/en/index.php?page=KokJailau>).*

11B. HOW DOES THE ACTION/PROJECT/ACTIVITY DEMONSTRATE IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, ACTIONS OR EFFECTS?*

Meanwhile, the ski resort is only a disguise for the actual plan, which is to build private luxury houses, hotels and a golf-course in the very heart of the National Park. The Almaty Mayor Office and private business interests are lobbying the legislature to make amendments to laws and regulations so that they could not be accused in breaking the law and reach their goals. Our deep concern about this is that not only the integrity of the National Park will be destroyed but the ecology of the city of Almaty, adjacent to the National Park, will be dealt a deadly blow as well. Currently Almaty is rated as # 4 in the list of the most polluted cities in the world by Newsweek. The city gets most of its fresh air and water from the “disputed” part of the National Park.

*Recently the initiators of the ski resort had organized the public hearing for the project, where they had presented the Preliminary Assessment of Impact on the Environment. The document revealed their plans to cut 27 hectares of unique forest on the territory of the National Park. The forest consists of *Picea schrenkiana* that grows on steep mountain slopes and has water conservation and protection functions. Even more, according to the plan, the territory of the resort will be located in the habitat of species, which are classified “Endangered” in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Regardless of all these facts, the local authorities keep lobbying the project unreasonably claiming the resort as not harmful for the National Park.*

C FURTHER DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

12A WHO ARE THE OTHER STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED?*

Citizens of Almaty and Almaty surroundings, Ministry of environment and water resources of Kazakhstan, Ile-Alatau National Park, local and foreign tourists, Almaty city council, Capital Partners, technical-economical specification prepared by: Centre for Remote Sensing and GIS "TERRA", KPMG, Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners Ltd., Kyrgyz Republic.

12B WHAT PART ARE THEY PLAYING? *Please provide details of the issue in the table below. Please describe positive and negative Impacts according to different stakeholders relationship to the issue. If negative, please describe potential mitigating actions.*

Impact analysis	Qualitative assessment/+	Quantitative assessment/+	Alternatives/ Options	Comments
How does the action/project/activity effect socio-economic processes in the local community, alongside other potential economic impacts?	The project is still on consideration despite the fact that it claims protected area for construction. Even more, the latest updates in Kazakhstan economy vote against it – devaluation happened in February 2014 had depreciated local currency up to 23% comparing to USD and Euro. There is no reasonable justification to this turn rather than an attempt to make up a negative gap in country's budget. In view of this, a project, demanding at least 450 mln USD seems to be a silly investment.	The ski resort is planned to accept up to 11 000 people at once. This figure is not supported by any demand and/or viable research. The project initiators claim that the payback period will be 20 years in case 1 person will spend at least 390 USD	"Protect Kok-Zhailau" initiative group proposes to develop ecological and sustainable tourism in the valley. This idea includes trails facilitation (handrails on steep slopes, special trails for people with disabilities), construction of ecological alpine huts for overnight tourists, etc. This activity does not demand to 450 mln USD, but far less, saving the money for other needs. As the same time the project can generate some small cash flows for self-maintenance and national park needs.	
How does the action/project/activity effect cultural heritage and have other potential socio-cultural impacts?	Being illegal, the project is a live example of how effective corruption is in Kazakhstan. In case the ski resort built, it will become a proof of permissiveness for government officials,		Development of ecological tourism on the territory of the national park will only strengthen the cultural value of the place. It will teach people and future generations to act and	

	neglect of any needs and rights of ordinary people. Kok-Zhailyau valley – is a special place for citizens and guests of Almaty – it is affordable for anyone to rest there. The place has a special atmosphere, where strangers greet each other and communicate in positive manner.		think sustainably. Unfortunately, today not each person going to the mountains takes his/her rubbish with him/her.	
How does the action/project/activity effect the environment and have other potential environmental impacts.	<p>According to the Tentative Assessment of Project Impact on the Environment, it is clear that construction works will touch the habitat of threatened flora and fauna species and destroy it.</p> <p>Then, Kok-Zhailyau is located right “above” the city of Almaty, which is one of the most polluted cities. Normally the valley with its forests acts as “lungs” of the city. No lungs – no fresh air in the city, more worth ecological situation and hence more health problems will have the</p>	<p>According to the latest information (Technical-economical specification of changing status of National Park territory), the project will result in cutting 38 ha of trees. In addition, some ski tracks are going to be constructed on glaciers – on the territory above Kok-Zhailyau. So, it will affect the highly protected zones of the National Park and the habitat of rare snow leopard. Furthermore, in order to be functioning 5 months per year the resort will need to use artificial snowmaking technologies.</p>		

