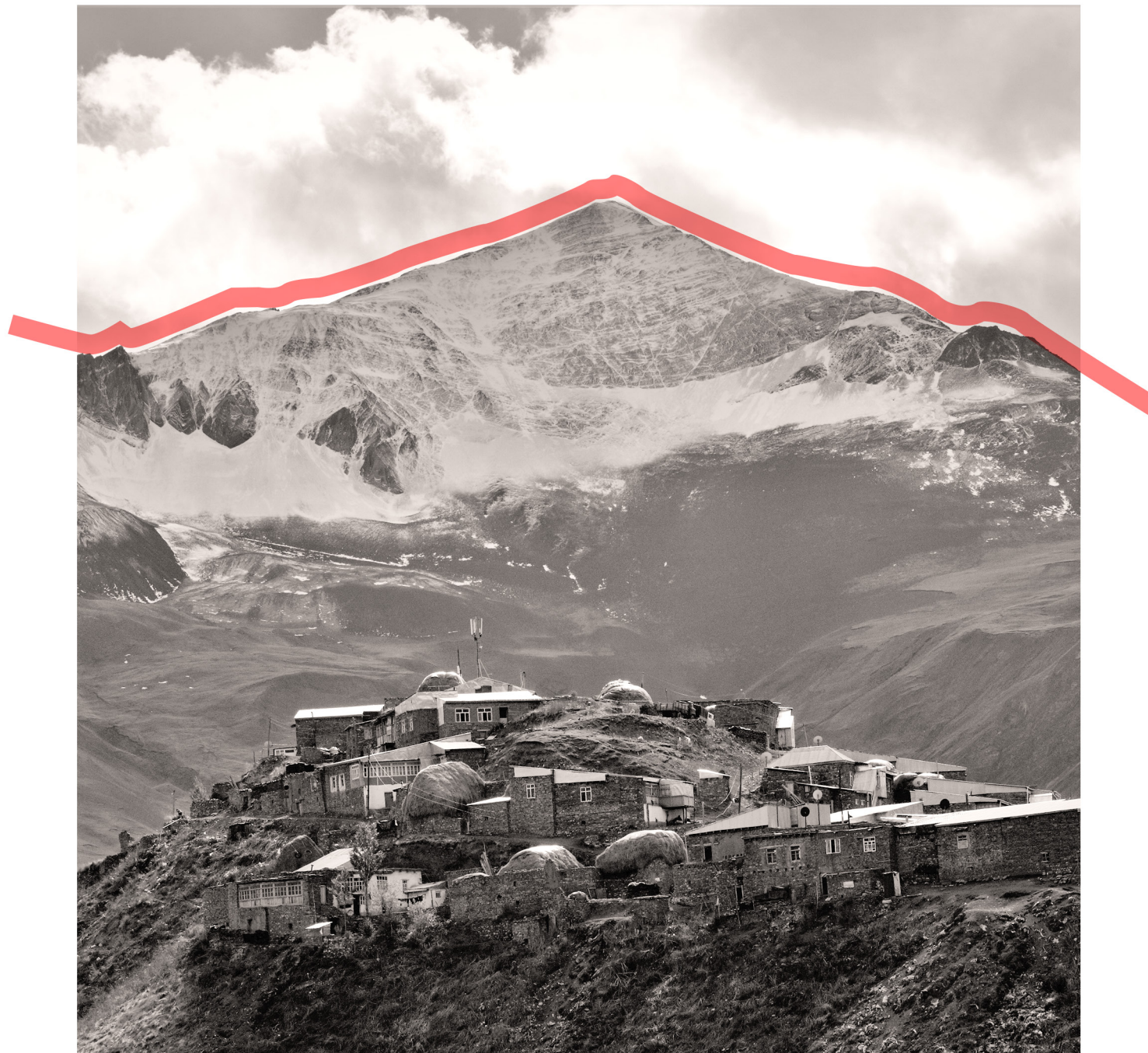


Chapter 5

DEVELOPMENT OF KHINALIQ

ACTIVE TOURISM





ACTIVE TOURISM

PREFACE

The rich mountainous relief and landscape surrounding the Khinalig Village gives us great opportunities for development of mountain tourism activities.

Thus, the village is located within the borders of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, more precisely, between the Yan Ridge and the Main Caucasian Ridge, on the left bank of the Gudyalchay, at an altitude of 2200 m above sea level. Because the village is located in a gate zone to the high-mountainous areas, the mountaineers say that it is a major Basecamp.

Today, there is more interest and demand for countries with "unexplored", exotic nature than popular tourism regions around the world. One of the main reasons is that mass tourism causes environmental problems and you cannot enjoy your vacation that much and so on. Therefore, the Caucasus is also known as a new touristic territory. Unconditional hospitality of our villagers is undoubtedly one of the main reasons for tourists to love the Greater Caucasus.

