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STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY IN THE CONTEXT OF UZBEKISTAN'S DIGITAL ECONOMY.

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Abstract: The article examines key approaches to enhancing Uzbekistan's socio-economic efficiency amidst the formation of a digital economy. It reviews government measures aimed at the digital transformation of the economy and the development of e-government services, artificial intelligence, startups, and human capital. Based on this analysis, the article proposes strategic directions for boosting labor productivity, improving the quality of public and social services, and fostering digital inclusion, enterprise competitiveness, and the country's export potential.

Keywords: digital economy, digitalization, socio-economic efficiency, information and communication technologies, e-commerce, digital services, artificial intelligence, human capital, digital infrastructure.

In the current landscape, digital transformation is becoming a key driver of the state's socio-economic development. Digital technologies are gradually reshaping goods production and service delivery, public administration, the education system, financial relations, trade, and the labor market.

The development of the digital economy is of particular importance for Uzbekistan. The country possesses significant human potential, a growing domestic market, and a relatively young population.

At the same time, the objectives of increasing labor productivity, creating new high-productivity jobs, reducing regional disparities, improving the quality of public services, and expanding the participation of domestic enterprises in the international division of labor remain in place.

Statistical data indicate a rapid pace of digital transformation. In 2024, the gross value added generated in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector amounted to 33.7 trillion soums, compared to 24.3 trillion soums in 2023. The share of ICT services in GDP rose from 2.02% in 2023 to 2.29% in 2024. This trend continued in 2025. In January–June 2025, the gross value added of ICT services reached 21.0 trillion soums, up from 15.2 trillion soums during the same period in 2024, while their share of GDP increased from 2.4% to 2.7%.[1]

Thus, digitalization is gradually evolving from a distinct area of technology policy into a factor driving the structural transformation of the national economy.

The development of the information and communication technology (ICT) sector is a key indicator of digital transformation.

According to data from the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the gross value added of ICT services amounted to 33,742.3 billion soums in 2024. For comparison,

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this figure stood at 9,372.5 billion soums in 2020. Consequently, the volume of value added generated increased more than 3.5-fold over the four-year period.[2]

At the same time, the role of the information economy and e-commerce is growing. In 2024, the gross value added of the information economy and e-commerce sector amounted to 60,219.5 billion soums, compared to 42,896.1 billion soums in 2023.[2]

This demonstrates that the digital economy in Uzbekistan is developing beyond just telecommunications infrastructure; it is increasingly incorporating programming, data processing, e-commerce, digital platforms, software development, and other activities.

Table 1.

Key indicators of digital economy development in Uzbekistan

Indicator	2023 г.	2024 г.	2025 г.
Gross value added of ICT services, billion soums	24 256,0	33 742,3	47344,6
Share of ICT services in GDP	2,02%	2,29%	2,7
Volume of communication and informatization services, billion soums	39 734,2	56 865,2	79 485,5
Number of internet subscribers, thousands	30 061,0	32 138,7	36 195,1
Volume of e-commerce, billion soums	13 263,8	15 211,5	31 551,9

Source: Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The increase in the volume of communication and information services is particularly notable. In 2024, it amounted to 56.9 trillion soums, whereas in 2025, it reached 79.5 trillion soums. Thus, the volume increased by approximately 39.8% over the year.[3]

In the context of the digital economy, socio-economic performance should be assessed by more than just GDP volume. Labor productivity, service accessibility, the quality of public administration, job creation, the reduction of transaction costs, and improvements in the population's quality of life are all of significant importance.

Digital technologies enable simultaneous progress across several areas.

First, they reduce the time and cost of obtaining information. Enterprises can use digital platforms to find suppliers, buyers, and partners.

Second, digitalization lowers transaction costs. Electronic payments, digital documents, electronic contracts, and online services help reduce the volume of operations associated with paper-based workflows.

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Third, digital technologies enhance the transparency of management processes. The use of big data allows government agencies and enterprises to make decisions based on more timely information.

Fourthly, digitalization is creating new types of economic activity: programming, mobile app development, cloud services, data processing, e-commerce, fintech, digital marketing, and AI-based services.

The services sector is developing particularly rapidly. According to official data, the volume of market services in Uzbekistan stood at 840.1 trillion soums in 2024 and rose to 1,050.3 trillion soums in 2025—an increase of more than 14.7%.[4]

Notably, communication and information services rank among the most dynamically growing segments of the services market.

Consequently, digitalization fosters not only the development of the IT sector itself but also the expansion of the entire services sector.

