International Journal Of History And Political Sciences
(ISSN – 2771-2222)
VOLUME 03 ISSUE 10 PAGES: 34-46
SJIF IMPACT FACTOR (2021: 5. 705) (2022: 5. 705) (2023: 6. 713)
OCLC – 1121105677
Publisher: Oscar Publishing Services

Journal Website: https://theusajournals.com/index.php/ijhps

Research Article

ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSPORT LOGISTICS HUB

Submission Date: October 20, 2023, Accepted Date: October 25, 2023,
Published Date: October 30, 2023
Crossref doi: https://doi.org/10.37547/ijhps/Volume03Issue10-07

Jasur Ekhsonov
Kokand Branch Of Tashkent State Technical University Named After Islam Karimov, Department Of Education Quality Control, Kokand City, Uzbekistan

Elmurod Khoshimov
The Banking And Finance Academy Republic Of Uzbekistan, Ceo, Tashkent City, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The transport and logistics hub section of the Uzbek Foresight Technology Programme and the study compiled in accordance with the relevant legal document of the government summarizes the main purpose, tasks, and results of the research conducted on the future analysis of transport. It describes the characteristics and methodology of the Uzbek Foresight Technology Programme, based on scenario building, professional workshops, and a large-scale Delphi survey, and evaluates in detail the specific research methods and results of the Transport and Logistics hub panel. The research outputs so far are panel guidelines, panel images, and Delphi statements on transport and logistics. Further tasks include creating a scenario based on the panel images, holding professional meetings to discuss future development paths, and writing a panel report summarizing the results and making recommendations for transport policy.

KEYWORDS

Logistics, transport, logistics hub, CAREC, logistics management.

INTRODUCTION

Transport logistics hubs are one of the most important aspects of freight transport and are increasingly used and managed by transport logistics hubs. They play a crucial role in transport processes. However, there is still little empirical data on these hubs and they are not sufficiently considered in models of high freight demand. Empirical research and model-based calculations are important tools for understanding the role of logistics hubs in transportation systems. They help determine the impact of measures on the transport system and answer the question of transport demand and the drivers behind it. Lack of empirical knowledge and insufficient integration in freight demand models are different.

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Logistics is understood as the process of planning, implementation, and control of processes for efficient, high-quality transportation and storage of goods, including services according to customer requirements and the relevant database. It covers the entire transport chain from the point of origin to the point of consumption and includes inbound, outbound, internal, and external movements. Logistics hubs are intermediate points between the origin and final destination of goods flows. They provide the ability to adjust flows temporally and spatially. Logistics hubs represent places that determine the free flow of goods and provide information to both sides (customer and operator). In this context, logistics hub can be defined as places where goods are stored in warehouses or transferred between different types of transport and vehicles. Below we distinguish transport logistics hub and distribution logistics hubs. Transport logistics hubs mainly have the function of freight forwarding, as well as the buffer function of the time change. Therefore, transport logistics hub, such as airports, railway stations, terminals for intermodal transport, as well as freight forwarders and courier, express, and shipment service providers (cep service providers). In addition, distribution logistics hubs are aimed at storing goods for a longer period of time. Examples of distribution n logistics hubs can be found in central or regional warehouses.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 28, 2022, №DP-60 "On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026" defines a number of tasks, such as improving the transport logistics system and bringing it to high results. In particular, in accordance with the 3rd direction of the strategy "Advancing the development of the national economy and ensuring high growth rates" for goal No. 36 "Development of a unified transport system with an integral connection of all modes of transport, creating the possibility of reaching and returning to the destination based on daily transport trips between major cities", such tasks are recognized at the level of governments.

Improving the national economy, making it increasingly competitive, and the associated structural changes prompted politicians in many industrialized countries to re-focus on innovation as a means of industrial and manufacturing policy. In the 1980s, this was evident in the emergence of national and international projects to support collaborative research known as" new technologies". Mainly IT, telecommunications, transport, new materials and biotechnology. Despite the position of low intergovernmental interaction, i.e. non-interference, these technologies were deemed to be at risk of being left behind.