Mainly commercial relations, bringing wooden materials from lowlands, usage of alp-subalp meadows for grooming and grassing purposes and few other reasons allowed to create pathways from Khinalig to other mountain villages and higher mountainous areas. Horse and foot hiking services on mountain trails will be reflected in the proposal plan on these roads, which have their own historical reasons and stories.

The development of active tourism will also have a positive impact on the economic development of Xinalig and villages in the neighbourhood, the welfare of local communities, and the "cultural exchange".



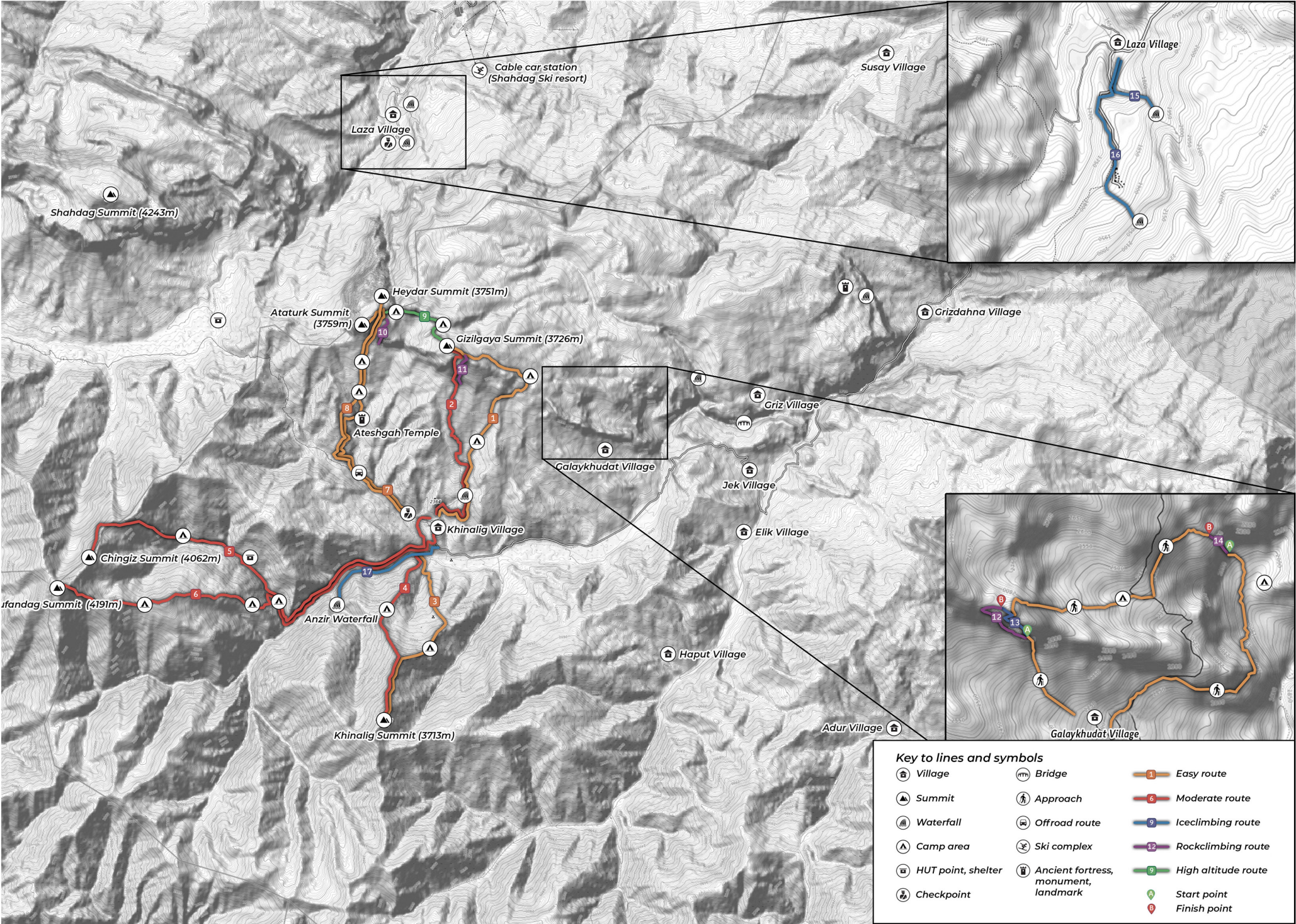
MOUNTAINEERING
ROCK CLIMBING & ICE CLIMBING



Khinalig is located in a very favorable position within Yan Ridge and the Main Caucasus Ridges. 3 peaks located on Gizilgaya massif on Yan Ridge offers different trips based on difficulty levels. On Gizilgaya Mountain Massif which has rocky relief there are some cliffs reaching a height of 500m and creates great opportunities for climbing routes at different difficulty levels. In these high mountainous areas, there are waterfalls with a height of 40-50 m. These waterfalls are not only beautiful in summer. It is also possible to organize seasonal ice climbing on these falls, which freeze in the winter and form large ice masses.

