

Uzbekistan's Intellectual Property Reform: From Watch List to Recognised Reformer

Sanjarbek Tursunov

Chief Consultant at Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Received: 06 June 2026; **Accepted:** 03 July 2026; **Published:** 28 July 2026

Abstract: The article examines the reform of Uzbekistan's intellectual property system over the period 2022–2026. It describes the distributed institutional framework in which enforcement is shared among the Ministry of Justice and specialised bodies responsible for economic crime, customs, competition, culture, telecommunications and pharmaceutical safety, with interagency coordination formalised through joint decisions on information exchange and joint action.

Keywords: Intellectual property; legal reform; TRIPS Agreement; enforcement; counterfeit goods; trademark protection; copyright; statutory compensation; administrative and criminal liability; customs control.

Introduction: Over the past four years, Uzbekistan has rebuilt its intellectual property system from the ground up – modernising legislation, strengthening enforcement, digitalising oversight and deepening cooperation with international partners.

The results are now visible in independent international assessments: in the 2024 Special 301 Report of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, Uzbekistan was removed from the Watch List for the first time since 2000. In the Global Innovation Index, the country climbed from 93rd place in 2020 to 79th in 2025.

For Uzbekistan, reliable IP protection is not a compliance exercise. It is a precondition for attracting investment, for moving domestic industry up the value chain, and for allowing national brands to compete internationally.

A coordinated institutional framework

Enforcement in Uzbekistan is deliberately distributed across specialised agencies, which registers IP objects and leads action against the manufacture and sale of counterfeit goods. Partner institutions include:

Department for Combating Economic Crimes – shutting down clandestine counterfeit production;

Customs Committee – detecting and halting infringing goods at and within the border;

Competition and Consumer Protection Committee – addressing unfair competition in the use of IP;

Ministry of Culture – overseeing royalty payments for staged and performed works;

Inspection for Control in the Sphere of Informatization and Telecommunications – monitoring copyright and related rights in online and on social platforms;

Centre for Safety of Pharmaceutical Products – verifying IP compliance in the registration of medicines, medical devices and equipment.

Coordination is formalised: two joint decisions now govern information exchange and joint action between justice, prosecution, tax and customs authorities.

Legislative reform

Since 2022, more than 70 draft legal acts on IP have been prepared, of which 51 have been adopted. To align national law with international standards, 19 international treaties have been ratified and 18 bilateral agreements signed. Work to bring national legislation into full conformity with the WTO TRIPS Agreement has been completed.

Key substantive changes include:

a) civil remedies.

Because calculating actual damages proved difficult in practice, courts may now award statutory

compensation of 20 to 1,000 times the base calculation unit for infringement of trademarks, industrial property and copyright. To date, 1.8 billion soums in compensation has been recovered from infringers.

Criminal liability was introduced for infringement of economic rights in trademarks, inventions, software and industrial designs, and strengthened for violations of authors' moral rights, with a broader range of protected objects covered.

b) corporate liability.

A gap in the law meant legal entities faced no sanction for unlawful use of another's trademark, trade name or industrial property. Fines of 100 to 200 times the base calculation unit now apply.

Administrative penalties were raised across the board: from 15 to 30 times the base unit for copyright and related rights infringement, and from 30 to 50 times for unlawful use of trademarks, service marks, appellations of origin and trade names. Confiscation of items used in patent-related infringement was added as a supplementary penalty.

Other milestones: The Law on Geographical Indications – under which 29 geographical indications are now registered and protected; extension of the copyright term from 50 to 70 years; ex officio powers for customs authorities; and a Supreme Court Plenum ruling consolidating judicial practice in IP cases.

Enforcement in practice

Public awareness and enforcement capacity have grown together. The number of IP objects afforded legal protection rose from 973 in 2023 to 1,548 in 2024 and 3,709 in 2025, with 2,225 recorded in the same period of 2026.

In 2026 alone, more than 60,000 counterfeit items were inventoried, and 14,046 were confiscated under court decisions.

Digital tools. The “Asl belgisi” national digital marking system is now used to monitor IP compliance and restrict circulation of counterfeits. Monitoring identified the import of 11,524 counterfeit items across 17 product types under the HOFMANN trademark, and halted circulation of 88,000 counterfeit items under the Parka mark.

Pharmaceutical sector. Screening of over 8,000 registered dietary supplements identified 77 whose names infringed IP rights; of nearly 300 registered medicines reviewed, 6 involved trademark violations.

Transparency. From 1 January 2027, inspections of business entities by justice bodies will be conducted using body-worn cameras; all officers with inspection powers have already been equipped.

Prevention, outreach and business support

Enforcement is paired with sustained public education. Since 2022 the ministry has run an annual “Counterfeit-Free Month”, joined in October 2025 by a “Protection of Art and Creativity” campaign.

Wider outreach has included 87 awareness banners in 78 markets, 62 training seminars, 90+ roundtables in schools, universities and research institutes, 86 video and radio materials, 205 social media posts, 15,000 copies of a counterfeit product catalogue, and a public challenge featuring 29 writers, actors and performers.

The patent attorney profession has been strengthened. Attorneys may now practise as individual entrepreneurs or as employees and represent clients in court.

International cooperation

Uzbekistan has acceded to eight international treaties, including the Hague System for industrial designs.

Cooperation with WIPO has entered a new phase. A roadmap for deeper engagement was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, in addition, cooperation was established between the Tashkent Mediation Centre and the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center. Uzbekistan will supply data on restricted websites to the WIPO ALERT platform.

Moreover, bilateral memoranda and roadmaps are in place with the United Kingdom, Russia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

CONCLUSION

The trajectory of the past four years is consistent in one respect: Uzbekistan has moved from declarative commitments to measurable outcomes. Fifty-one adopted legal acts, full alignment with the TRIPS Agreement, accession to the Hague System and nineteen ratified international treaties have given the country a legal framework that international partners can read and rely on.

Removal from the USTR Watch List after 24 consecutive years, and a fourteen-place improvement in the Global Innovation Index, are the external confirmation of that shift. They are not, however, treated in Tashkent as an end point.

For foreign rights holders, investors and creative industries, the practical significance is straightforward. Uzbekistan today offers a registration system connected to the principal international instruments, courts with consolidated guidance on IP disputes, customs authorities empowered to act on their own initiative, statutory compensation that makes litigation economically rational, and a specialised administrative track that resolves most cases without recourse to the

courts. Rights holders encountering infringement in Uzbekistan have identifiable counterparties, defined procedures and, increasingly, a documented record of outcomes.

The Ministry of Justice regards international engagement as integral to this work – not as a reporting obligation, but as the mechanism through which national practice is tested against global standards.

REFERENCES

1. Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), World Trade Organization, 1994. Available at: wto.org;
2. Global Innovation Index. Geneva: World Intellectual Property Organization, editions 2020 and 2025. www.wipo.int;
3. Special 301 Report. Washington, D.C.: Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2024. www.ustr.gov;
4. Law “On Copyright and Related Rights” – No. LRU–42 of July 20, 2006;
5. Law “On Trademarks, Service Marks and Appellations of Origin” – No. 267–II of August 30, 2001;
6. Law “On Inventions, Utility Models and Industrial Designs” – No. 397-II of August 29, 2002;
7. Law “On Geographical Indications” – adopted in 2022;
8. Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Reports and statistics on intellectual property enforcement, 2023–2026;