The development of this technology has sought not to disclose the focus on cooperation, another reason for the support of these areas and the fact that these are technologies that represent advances in other technologies and a wide spectrum of industrial activity in their integrated form, as well as widespread technologies for practice. The problem that arises about the consequences of the situation to maintain competitiveness was observed in European countries at the center for technology in early 1990. However, this new passion for foresight technology policy coincided with the reduction of the main unconventional sources of indirect support for industrial technological development, in particular the defense sector. Together with the constant optimization of public spending, this created conditions in which a large level of priority is considered necessary. From this, the technological choices that are sought from priority are the

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manifestations that generate the greatest economic and social income.

Current year, in cooperation with the Chinese logistics company "Chongqing International Logistics Hub Park", a large project has been achieved, namely, the establishment of a logistics hub on the territory of the Republic. It is definitely a state reform aimed at the development of the transport and logistics sector, creating relief for entrepreneurs, optimizing costs, and lacing the principle of door-to-door.

The Technology Foresight Program of the Republic of Uzbekistan announced the Decree of the government on the improvement of the state management system for the development of scientific and innovative activities in 2021. In the context of research to enrich the scientific base, ensure the quality of education and develop human capital, the Technology Foresight Program has two broad objectives. In particular, it is the establishment of collaboration between scientists and industrialists who are best placed to assess emerging market opportunities and technological trends and to make decisions about the balance and direction of publicly funded science and technology.

While this list contains many topics that are usually found in critical technology analysis, the overall balance reflects the specific needs of Uzbekistan. In addition, each of them is described in more detail both in the management team report and in the reports of individual panels. The final set of priorities was achieved using a framework developed during the preview phase, which developed a number of sub-criteria under five main headings:

- Economic and social amenities;
- Ability of Uzbekistan to receive economic and social benefits;
- Pillars of the science and innovation base of Uzbekistan;
- Costs of investing in new science, technology and innovative projects;
- The time frame in which the new technology may exist.

Elsewhere, the successful use of the Delphi method influenced its adoption for the Uzbekistan program. Support can also come from consultation seminars and sessions throughout the country at the research and review stage, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Uzbek government. However, it was never foreseen that the use of Delphi in Uzbekistan would lead to a repeat of the questions of Japan and the United Kingdom. They reflect the agenda of the industry and scientists of the two countries and do not necessarily correspond to the specific goals of the Uzbekistan program. In particular, it is necessary to study the advantages of forming new networks between the scientific base and production, pay great attention to market size and quality of life in Uzbekistan, and national efforts to identify networks. To achieve these goals, Delphi was used as a consulting tool for panels that directly reflect the themes and problems created by the panels and their concerns. It also provides a means of communication. Specific goals include:

- Acquaintance with the opinions of the business and scientific and technical communities on future changes in markets and technologies;
- Loyalty to results and assistance in achieving consensus on developments;
- To inform the wider business and scientific and technology communities of the major challenges under

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consideration in the technology prediction program and how their peers will assess these challenges.

These three goals highlight an interactive approach. In addition to the most obvious function of assembling options for panels, the Delphi survey aims to attract a large number of professionals who would otherwise be excluded, and therefore significantly expand the consistency of participants who feel the right to ownership of the results and, consequently, their commitment to performing them [1]. The end of this approach is illustrated in Fig 1.

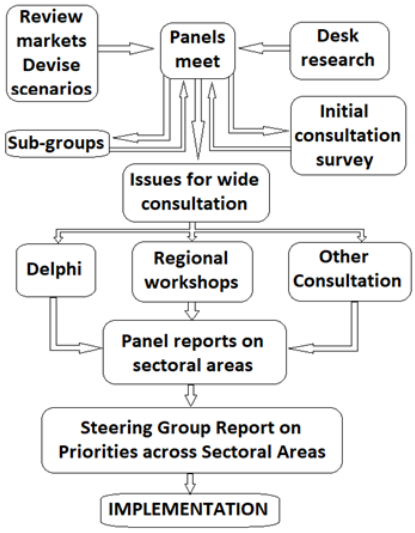

Fig. 1 Main foresight stage. Source: [1]

In the main foresight phase, the assigned task managers take on their functions, which include building scenarios for their areas with some degree of freedom, identifying key issues and trends, and critically consulting with relevant communities. From the outset, it became clear that it was unlikely to capture all the necessary experiences in panels of a manageable size. In addition, extensive consultation with relevant communities is necessary to obtain the commitment and consensus necessary to implement the final findings. Much of this consultation takes place through direct contact between panel members and organizations and even individuals with an interest in the field. However, a more systematic approach is needed to achieve a structured dialogue with the widest range of experts in the country. This is provided by the Delphi process, which is described in more detail below [1].