MAIN ROUTES & CLIMBING POINTS

- 1. Khinalig summit (3713 m)- classic route 1B
- 2. Khinalig summit (3713 m)- more difficult route 2A
- 3. Gizilgaya summit (3726 m)- classic route 1B
- 4. Gizilgaya summit (3726 m)- couloir route 2A
- 5. Heydar summit (3751 m)- classic route 1B
- 6. Ataturk summit (3730 m)- classic route 1B
- 7. Tufandag summit (4191 m)- classic route 1B
- 8. Chingiz summit (4062 m)- classic route 2A
- 9. “Travers” 3 summits (Gizilgaya, Heydar and Ataturk)
- 10. Gizilgaya rock-climbing route 1. Heydar couloir
- 11. Gizilgaya rock-climbing route 2. Gizilgaya couloir
- 12. Aydagala rock-climbing route near first Galakhudat
- 13. Aydagala rock-climbing route near second Galakhudat
- 14. Kokosh trail rock-climbing route. Near Galakhudat
- 15. Twin waterfalls. Laza village
- 16. Suvar waterfall. Laza village
- 17. Anzir waterfall. Khinalig village





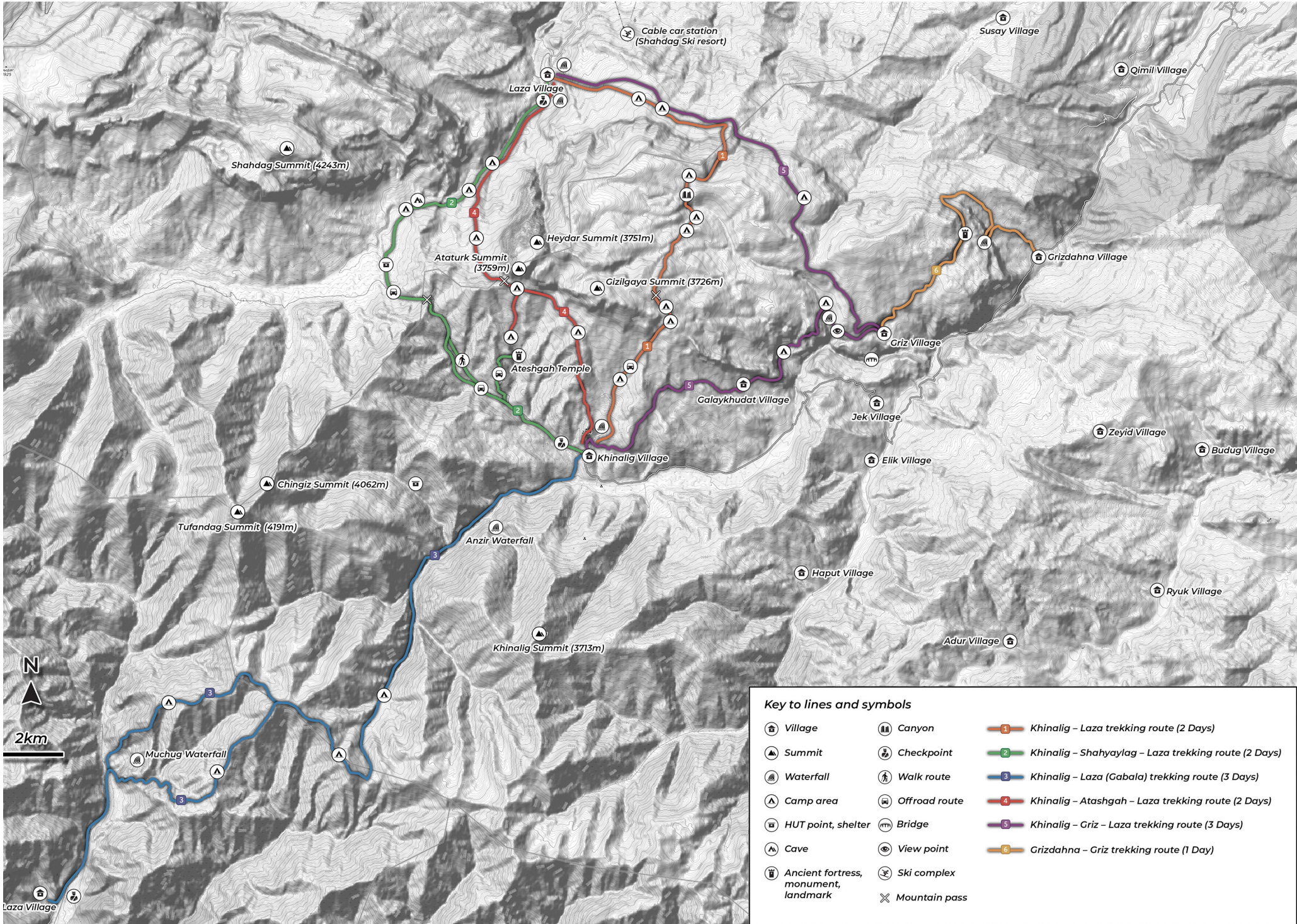
TREKKING



Located in the administrative district of Gusar, on the other side of Gizilgaya, Laza is a touristic mountainous village as much as Khinalig. There were regular visits from Khinalig to Laza for various reasons. There were many people coming from Laza which is village of Gabala to Khinalig mainly for business relations through horse tracks. A few days' trekking routes will be offered in these trails. These routes cross the mountain passes which are beautifully landscaped. Places to stay and springs will also be marked for camping on different points throughout the trekking. It is possible to make 4-days' trekking from one village to another in between Khinalig and Laza village of Gusar. This trekking route is called circling around Gizilgaya.

MAIN ROUTES

- 1. Khinalig-Laza with the eastern slope of Gizilgaya. 2 days difficult
- 2. Khinalig-Laza Shahyailag route. 2 days easy
- 3. Khinalig- Laza (Gabala) Salavat pass. 3 days moderated
- 4. Khinalig-Laza. Through the left rocky slope of the Gizilgaya massif. 2 days moderated
- 5. Khinalig-Griz-Laza villages trekking. 3 days moderated
- 6. Khinalig-Griz-Grizdahna villages trekking. 2 days easy



