



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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Annotation: this article examines the growing importance of economic development in Uzbekistan and the role of development strategies in enhancing the country's position in international cooperation. Uzbekistan's unique natural resources, industrial potential, agricultural and urban development, as well as its historical and cultural heritage, are highlighted as key drivers of economic growth. Since 2017, economic reforms such as improving the investment climate, establishing free trade zones, implementing innovative technologies, and expanding tax incentives have stimulated economic progress. These strategies also contribute to attracting foreign investment, strengthening cooperation with international organizations, and enhancing diplomatic relations. The article also emphasizes the social, cultural, and political benefits of economic development, including the creation of jobs, improvement of citizens' well-being, promotion of local production, and strengthening Uzbekistan's positive image on the global stage. Despite existing challenges such as infrastructure limitations and regional competition, the long-term prospects for Uzbekistan's economic development remain positive, supporting sustainable growth in Central Asia.

Key words: Economic development ; Development strategies; 2022–2026; Uzbekistan 2030 Vision; Sustainable growth; Industrial modernization; High-tech sectors; Agricultural development; Irrigation modernization; Infrastructure improvement; Transport networks; Investment climate; Foreign and domestic



investment; Free economic zones; Research and innovation; Digital transformation; Human capital development; Education and vocational training; Knowledge-based economy; Energy efficiency / green technologies; International trade integration; Social development; Tourism and cultural heritage; Visa-free entry / e-visa systems; Cultural diplomacy; Foreign investment; Diplomatic ties; Scientific and technological advancement; Regional leadership; Sustainable national prosperity

Introduction

Uzbekistan is undergoing a period of dynamic economic transformation, guided by long-term strategic plans aimed at sustainable development and global integration. The nation's development strategies for 2022–2026 and the vision for 2030 focus on modernizing industry, agriculture, and infrastructure while fostering innovation, digitalization, and human capital growth. These initiatives aim to attract foreign and domestic investment, strengthen international trade relations, and enhance the country's regional and global influence. By prioritizing technological advancement, energy efficiency, and the promotion of tourism and cultural heritage, Uzbekistan seeks to achieve balanced economic growth and social development, ensuring prosperity for its citizens and long-term stability for the nation.

Economic development

Uzbekistan, a country in Central Asia with a population of over 36 million, has undergone significant economic transformation since gaining independence in 1991. Historically reliant on agriculture, especially cotton, the country has gradually diversified its economy to include industry, energy, mining, and services. Key sectors driving growth include agriculture, which produces cotton, wheat, fruits, and vegetables; industry and manufacturing, such as textiles, metallurgy, and chemical production; and energy and mining, leveraging rich resources like natural gas, gold, copper, and uranium. Since 2016, under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has implemented market-oriented reforms to promote private entrepreneurship, attract foreign investment, liberalize financial markets, and modernize infrastructure. The services sector, including tourism, finance, and telecommunications, has also expanded. Economic indicators have improved, with



GDP growth averaging 5–7% annually, inflation and unemployment under control, and foreign investment rising. Strategic initiatives like the “**Uzbekistan – 2030**” **strategy** aim to double the economy, increase per capita income, enhance infrastructure, and create a favorable business environment. While challenges such as commodity dependence and water scarcity remain, Uzbekistan has significant opportunities in renewable energy, high-tech industries, tourism, and global trade integration.

Development Strategies of Uzbekistan (2017–2021) and Their Priorities

During 2017–2021, Uzbekistan implemented a comprehensive **Action Strategy** focused on five priority areas for national development. These reforms built upon decades of progress following independence, strengthening statehood, sovereignty, security, law and order, the rule of law, human rights, interethnic harmony, and religious tolerance. The rapid changes in global markets and increasing competition required a new approach to accelerate development. Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the 2017–2021 Action Strategy aimed to enhance the effectiveness of reforms, modernize the country, liberalize key sectors, and ensure rapid development across all spheres of life. The strategy was structured in **five stages**, with annual state programs approved for each stage. A **14-member National Commission**, headed by the President, was established to oversee the timely and high-quality implementation of the strategy.

The five priority areas of the strategy were:

1. **Improving the system of state and social governance** – symbolized by sky blue, representing the sky and pure water, inspired by the colors of Amir Timur's state flag.
2. **Ensuring the rule of law and reforming the judicial system** – symbolized by black, representing law, order, and integrity.
3. **Economic development and liberalization** – symbolized by yellow, representing strength, wealth, and prosperity.
4. **Social development** – symbolized by red, representing life and the well-being of citizens.