A hub is defined as a regional interconnection point where products from multiple supply sources arrive and are sorted according to destination needs. As a result, products are delivered to these points without being stored in the hub. Some elements are necessary for the development of a logistics hub, but there is no consensus on them. Some authors say that natural wealth is the main factor, while others argue that the role of government is crucial. So far, traditional literature has focused on the main elements rather than their interaction. There is no prioritization of

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elements or certain methodologies for the development of the logistics hub.

If the hub develops, it will affect the region, especially the logistics infrastructure. The study explains that the development of the hub affects other transport sectors in the region and changes the importance of ports and stations in the shipping networks. In addition, hub development will change trade patterns and infrastructure needs. The development of Uzbekistan's logistics hub will affect the port system in Central Asia, which must decide whether to compete or cooperate and compete. To holistically study the development of Uzbekistan's logistics hub, this research also analyzes the cargo transportation network of the Republic of Uzbekistan and identifies the ports or centers that will be directly affected in the short term. For this, a qualitative analysis supported by interviews with agents involved in Central Asian shipping networks is used. Recommendations for the Government of Uzbekistan and the Asian region for affected ports are presented to maximize the benefits of hub development.

In order to conclude about the excellent geographical location, it should be said that Uzbekistan should organize multimodal corridors of access to the sea and the straits connecting it. Control over an important sea route gives a country a strategic advantage and enables the development of maritime infrastructure to use it as a resource or logistics capacity. High-speed rail and highway connections are essential for connecting other land-based logistics infrastructures within the country.

Relying on the results of research in recent years, it can be said that globalization has increased the international exchange of products and services, and the identification and installation of cross-border transport network connectivity throughout the Asian region with analysis should now be one of the main priority goals. A number of studies conducted in Asia show that countries that are geographically close can benefit significantly from more trade if the costs of infrastructure and trade turnover are improved. All of these studies require efficient and integrated transport and logistics networks to improve the movement of goods and Services; Asia is known for its scattered production and economic networks across borders.

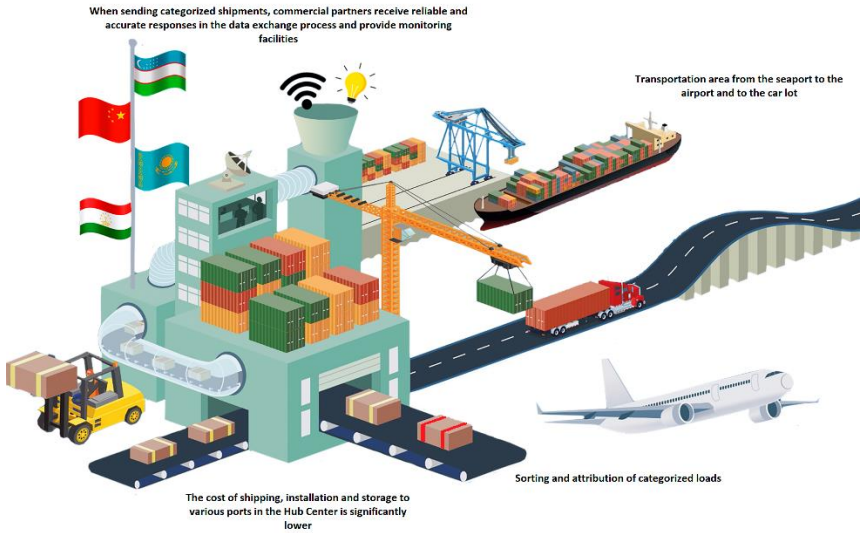

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Fig. 2 Formation and principle of operation of the logistics hub.