ACTIVE TOURISM | Hiking



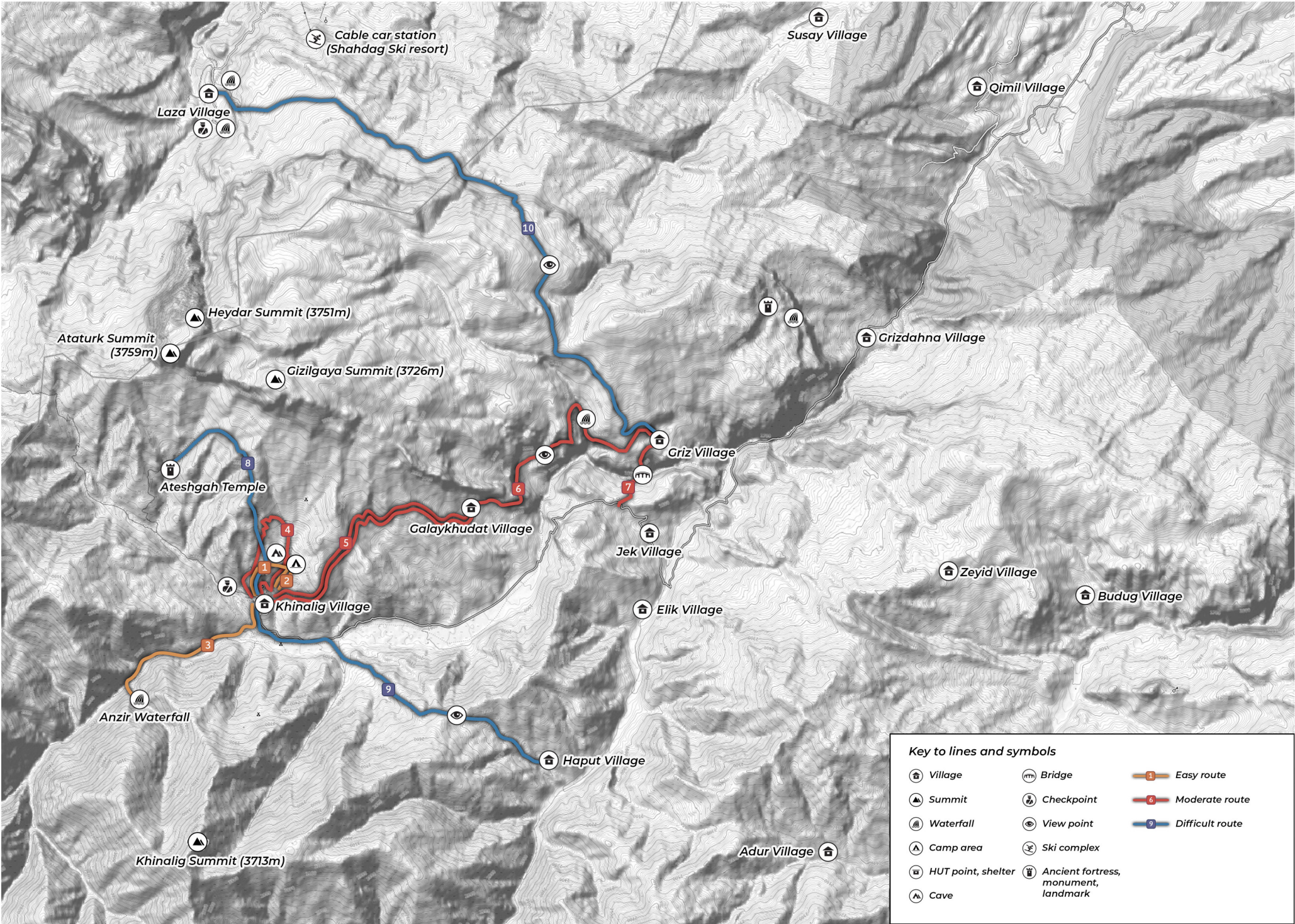
HIKING



Having traveled from Khinalig village in any direction and walking a little further is already counted as hiking. For organizing eco-tours from one day to several days around the village, caves, waterfalls, camps, as well as nearby villages have enough routes . The most interesting part of one or several days' tours to villages is the fact that the population of the villages belongs to different ethnic groups and they have their own language and culture even though they are very close to Khinalig. Some of these routes were tested by Camping Azerbaijan by organizing group tours.

MAIN ROUTES

- 1. Caves hiking close to Khinalig. Short route
- 2. Easy tour around Camp area
- 3. Anzir waterfall. Easy hiking
- 4. Caves hiking close to Khinalig. Long route
- 5. Khinalig-Galakhudat. Moderated hiking
- 6. Khinalig-Galakhudat-Griz. Moderated long hiking
- 7. Khinalig-Griz-Jek. 2 days moderated hiking
- 8. Khinalig-Ateshgah temple. Difficult hiking
- 9. Haput-Khinalig hiking. Long-moderated level
- 10. Khinalig-Griz-Laza hiking. 2 days difficult and long