	population of the city.	They demand for huge amounts of water and the reservoirs of 330 000 sq. m. in the mountains will become a mudflow catastrophe risk for the city.		
--	-------------------------	--	--	--

13. CAN YOU REFER TO ANY MONITORING/CERTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT THIS EXAMPLE IS COVERED BY OR IS RELATED TO? (See www.destinet.eu to check if your example is listed in relationship to any certificates or awards)

No

14. GOOD GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

14A CAN YOU ESTABLISH ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL OR SOCIAL DRIVERS AND UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THIS SITUATION? (IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE DRIVING FORCE, PRESSURE, STATE, IMPACT, RESPONSE (DPSIR) MODEL, PLEASE APPLY)

The project originally was initiated by Almaty city council. Previously all issues related to Ile-Alatau National Park were related to the land. The national park is located right to the south from Almaty – in the mountains and its territory is seems to be very attractive for private estate. That is the reason why there are many elite houses built in the mountains. Kok-Zhailau is a very picturesque place and at the same time the idea of ski resort there is not viable in terms of country's legislation, demand, payback period. But still, project initiators go ahead and the latest movement was to deprive Kok-Zhailau the status of protected area so that the ski resort construction could become 'legal'.

14B CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE GOVERNANCE CHAIN AND FINANCING PROCESSES BEHIND THE ACTIVITY? (STATE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS ESTABLISHED AT A NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AND DEPARTMENTS)

The model of the project is as follows:

Government of Kazakhstan invests 450 mln USD in the ski resort, particularly in its infrastructure. Another 900 mln USD are to be invested by private investors into hotels and other tourist and entertainment infrastructure construction.

For this moment 350 mln KZT were already spent of the development of Technical-economical specification of the project. The money were spend from Almaty city budget and the document was not presented to the public yet.

**14C CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICY CONTEXT OR PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING GOVERNANCE MEASURES ON THIS ISSUE?
(STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT CORRESPOND TO THE PROBLEM/ROOT CAUSES OR SOLUTIONS)**

*As soon as the project touches a National Park, it has to be considered by the Ministry of environment and water resources of Kazakhstan. The ecological expertise could be provided by the Ministry **only**. However, it was finally provided by the Office of natural resources under Almaty city council. This issue is being considered at city court now.*

14D ARE YOU AWARE OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN OR UN MEMBER STATES?

14E HOW CAN THIS PROJECT/ACTIVITY/DESTINATION BE IMPROVED?

This project has to be reconsidered and transferred to any other territory outside protected areas. Underlying principle of the project has to be sustainability.

The territory of Kok-Zhailau is an ideal place for ecological tourism development, promoting mountain trekking, hiking, walking, bird watching, etc.

14F WHAT OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVE WERE POSSIBLE?(COMPARE THE OPTIONS, WEIGHING-UP POSITIVE/NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PREFERRED OPTION IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES)

15_ UPDATES AND PROGRESS:

Update Date:

Author:

16. SUBMIT IMAGES RELATED TO REPORTED ISSUE HERE:



Kok-Zhalyau valley at Ile-Alatau National Park



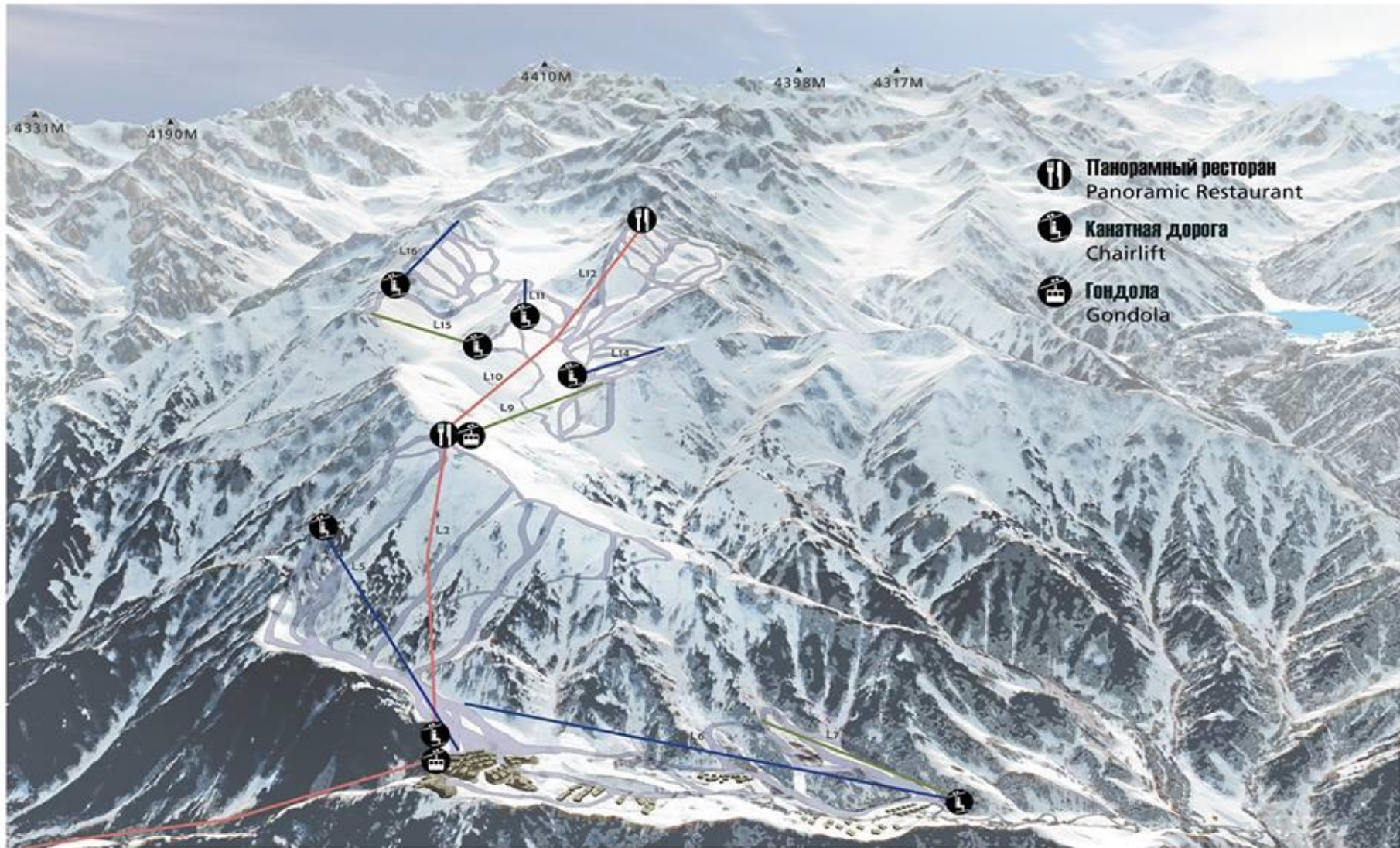
Kok-Zhailyau in winter time with people-letters asking for help.