The ongoing global financial problems will take the integration of transport and logistics networks to a more critical stage to aid the growth of regional demands for Asian countries. Asia is now facing a new world economy that is radically different from what it dominated until the 1990s. In the modern world, the decline in communication and transport costs (along with technological development) has changed the comparative advantages of economies. However, if the actual Pan-Asian connection of its logistics infrastructures is not available, the current leading position of Asian trade can be replaced. What Asia needs now is to restore the modern "Silk Road". The ancient trade route stretching from Asia to Europe was one of the most important transboundary arteries in the world until the 13th century. While the trade turnover between Asia and the rest of the world is growing again, a modern Silk Road should be built for Sustainable Economic Development in Asia. Attempts to develop a transport network across Asia have begun since the 1960s. However, it was not until the 1980s that little success was achieved. Significant political and economic changes in the region in the 1980s and early 1990s eventually facilitated the mobility of trade and production factors in Asia.

Fig. 3 Map of potential directions of transportation, using Uzbek territory as a logistics hub.

Of course, Uzbekistan's LPI rating is impressive (2023 - 88). In particular, it contributes to the formation of the prospects of neighboring countries (Afghanistan - 138, Tajikistan - 97, Kazakhstan - 79, Armenia - 97, Kyrgyzstan - 123). These indicators bring Uzbekistan to a standard that is popular among Asian countries, which is evident in the LPI ranking, where according to statistics, Uzbekistan scores higher than Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

Table 1 Comparison of Uzbekistan's 2016 – 2023 outputs in LPI with Kazakhstan.

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Country	Year	LPI Rank	LPI Score	Customs score	Infrastructure score	International shipments	Logistics competence	Timeliness
Kazakhstan	2016	77	2.75	2.52	2.76	2.75	2.57	3.06
	2023	79	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.9
Uzbekistan	2016	118	2.4	2.32	2.45	2.36	2.39	2.83
	2023	88	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.8

Uzbekistan is progressing in all categories noted by the World Bank. At the same time, the modernization of infrastructure is the most observed. From 2.39 points in 2016 to 2.6 points in 2023.

In world practice, the establishment of special economic zones with state regulatory support and preferential tax regime for the development of logistics hub, simplified and accelerated customs operations, the presence of customs points and the acquisition of land will help. From this point of view, it would be more attractive for investors and operators if the hub was given the same status as a free economic zone. At the same time, this industrial and logistics hub should be distinguished from other free economic zones and provide unique features for a cross-border center. For example, cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan should improve border crossing procedures through development, production and investment, and have a positive impact on the economy at the international level.

This development is the result of huge infrastructure projects in the field of transport construction. Within the framework of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway line construction project, the construction of efficient crossings and the construction of high-speed railways and highways attracting investments from the private logistics sector has become a priority and urgent topic. Fergana Valley, Termez, and above all, Tashkent, which has 65% of all projects in the logistics sector, are the locations for warehouse infrastructure needed in these densely populated areas.

International logistics chains serve such a configuration of production processes, which helps to obtain benefits arising from the use of opportunities and potentials located anywhere in the world. These connections make it possible to achieve modern logistics achievements on a global scale. Countries that have specific characteristics to create qualitative or quantitative advantages in production processes create an existing potential for logistics operators. In Asia, this potential is highly developed technologies and logistics management systems. Developing countries such as China, which have the most productive resources in the world, are interested in cooperation with Asian producers. The view of trade as a source of influence should be complemented by the statement that trade partnerships allow for maintaining a certain level or employment and sustainable growth of the country's economy. Global supply chains can help you find the potential and opportunity to deliver value more efficiently. In other words, the transformation to a green economy helps to increase competitiveness by comparing the sources

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of value. It is necessary to pay attention to what is the main product exported from Europe or other countries. Because the largest share of exports outside the EU is a group of products characterized as machinery and transport equipment. These products are mainly exported to the USA and China. It is a highly specialized product in the high-tech European industry. This is also due to the scientific and manufacturing potential of Europe, as well as economic growth in Asia, mainly China.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed research strategy was used in the preparation of this article, which implies complementary quantitative and qualitative methods. The main research questions were as follows: - what factors are important in the formation of an industrial and logistics hub in the border regions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan? Based on this, what components are included in the industrial and logistics hub model? - What are the directions of development of the industrial logistics hub in the border regions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan? This project uses a descriptive type of research. It consists not only of a systematic literature review and statistical data on the research topic, but also includes the implementation of theoretical research, comparison, summarization and analysis of results, providing evidence and forming conclusions, practical recommendations and suggestions. This made it possible to determine the factors for the development of international cargo transportation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in order to deepen the economic integration of the border regions.