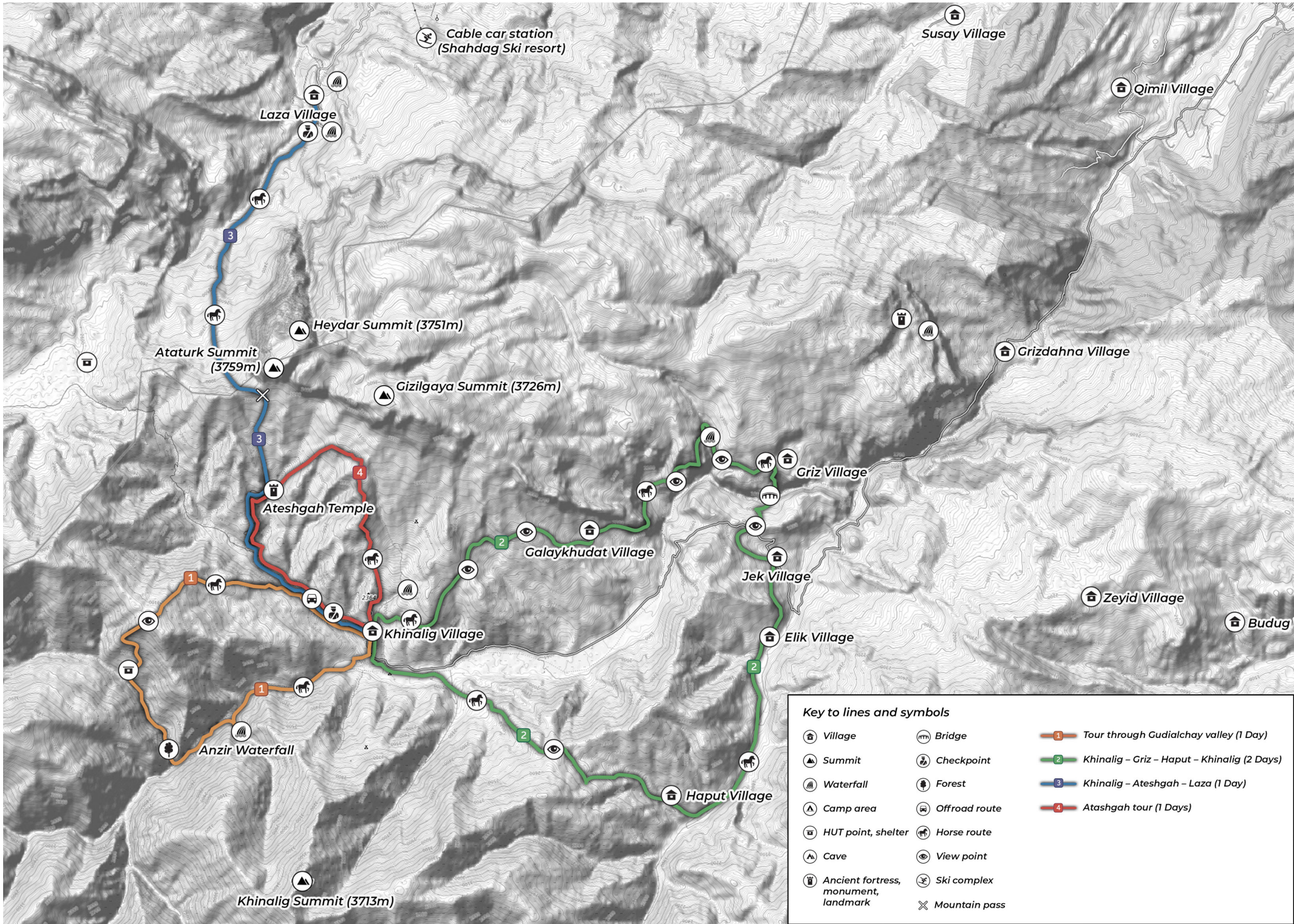
HORSEBACK RIDING



Having traveled from Khinalig village in any direction and walking a little further is already counted as hiking. For organizing eco-tours from one day to several days around the village, caves, waterfalls, camps, as well as nearby villages have enough routes . The most interesting part of one or several days' tours to villages is the fact that the population of the villages belongs to different ethnic groups and they have their own language and culture even though they are very close to Khinalig. Some of these routes were tested by Camping Azerbaijan by organizing group tours.

