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# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN UZBEKISTAN

Kholov Aktam Khatamovich
Dean of the Academy of Public Policy and Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, PhD in Economics, Associate Professor

Akhmedov Zafar Kadirovich
Head of the Department of Spiritual and Educational Issues and Youth Work, Urgench Technological University (RANCH)

**Abstract**
This article analyzes the strategic priority directions of industrial policy outlined in the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Oliy Majlis and the people, through the lens of the "disruptive technological leap" (Technological leap radically changing existing production and management models hereinafter DTL) concept. The study highlights the role of management in modernizing industry and improving governance through approaches such as benchmarking, swarm intelligence, and servitization, as well as the role of small industrial zones (SIZ) as regional drivers. The article provides a scientific-analytical assessment of the socio-economic impacts of industrial transformation.

**Keywords**: Industrial policy, Disruptive technological leap, Small industrial zones, Swarm intelligence, Servitization, Circular economy.

**Annotatsiya**
Mazkur maqolada O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining Oliy Majlisga va xalqimizga yo‘llagan Murojaatnomasida belgilangan sanoat siyosatining

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strategik ustuvor yo‘nalishlari "disruptive technological leap" (mavjud ishlab chiqarish va boshqaruv modellarini tubdan o‘zgartiruvchi texnologik sakrash keyinchalik DTL) konsepsiyasi prizmasi orqali tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda sanoatni modernizatsiya qilish va boshqaruvini takomillashtirishda menejmentning benchmarking, swarm intelligence va servitizatsiya yondashuvlarining o‘rni, shuningdek, kichik sanoat zonalarining (KSZ) hududiy drayver sifatidagi roli yoritilgan. Maqolada sanoat transformatsiyasining ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy samaralari ilmiy-analitik jihatdan baholangan.
Kalit so‘zlar: Sanoat siyosati, Disruptive technological leap, Kichik sanoat zonalari, Swarm intelligence, Servitizatsiya, Sirkulyar iqtisodiyot.

**Аннотация:**
В данной статье анализируются стратегические приоритетные направления промышленной политики, обозначенные в Послании Президента Республики Узбекистан Олий Мажлису и народу страны, через призму концепции «disruptive technological leap» (Технологический скачок, радикально изменяющий существующие производственные и управленческие модели далее DTL). В исследовании освещается роль менеджмента в модернизации промышленности и совершенствовании управления с использованием подходов benchmarking, swarm intelligence и сервитизации, а также роль малых промышленных зон (МПЗ) как территориальных драйверов. В статье научно-аналитически оцениваются социально-экономические эффекты промышленной трансформации.

**Ключевые слова:** Промышленная политика, Disruptive technological leap, Малые промышленные зоны, Swarm intelligence, Сервитизация, Циркулярная экономика.

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## Introduction

At present, Uzbekistan is entering a qualitatively new stage of economic growth within the framework of the "Uzbekistan–2030" Strategy. The expectation that gross domestic product will exceed USD 145 billion by the end of 2025 necessitates a transition in the industrial sector from an extensive development model to an innovation-driven and intensive one. From this perspective, industry is regarded as the "locomotive" of the national economy, becoming a decisive factor in positioning the country among upper-middle-income economies.

As emphasized by the Head of State, only those countries that are capable of producing high value-added goods can remain competitive in the global market[1]. This, in turn, necessitates the application of a "technological leap" (DLT) strategy in industrial policy. In order to achieve energy efficiency, priority is given to reducing energy intensity in production processes. According to fact-checking results, in 2025 the amount of fuel consumption per one dollar of output decreased by 13 percent, which generated an additional USD 1 billion in value added[2].

The Head of State has defined clear, step-by-step transformation targets (milestones) for the industrial sector. These include increasing the volume of value added generated in industry from USD 36.5 billion to USD 60 billion, as well as expanding the production of medium- and high-technology goods by 2.5 times. Starting from 2026, the implementation of 782 new projects worth USD 52 billion is planned, of which 228 are expected to be launched in the short term. Within this process, the expansion of the capacities of the Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Combine and the Almalyk Mining and Metallurgical Combine, along with the establishment of new chemical clusters in Samarkand and Qashqadarya, is of critical importance[3].

[1] Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834
[2] Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistanhttps://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834
[3] Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistanhttps://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834

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This article provides, for the first time under the conditions of Uzbekistan, a scientific justification for the concept of establishing eco-industrial zones[4] specialized in household waste recycling, based on the principles of the circular economy, servitization, and swarm intelligence.

## Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This article integrates several contemporary concepts of industrial development, including Disruptive Technological Leap (DTL)—a technological breakthrough that transforms existing production models not incrementally but in a fundamental (radical) manner; benchmarking, which involves the localization of "best practices" from leading countries and companies; swarm intelligence, defined as a mechanism of collective and adaptive decision-making among entities within small industrial zones; and servitization, whereby industrial enterprises provide not only products but also complementary packages of high-technology services.

In this context, the application of the benchmarking method based on the experience of developed countries is considered appropriate. This analytical approach aims to identify strengths and weaknesses through systematic comparison of sectoral performance with indicators of advanced economies, leading firms, or the most effective institutional models. Through benchmarking, advanced practices are identified, and the feasibility of adapting them to local conditions is assessed.

In shaping industrial policy, benchmarking plays a crucial role in evaluating the pace of technological development, determining levels of competitiveness, and identifying priority directions for disruptive technological leap processes.