5. Security, interethnic and religious harmony, and pragmatic foreign policy – symbolized by white, representing peace and purity.

This Action Strategy laid the foundation for a holistic, sustainable, and forward-looking approach to Uzbekistan's development, addressing pressing social and economic issues while promoting modernization and international cooperation.

New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026

The ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan are being implemented under the principle of **“For the Dignity of the Individual.”** During the 2017–2021 period, the **Action Strategy** for the five priority areas of national development laid the foundation for comprehensive reforms across all sectors of state and social life. Nearly **300 laws** and over **4,000 presidential decrees** were adopted during this period to modernize governance and society. Significant efforts were also made to ensure **human rights, strengthen accountability and transparency of state institutions**, and enhance the role of civil society, media, and public organizations, thereby increasing political engagement. In the field of **economic reform**, measures were taken to liberalize foreign trade, taxation, and financial policies; support entrepreneurship; guarantee the protection of private property; promote deep processing of agricultural products; and ensure rapid regional development. **Social protection and poverty reduction** were prioritized, providing citizens with new job opportunities, guaranteed income sources, quality healthcare and education services, and decent living conditions. The results of the last five years of reform created the necessary **political, legal, socio-economic, and educational foundations** for building a New Uzbekistan. Taking into account global challenges and Uzbekistan's development achievements, the **2022–2026 New Uzbekistan Development Strategy** was designed under the principle of **“For the Dignity of the Individual”** to further improve citizens' well-being, transform economic sectors, promote entrepreneurship, guarantee human rights, and foster an active civil society.

The strategy, developed with broad public consultation under the theme **“From Action Strategy to Development Strategy,”** includes the following priority areas:

- 1. Enhancing human dignity and developing an active civil society to build a citizen-oriented state;**
- 2. Making justice and the rule of law the key conditions for development;**
- 3. Rapid development of the national economy and ensuring high growth rates;**
- 4. Implementing fair social policies and developing human capital;**
- 5. Promoting spiritual development and advancing the education and cultural sectors;**
- 6. Addressing global issues based on national interests;**
- 7. Strengthening national security and defense capabilities, and pursuing an open, pragmatic, and active foreign policy.**

This strategy aims to ensure sustainable, inclusive, and comprehensive development, positioning Uzbekistan as a modern, progressive, and citizen-focused nation in the coming years.

Decree on the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy

On September 11, 2023, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the decree on the “Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy. The strategy outlines 100 key objectives across five priority areas. Importantly, it was developed based on accumulated experience, international expertise, and public discussion. The strategy aims to position Uzbekistan among countries with above-average income through sustainable economic growth; establish education, healthcare, and social protection systems that meet both citizen needs and international standards; create favorable ecological conditions; build a fair and modern state serving the people; and ensure national sovereignty and security. Over the next seven years, the strategy aims to double the size of the economy, increase GDP to \$160 billion, raise per capita income to \$4,000, ensure macroeconomic stability, and provide adequate energy, water, and infrastructure resources, while developing a favorable investment and business environment. Healthcare reforms plan to fully cover 350,000 diabetic patients and 1.5 million people with cardiovascular diseases. Selective screening for

hereditary diseases in infants will increase by at least 50%, resulting in a twofold reduction of such diseases among children. In the coming years, programs will provide infants with micronutrient powders, young children with anti-parasitic treatments, iodine supplements, and women with free multivitamins, iron, and folic acid. This is expected to reduce the incidence of infectious and non-infectious diseases by 20%. Additionally, 70% of primary healthcare requests will be addressed at the first level of service. As a result of strategic reforms over the past five years, preschool education coverage increased from 27% to 72%, with the number of preschool institutions rising from 5,211 to 29,420. The strategy aims to bring preschool education coverage to 100%. Public engagement has been strengthened through direct communication with state bodies, enhancing citizens' trust in reforms and increasing opportunities for raising issues to authorities. To continue these efforts, the Republican Commission was established to oversee the implementation of the strategy, ensuring that reforms are carried out efficiently based on public feedback. Furthermore, a special online portal managed by the "Development Strategy" Center allows citizens to provide feedback and suggestions on the strategy's implementation. The Center consolidates and analyzes this input, monitors progress, and reports results to the Republican Commission monthly. In conclusion, the "Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy sets out the fundamental directions for the country's development, prioritizes key areas of activity, strengthens Uzbekistan's international standing, and promotes respect for human dignity.

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