

**PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND
MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES**

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***Аннотация.** В данной статье анализируются актуальные вопросы развития малого и среднего бизнеса (МСП) в Узбекистане, механизмы государственной поддержки и будущие стратегические направления. Подробно освещаются роль малого бизнеса в экономике нашей страны, его потребность в финансовых ресурсах, вопросы повышения экспортного потенциала, внедрения инноваций, повышения занятости населения. Также рассматриваются кредитные ресурсы, выделяемые государством, финансирование стартапов, процессы цифровой трансформации. Результаты исследования служат для разработки практических рекомендаций по поддержке малого бизнеса.*

***Ключевые слова:** Малый бизнес, средний бизнес, предпринимательство, государственная поддержка, экспорт, инновации, стартап, финансовые ресурсы, цифровизация, занятость, экономическое развитие.*

***Abstract.** This article analyzes the current issues of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) development in Uzbekistan, the mechanisms of state support and future strategic directions. The role of small businesses in the economy of our country, their need for financial resources, issues of increasing export potential, introducing innovations, and increasing employment are covered in detail. It also discusses the credit resources allocated by the state, financing startups, and digital transformation processes. The results of the study serve to develop practical recommendations for supporting small businesses.*

Keywords: *Small business, medium-sized business, entrepreneurship, state support, export, innovation, startup, financial resources, digitalization, employment, economic development.*

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are an important component of the country's economy, contributing to job creation, innovation, and sustainable economic growth. In recent years, Uzbekistan has paid great attention to the development of this sector. The meeting of our President Shavkat Mirziyoyev with representatives of small and medium-sized businesses on March 19 is a vivid example of this.

Small and medium-sized businesses play an important role in the labor market. Currently, more than 10.5 million people work in this sector, which is 74% of the country's workforce. In addition, small and medium-sized enterprises account for more than 50% of the economy, a significant part of industry and exports.

However, small businesses face various challenges. Factors such as lack of financial resources, difficulties in marketing and branding, and the complexity of the state regulatory system can hinder the development of SMEs. Therefore, the government is developing comprehensive strategies to address these problems.

Today, small and medium-sized businesses account for more than half of our country's GDP and are a key factor in the sustainable development of the economy. SMEs employ the majority of the workforce and constitute a significant part of industry, trade, services and exports.

However, this sector still faces a number of challenges:

- **Lack of financial resources** - enterprises face difficulties in expanding their activities due to lack of capital.
- **Low competitiveness** - most small enterprises cannot compete effectively with large enterprises due to insufficient production capacity and technological base.
- **Difficulties in entering marketing and export markets** - many entrepreneurs face difficulties related to international requirements and certification processes.

- **Bureaucratic obstacles** - the complexity of licensing, tax burden and permit processes creates an excessive administrative burden for some enterprises.

In order to solve these problems and increase the share of small businesses in the economy, our state is implementing large-scale programs.

Strategic measures have been developed in the following areas for the sustainable development of small businesses:

Financial assistance and credit resources. The conditions for lending to small businesses are being simplified, and their financial opportunities are being expanded. In 2025, it is planned to allocate \$ 10 billion for financial support for small businesses, which will ensure business stability. This year, it is planned to allocate 120 trillion soums to this sector. The lending system has also been further improved, and the opportunities for small businesses to obtain unsecured loans have been expanded. This is an important factor for young people and family entrepreneurs who are starting their own businesses.

Expanding opportunities for export and access to international markets. In order for local small businesses to be competitive in the international market, the state is taking additional measures to certify products, standardize them, and reduce transportation costs. In this direction, it is planned to increase the volume of small business exports, which will allow stimulating the production of products that meet the requirements of the international market.

Development of innovations and digitalization. Automation of modern business processes and the introduction of digital technologies are important for small businesses. Therefore:

- Development of e-commerce platforms;
- Automation of business processes;
- The use of digital marketing tools is expanding.

These measures will help reduce the operating costs of small businesses and expand their customer base.

In order to widely involve women entrepreneurs and young people in economic activity, credit interest rates are being reduced. This will create ample opportunities for them to realize their entrepreneurial potential.

The strategic measures adopted in Uzbekistan to develop small and medium-sized businesses are aimed at strengthening the country's economy, improving the business environment, and strengthening integration with international markets. As a result of these reforms, the role of small and medium-sized businesses in the economy will further increase, opening up a wide path for innovative development.

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