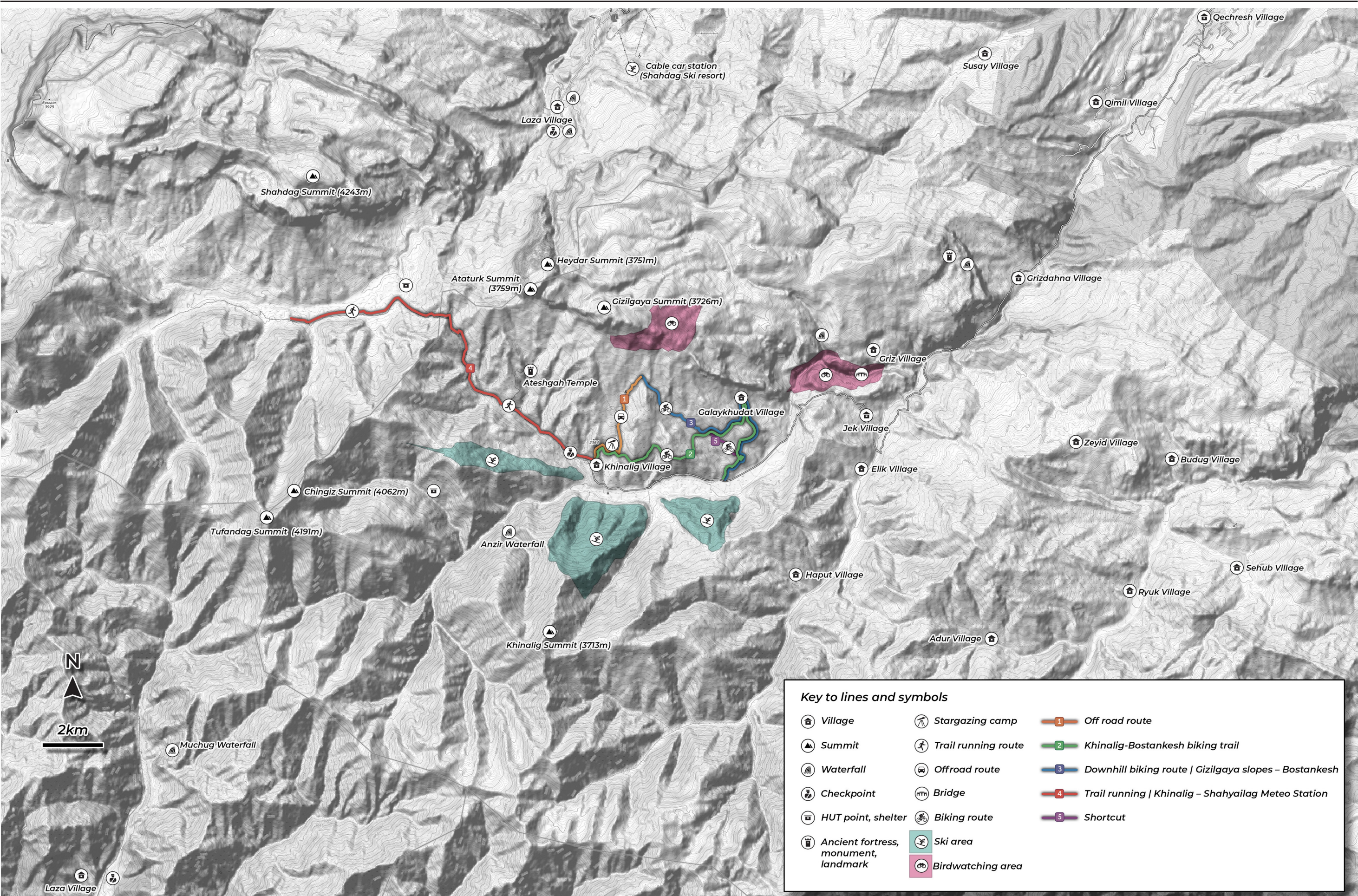
MAIN ROUTES

1. Mukhokh mouse - Viewpoint horseback riding. For 1 day
2. Khinalig-Griz-Haput-Khinalig horseback riding. For 2 days
3. Khinalig-Laza (Gusar) horseback riding. For 1 day
4. Ateshgah horseback riding. For 1 day



MASTER PLANNING STRATEGIES & URBAN DESIGN PROPOSALS FOR KHINALIQ VILLAGE

ACTIVE TOURISM | Other Activities Map



SHEPARD TOUR



In Khinalig, as well as other remote villages, the main occupation is sheep breeding. Migration with large herds of sheep and daily grazing around the village is a part of historical-traditional occupation. A sheep grazing route near a daily village can be presented to foreign tourists as a tourism activity. Thus, along with the daily shepherd, the tourist takes several sheep of few families into the meadows in the direction of the route, travels to the surrounding area to get acquainted with the historical and traditional aspects of this occupation, and feels like a resident of the village for a day.

TRAIL RUNING



For people with a running addiction in the world, fleeing the mountain relief is a very exciting and challenging activity. Trail running is one of the most basic outdoor activities recently for feeling the nature and testing your strength. In world practice, various marathons and festivals are organized for those who love this activity. The proposed trail from Khinalig will have a great place in the list of world trail running marathons in the near future with its landscape and favorable relief.

SKIING ACTIVITIES



Geographical position and especially high mountainous relief of Khinalig results with a lot of snow in the winter. Specially this factor about climate, creates great potential for winter mountain tourism (especially for downhill skiing and ski touring). Today, there is a massive focus on off-piste slides in the mountain resorts. The recommended skiing areas are in the northern slopes of the mountains around Khinalig, which usually has more snow. Also, the curves of the slopes of these mountainous regions are suitable for slipping.