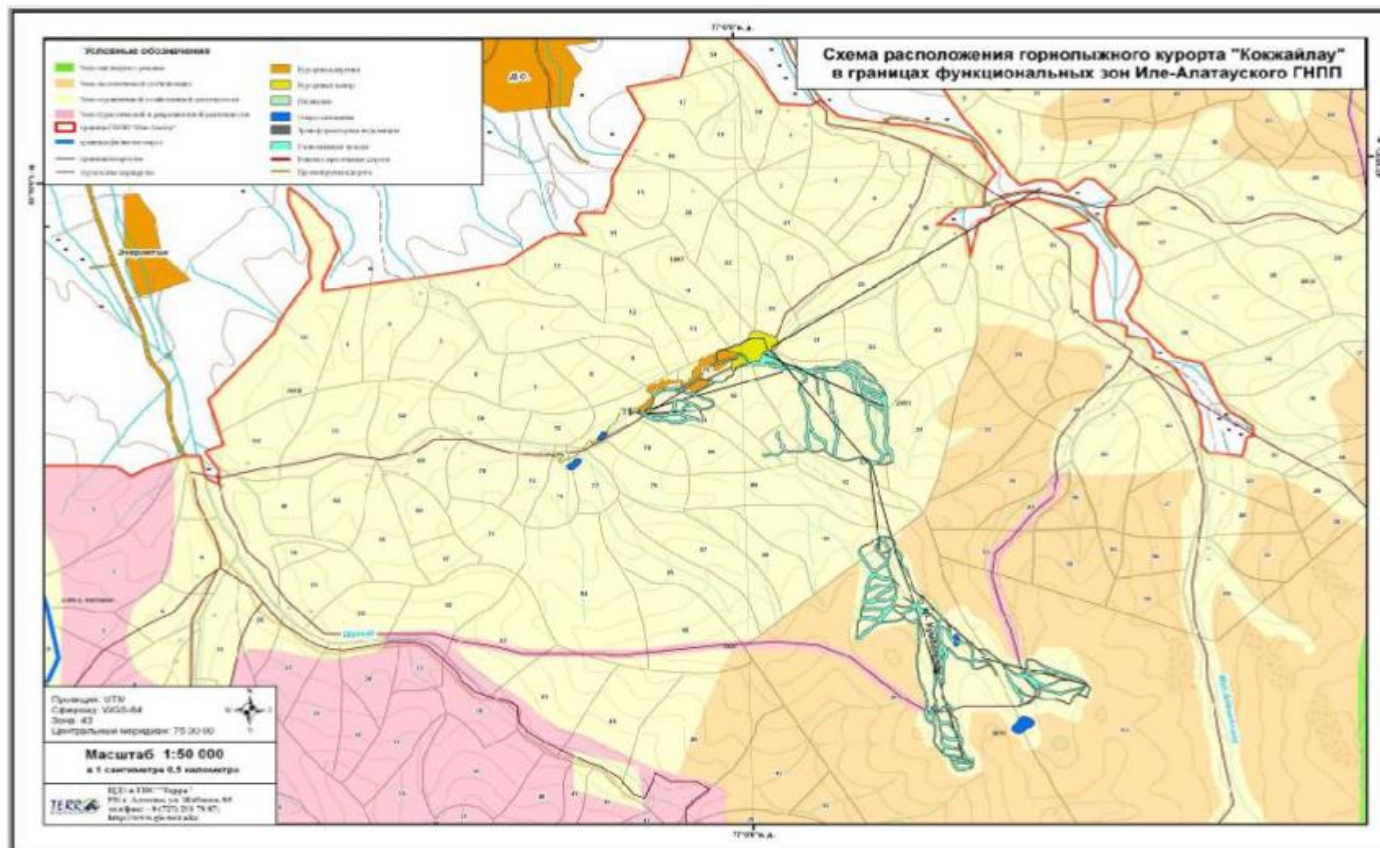
The picture was taken from official Facebook page of ski resort. The view of the resort in summer.



The view of the resort in winter



The plan of ski tracks of the resort. The highest of them are on the glaciers.



The map shows Ile-Alatau National Park (separated by red border). The blue lines in the center – are the ski tracks of the resort, green and orange zones – village of ski resort. The pale colour of the national park territory stands for the zone of limited economic activity, while the orange – is the zone of ecological stabilizations. At the moment the territory of the ski tracks is still refers to the zone of ecological stabilization. The picture presents plans of ski resort initiators to deprive the protection status of the areas.