RESULTS

Strengthen cooperation on trans-Caspian international transport corridors, work with relevant countries to develop the "Fourth Logistics Corridor" (an international road transport corridor between China and Europe through Central Asia), further improve the system of regional international road transport agreements, and improve the efficiency of transport logistics.

Further development and deepening of cooperation in the field of transport and logistics, implementation of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of building cross-border transport infrastructure, and facilitating transportation.

Promote technological innovation in the transport sector, promote the digital transformation and intelligent upgrading of transport, and the improvement of transport services.

Promote the green and low-carbon transformation of transport, improve the level of green, low-carbon, and circular development, and promote the quality and sustainable development of transport.

Over the past two years, Kazakhstan's exports to Uzbekistan have decreased, while Uzbekistan's exports to Kazakhstan have increased. The decrease in Kazakhstan's export index is due to the reduction of tonnage in the transportation of grain, metal scrap, oil products and coal. The increase in the export of Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan was caused by the increase in the volume of transportation of construction materials, chemicals, soda ash, ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Transit shows the importance of transit trade, similar to the sum of rail transport imports and exports. Currently, more than 50 percent of the trade turnover of Uzbekistan passes through the territory of Kazakhstan. Road traffic recovered significantly in 2021 after declining in 2020. Exports of Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan and transit transportation of Uzbekistan through Kazakhstan showed strong double-digit

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growth. Goods transported from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan include wood and products made from it, rubber and products made from it, chemicals, apparatus and equipment. In the opposite direction, goods such as consumer goods, gas, and textiles are sent by trucks. The volume of cargo transportation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is presented in Fig 4.

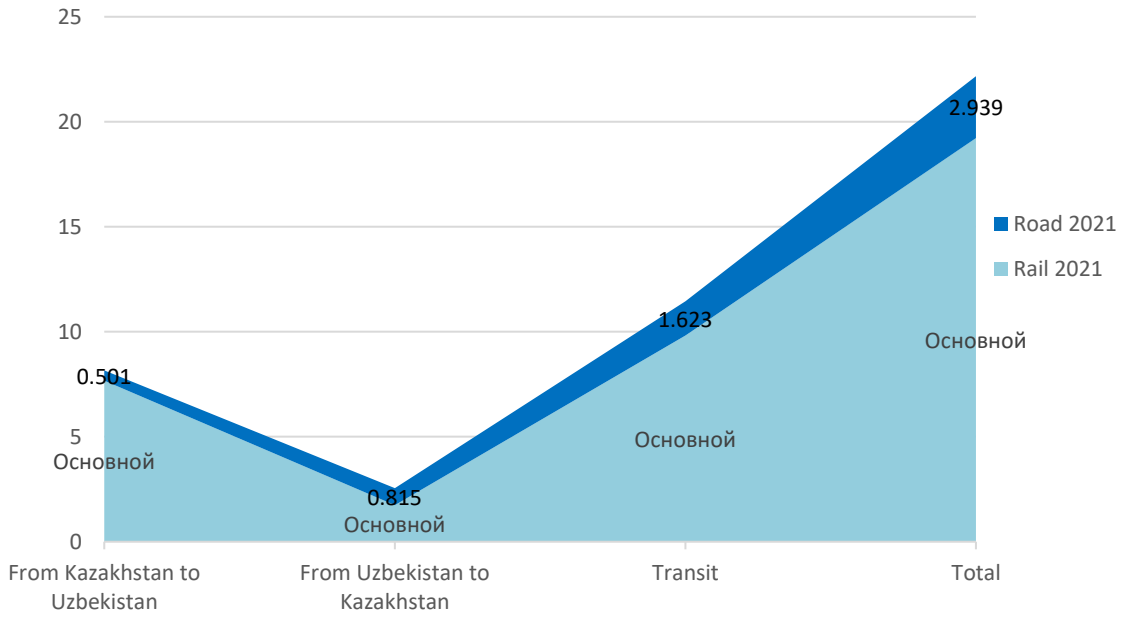

Fig. 4 Volumes of transportation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, million tons.