One of the most notable results of the digitalization of Uzbekistan's economy is the growth of e-commerce.

According to the National Statistics Committee, the volume of e-commerce increased from 13.26 trillion soums in 2023 to 15.21 trillion soums in 2024. In 2025, the figure reached 31.55 trillion soums.[4]

This shift holds significant socio-economic importance. E-commerce enables:

-expand the market reach for small businesses;

-reduce costs associated with traditional retail infrastructure;

-improve consumer access to goods and services;

-foster remote employment opportunities;

-encourage the use of digital payments;

-increase competition among sellers;

-create new logistics and IT services.

E-commerce is particularly important for the regions, as digital platforms enable entrepreneurs based outside major hubs to reach customers beyond their local areas.

However, the further development of e-commerce requires improvements in digital literacy among the population, as well as in logistics, consumer protection, cybersecurity, and personal data protection mechanisms.

Modern digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for enhancing socio-economic efficiency.

The number of internet subscribers in Uzbekistan rose from 30.06 million in 2023 to 32.14 million in 2024, reaching 36.20 million in 2025.[5]

Consequently, access to digital communications for the population and businesses continued to expand throughout 2024–2025.

At the same time, the issue of the digital divide must be taken into account. A mere increase in the number of internet users does not equate to full equality of opportunity. Disparities may exist

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regarding income levels, place of residence, age, digital skills, and access to modern devices. Therefore, a digital economy strategy must encompass not only infrastructure development but also the creation of an accessible digital environment for diverse social groups.

One of the most significant areas of digital transformation is e-government.

According to government data, 760 types of public services in Uzbekistan have already been digitized, and approximately 10 million citizens utilized digital services over the past year. As a result of this digitalization, the requirement for the public to submit over 70 types of certificates and documents has been eliminated.

This is of direct social significance: when citizens do not need to visit government offices multiple times to obtain documents, their expenditure of time and money is reduced.

In the long term, the digitalization of public services can contribute to:

- reducing administrative costs;
- increasing the accessibility of public services;
- reducing bureaucratic procedures;
- enhancing transparency;
- improving the quality of interaction between the state and citizens;
- more efficient use of public resources...

At the same time, the digital state must evolve based on the principle of "citizen-centric services." Simply converting a paper-based procedure into an electronic format does not, in itself, guarantee high efficiency; the service delivery process itself must be simultaneously reviewed and streamlined. Artificial intelligence serves as a new driver of socio-economic efficiency, and it is becoming increasingly important for the continued development of the digital economy.

In October 2024, the Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence Technologies through 2030 was approved.

The document outlines measures to create conditions for the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in the social and economic sectors.

Key targets of the strategy include increasing the volume of AI-based software products and services to $1.5 billion, raising the share of AI-enabled government services on the Unified Portal of Interactive Government Services to 10%, and developing research laboratories and computing infrastructure.

Artificial intelligence can enhance efficiency in industrial manufacturing, agriculture, the financial sector, healthcare, education, public administration, transport and logistics, marketing, demand forecasting, and resource management.

However, the economic impact of AI depends on data quality, workforce skills, the availability of computing infrastructure, and compliance with information security requirements.

Therefore, the implementation of AI must be accompanied by the training of specialists and the development of a culture of responsible digital technology use.

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One of the most promising areas is the export of digital services. According to official data, ICT service exports encompass telecommunications services, software, and computer and information services. In 2024, computer software exports amounted to approximately $261.5 million, rising to roughly $501.1 million in 2025. Exports of other computer services stood at approximately $60.3 million and $154.6 million, respectively. Thus, the export of software and computer services demonstrated significant growth. In 2025, Uzbekistan's total IT service exports were estimated by government authorities at approximately $940 million.[6]

The development of IT exports is of particular importance to the country, as digital services offer several advantages: exporting them does not require the physical transport of goods, and a single specialist can provide services to clients in multiple countries.

Consequently, building a competitive IT sector can help diversify Uzbekistan's exports.

Conclusion.

Digital transformation should not be viewed solely as a technological process. Its ultimate goal is to boost economic productivity, the quality of public and social services, enterprise competitiveness, employment, and the population's quality of life.

Therefore, Uzbekistan’s strategy for socio-economic effectiveness in the digital economy must be based on five interconnected pillars: modern digital infrastructure, high-quality human capital, the digitalization of business and government, the development of innovation and artificial intelligence, and the assurance of digital security and inclusivity.

It is precisely the combination of technological advancement, human capital development, and effective institutions that can ensure the sustainable socio-economic impact of digital transformation.

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