MOUNTAIN
BIRDWATCHING



Khinalig region, especially the Gizilgaya massif, has an invaluable potential for observing birds in the mountains. The main species that can be observed here are chukar, snowfinch, rock thrushes, great rosefinch, horned lark, wheatear species, and red-booked species such as golden eagle, bearded vulture, griffon vulture, cinereous vulture. However, the main objective of local and foreign nature lovers is to see rare and insignificant Caucasian dogs, Caucasian tera, and qirmızıqarın odyuruq types.

STARGAZING



Stargazing is more known like a family travel in world practice as an outdoor activity. Thus, a camping area with a wide and open view is set up with special observation equipments and night space is observed. The main camp site near Khinalig is a very convenient area for this activity. It is necessary to acquire certain equipment and astronomical knowledge for the stargazing, which has a specially interested audience.

PHOTOGRAPHY
TOURS



The geographical location of the village is surrounded by picturesque high mountains. Whether walking on mountain passes, or walking along the waterfalls, canyon tours, as well as on a different day-to-day hiking, it is possible to see beautiful scenery from different angles. When the necessary infrastructure and facilities will be available for other mountain activities around Khinalig, meaningful resources will already be on hand for photography tours.

MOUNTAIN
BIKING



Talking about Adventure Touring, one of the first things coming our minds is mountain biking. Potential routes for long mountain bike rides near Khinalig village are only in the direction of Shahyaylak. It is possible to organize cycling tour routes with new generation electric mountain bikes to Laza village. At present, there are real downhill biking trails that will be reflected in the plan.