Although in recent times the efforts of the two countries have focused on the development of transit corridors, it should be taken into account that the interests of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan do not overlap in certain areas. For example, Uzbekistan is actively supporting the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project, bypassing the territory of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan also supported a project to build the Mazori Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar Railway in Uzbekistan as an opportunity to access the future transafgan corridor. But without serious investments, without the support of the Taliban and Pakistan, which should guarantee the safety of the railway, this cannot be done. For Central Asian countries, cooperation within the framework of the North-South international corridor with access to Iranian seaports is also important for India [2].

The cases presented in the study showed the importance of logistics centers for international freight corridors. In addition, Uzbekistan may face a decrease in transit revenues due to temporary restrictions on cargo transportation in the territory of the Russian Federation. The country has been the main beneficiary of the United Transport and Logistics Company (UTLC) regular cargo container train from China to Europe via Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. Traffic from China to Europe has grown rapidly, from 1,600 to 10,000 in 2021.

There are a few problems and factors to the development of cross-border logistics centers:

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1. Infrastructure underdevelopment. The railway network in the region was built mainly during the Soviet period, and many sections are not up to the level of demand. The capacity of the railway stations located in the border regions is not enough to transport such a large amount of cargo. There is a lack of necessary equipment at the entrances for receiving/dispatching containers. Intrusive inspection equipment, such as X-ray machines, is either non-existent or outdated and often breaks down, forcing customs officials to manually inspect vehicles and cargo. All of the above is the reason for their high costs and the time it takes to cross borders in the region. The shortage of freight wagons in Uzbekistan is causing delays in the return of wagons belonging to other countries from Uzbekistan. This increases the cost of shipping goods to Uzbekistan, as wagon owners in Kazakhstan do not want to rent their wagons for shipping to Uzbekistan.

Solution. Adoption of a financing program with a rate of up to 4 percent aimed at encouraging the purchase of universal platforms for the transportation of goods and containers.

2. Low level of digitalization and application of information systems. Due to the lack of information support, foreign carriers and service consumers cannot track their cargo and vehicles. Therefore, they are suspicious of the transportation of goods through the territory of Uzbekistan.

Solution. It is necessary to create and develop integrated transport services based on a digital platform. Thus, after analyzing the factors affecting the development of the corridors between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, it will be possible to determine the components that should be included in the model of the industrial and logistics hub in the border area.

Digitization of the logistics hub and the creation of an "Intelligent Dry Port" is an open and neutral platform that connects multiple systems and provides a secure and intelligent exchange of information between the various organizations that make up the port community (CAREC, 2021).

CAREC 2030 was developed through consultation and participation. In the first half of 2017, consultations were held in all CAREC member countries with the participation of more than 350 government representatives, multilateral and bilateral development partners, think tanks, academia, the private sector, and business associations. Valuable guidance and comments received during these consultations are reflected in this strategy paper.

Several CAREC-supported themes are prominent in the national development strategies of participating countries that are being implemented or are currently under development. All development strategies focus primarily on economic growth and job creation, with an emphasis on sound macroeconomic structure and financial sector stability. Kazakhstan's strategy is aimed at economic diversification. The Afghan National Peace and Development Framework seeks to improve banking regulation and financial sector inclusiveness; and Pakistan Vision 2025 aims to deepen financial services. Three other strategies - Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan - provide regional approaches to contain economic and currency volatility and are aimed at ensuring a stable monetary policy and strengthening the financial sector. Azerbaijan and Mongolia have made banking sector and capital market reforms an important part of their medium-term strategies. Georgia is also implementing broad reforms, including capital market reforms and pension reforms. The Development Strategy of Xinjiang (PRC) places particular emphasis on financial

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inclusion. The liberalization of fiscal and monetary policy and the development of insurance markets are elements of the later stages of Turkmenistan's reform strategy until 2030. Countries seek to stabilize cross-country capital flows and develop capital markets.

Transport has a special place, especially in the context of regional corridors, but also in the areas of improving asset management, institutions, and financing - Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and the countries of Central Asia. A The ll countries in their national development strategies recognize the critical importance of improving water management (Pakistan), improving water storage (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan) and cooperation in optimizing water-energy linkages.

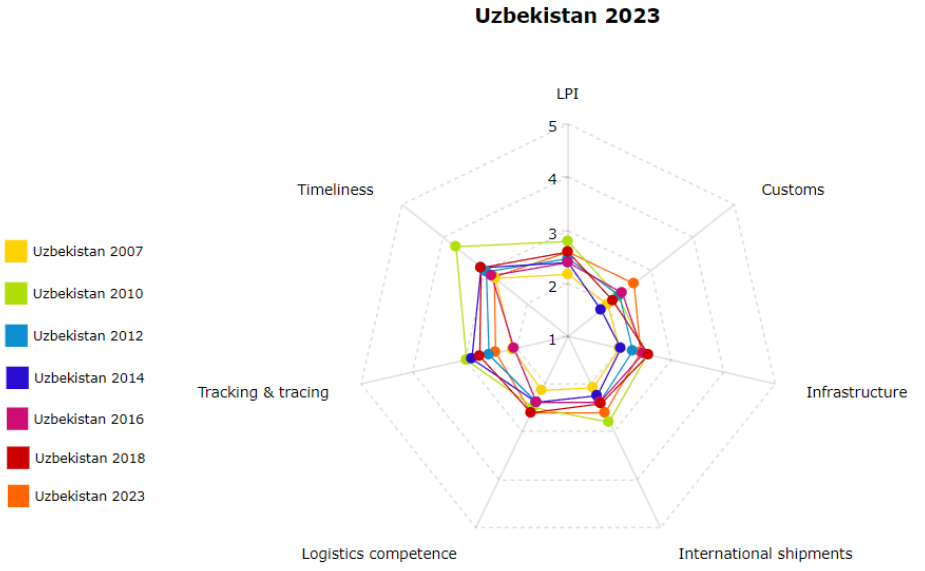

Fig. 5 Development of Uzbekistan's performance in LPI (2007 – 2023). Source: LPI World Bank

Integrating the use of ICTs across the spectrum of CAREC activities is a priority to improve the quality of public services and support private sector growth. CAREC countries still need to fill the digital gap, which requires investment in ICT and knowledge services to improve the availability and efficiency of public services, increase productivity, ensure smoother people-to-people contacts, and support integration into regional and global value chains [3].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be said that Uzbekistan, like neighboring countries, does not have direct access to the sea. At the same time, Uzbekistan is increasing its trade, export and transport potential. The study showed that this situation implies finding a common basis for participation in international transport corridors, despite the fact that our country carries out its own transport. In the context of global problems, cross-border cooperation processes are deepening. Cross-border relations of countries on participation in existing international transport corridors stimulate the development of not only border areas, but also the entire national economy. Transport and trade infrastructure will be developed due to the formation of transport logistics centers that ensure the continuous transportation of goods across the border. It is possible to establish such centers in the bordering

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regions of neighboring countries, improve their infrastructure, and ensure employment of the population. However, the study identified the main factors hindering the development of such centers, which are detailed above. Currently, the most intractable cases are delays in customs inspection and inconsistencies in the legal basis of the transportation process. Returning to the underdevelopment of the infrastructure, this issue requires a comprehensive solution at the government level. Special attention should be paid to the low level of digitization and use of information systems. The reason is to speed up the process of creating and developing integrated transport services based on a digital platform. In addition, the use of non-tariff barriers is also a concern. In this regard, it is necessary to move to an open and transparent model of tariff and transit policy formation by transit countries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The article reflects the results of the author as part of the research carried out at the Graduate School of Business and Entrepreneurship (GSBE) in 2021-2023 in accordance with the relevant order of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Digital Economy and digital international integration processes. In the end, the research has a scientific approach to the formation of the national brand of Uzbekistan in the international environment (4th quarter of 2021 - 2nd quarter of 2023) and readiness for hybrid strategies in the period of changes.

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