CAMP SITE
IN KHINALIG

Saving money with spending less, living adventure by staying in a tent near the village in the mountainous area will be the expectations of many travelers. The most suitable tent camp in Khinalig promises a beautiful view of Khinalig village and the mountains on the background. This camp site is well suited for both camping and stargazing lovers.

It is essential to establish an infrastructure with building bio-toilets in the camp area, setting up a water line, preparing a quarry, surrounding it with stones, preparing a table displaying camping rules and so on.



PROBLEMS

THE CURRENT PROBLEMS THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVE MOUNTAIN TOURISM AROUND KHINALIG IS FACING CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWING:

- 1. The process of getting permission for the access to the territory of the protected area of the main part of the region, Shahdag National Park, is not properly organized;
- 2. Mountaineering and rock climbing, several-day trekking routes are close to border zone, existing difficulties on obtaining a permit from the State Border Service, other bureaucratic obstacles;
- 3. Mass exploitation of subalpine and alpine meadows for sheep farming in the active 5-6 months of the year, shepherd dogs create major obstacles for the movement throughout the routes. Also, waste by the shepherds;
- 4. Lack of road signs for solo trips by independently travelling tourists through proposed routes (most of them), lack of map and online resources;



SOLUTIONS

ACTIVE MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SUGGESTIONS:

- 1. Entrance-tours to the Shahdag National Park area for tourists should only be carried out by selling tickets on the spot by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources . Together with the ticket, topographical maps for tourists on main routes should also be provided as a service. If the landing period is for a few days and the high mountainous area is planned to visit within the tour, the MENR can recommend its own guide or the use of local mountain guide services that is going to be raised;
- 2. The State Border Service may only provide access to the Shahyaylak and Gabala lane territory by giving a permission document right on spot (hence, permission holder may continue their way by showing permission document to the border post). Many prospective mountain routes included in the proposed plan are far beyond the boundary strip, and no authorization process should be applied on these routes.
- 3. When shepherd farmers located on mountain routes are entering the land, written instructions should be given and compulsory rules have to be followed by them. The collection of these guidelines should include timely vaccination of dogs and the maintenance of "neutralization" of dogs during the tours of tourists, keeping the surrounding area clean and so on. Shepherds can be offered a payment if they provide food to tourists camping near the sheepfold. In general, creating the economic interest for the shepherds is the most successful solution on solving this problem.
- 4. Professional topographical maps which include all routes should be compiled. These maps should be accessible to tourists at the tourist information centers in Baku and Khinalig. All mountain routes should be marked on the basis of a single marking system (Czech Trail Marking System is recommended). Electronic versions of all perspective routes should be placed on a single web site with information and photographs; website should be introduced to tourists.

PROBLEMS

THE CURRENT PROBLEMS THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVE MOUNTAIN TOURISM AROUND KHINALIG IS FACING CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWING:

- 5. Lack of mountain rescue experience and service. Lack of specialized medical center in the village, in the case of problems with injuries, trauma and other health problems;
- 6. Some routes have fragmented difficult parts to cross and there is a need for recovery of these parts;
- 7. Absence of local guides with foreign language skills, miscommunication problems in between locals and tourists;
- 8. The lack of a tourism information center operating in the village with a centralized system; accommodation and food offers by locals;
- 9. Niva taxis, the only type of public transport, are more comfortable for the usage of locals, and difficulties in accessing this taxi service for less-budgeted tourists (like backpackers) (communication, lack of traffic schedule, and sometimes taxis don't depart from the terminal).



SOLUTIONS

ACTIVE MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SUGGESTIONS:

- 5. While mountain routes are growing as an active tourism products, creating safety and rescue services is another important issue. First of all, a medical center in the village should be established and qualified medical staff should function. Training a number of local guides on mountainous rescue and evacuation services means to be prepared and insured for any accidents and emergencies that may happen.
- 6. It is necessary to restore certain difficult passes of some routes, clean up some tracks before the season, and construct bridges on few small rivers.
- 7. The development of active tourism, firstly, should be the interest to the local community. One of the main problems in the tourist village of Khinalig is the weakness of foreign language skills. Several chosen local guides need to take regular courses in the village to learn basic level language skills and they should be motivated to study English. Guest house owners may also be involved in those courses.
- 8. Mountain tourism services provided at the tourism information centers located on suggestions plan by Pilla will be offered in Khinalig. We think that the registration and controlling certain standards of the guest houses can be implemented.
- 9. Public transport vehicles - Nivas routed to Khinalig provides services in the bazaar area of Guba region. It would be helpful to guide drivers who are interested in working with tourists to make this service accessible for less-budgeted backpackers and to provide information about parking stops on web platforms.