[4] Normativ-huquqiy hujjatlar loyihalari muhokamasi portali. Mamlakatning 2030 yilgacha mo'ljallangan taraqqiyotining ustuvor yo'nalishlari doirasida islohotlarni izchil davom ettirish va yangi bosqichga olib chiqishning qo'shimcha chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida Loyiha ID:8712 https://regulation.adliya.uz/project/8712/22983?contentLang=oz

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Importantly, benchmarking encompasses not only outcomes but also governance mechanisms, institutional efficiency, and value-added creation chains.

The concept of the disruptive technological leap (hereinafter referred to as DTL), which entails a fundamental transformation of existing production and management models, is increasingly recognized as one of the most significant contemporary approaches. This perspective interprets technological development not as gradual modernization, but as a disruptive process that radically reshapes existing production, governance, and institutional frameworks.

DTL establishes new efficiency standards in traditional industrial sectors through the application of artificial intelligence, digital platforms, automation, and data-driven management. In this process, the key advantage lies not solely in the technology itself, but in its rapid implementation and integration with flexible governance and collective decision-making mechanisms based on swarm intelligence.

In Uzbekistan's industrial policy, the DTL approach is particularly evident in the operation of small industrial zones (SIZs). These zones function as "testing grounds" for piloting new technologies, enabling rapid scaling and the regional diffusion of innovations, thereby reducing institutional inertia in industrial development. As a result, industrial competitiveness increases, and integration into global value-added chains accelerates.

The scientific foundations of integrating eco-industrial zones (EIZs) with SIZs are based on the principle of industrial symbiosis, whereby the waste or by-products of one enterprise serve as raw materials for another. The geographical proximity of enterprises within SIZs enables the formation of a "closed-loop" system, optimizing the exchange of energy, water, and materials, and consequently reducing production costs.

Within the processes of institutional transformation and the adoption of "green" standards, the eco-transformation of SIZs requires the introduction of ISO 14001 (environmental management) and ISO 50001 (energy management) standards

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into governance systems. This facilitates the integration of resident enterprises into international "green supply chains."

Given that the textile industry is one of the leading sectors of Uzbekistan's economy, the integration of EIZs and SIZs is examined through an analytical case example in this sector. Textile production is highly resource-intensive, particularly in terms of water and energy consumption. In this context, the EIZ model contributes to cost reduction through industrial symbiosis. The analysis is grounded in the application of a resource exchange model.

In conventional SIZs, each enterprise independently purchases water and energy and disposes of waste separately. Under EIZ integration, enterprises are interconnected: hot wastewater discharged from dyeing units is redirected through specialized heat exchangers to preheat raw materials for other enterprises. Through a centralized filtration system, 70–80 percent of water is recycled back into production.

Based on analytical calculations (using a hypothetical example), a SIZ area contains ten textile enterprises.

A) Each enterprise consumes 100 $m^3$ of clean water per day, resulting in a total consumption of 1,000 $m^3$/day. Following the introduction of a water recycling system under the EIZ model, total consumption is reduced to 300 $m^3$/day. Over one year (300 working days), this results in water savings of 210,000 $m^3$. Assuming a water price of 3,800 UZS per $m^3$, annual savings amount to 798 million UZS.

B) Through heat recovery, natural gas consumption is reduced by an average of 15–20 percent. This not only lowers production costs but also reduces the product's carbon footprint, facilitating exports to European markets under green certification requirements.

Based on these findings, the following measures are recommended: the construction of a unified water treatment and waste recycling complex serving all resident enterprises within the SIZ, rather than individual facilities for each

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enterprise; the implementation of a digital monitoring system to track resource consumption and waste volumes of each enterprise in real time; and the introduction of tax incentives for enterprises adopting eco-industrial principles, along with support in obtaining international eco-label certification.

**Improvement of the Governance System and the Role of Small Industrial Zones**

Achieving the established objectives is not possible without effective institutional transformation. Therefore, the functioning of the economic and investment blocks is being fundamentally restructured. Within this framework, the "single window" principle has been implemented through the invest.gov.uz platform, significantly reducing bureaucratic barriers for investors[5].

Small industrial zones (SIZs) play a pivotal role in this process, emerging as flexible systems grounded in collective governance and the principles of swarm intelligence. Currently, 507 SIZs are operating nationwide, covering more than 3.4 thousand hectares.

Servitization in SIZs implies that resident enterprises are provided not only with land, but also with integrated packages of consulting, logistics, marketing, and financial services. The application of circular economy principles and industrial symbiosis—through waste recycling and the shared use of resources—enables cost reductions of up to 20 percent.

In terms of socio-economic efficiency, the social impact of the industrial strategy is reflected in several key outcomes: the creation of more than one million high-income jobs over a five-year period; a reduction of the poverty rate to 4.5 percent by 2026 and the transformation of local communities into centers of industrial and service activities.

[5] Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834

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In the process of industrial transformation, a system of key milestones has been introduced, which are presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Key Target Indicators of Industrial Development in Uzbekistan (2025–2030)[6]**

| Indicator | 2025-year | 2030-year (plan) | Growth |
|---|---|---|---|
| Value added generated in industry (USD billion) | 36,5 | 60,0 | 1,6 |
| Share of high-technology products (%) | 22 | 45 | +23 |
| Share of finished goods exports (%) | 48 | 55+ | +7 |
| Number of industrial projects | - | 782 | - |
| New jobs created (thousand) | - | 1000 | - |

The table presents the key target indicators defined for the development of Uzbekistan's industrial sector for the period 2025–2030. These indicators are aimed at increasing the volume of value added, expanding the share of high-technology products, and promoting export growth. Based on the DTL concept, these targets enable industrial modernization, enhance competitiveness, and strengthen integration into international value chains. At the same time, the growth of investments provides a solid financial foundation for the sustainable and innovation-driven development of the industrial sector.

[6] Source: "Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy — State Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan (gov.uz)

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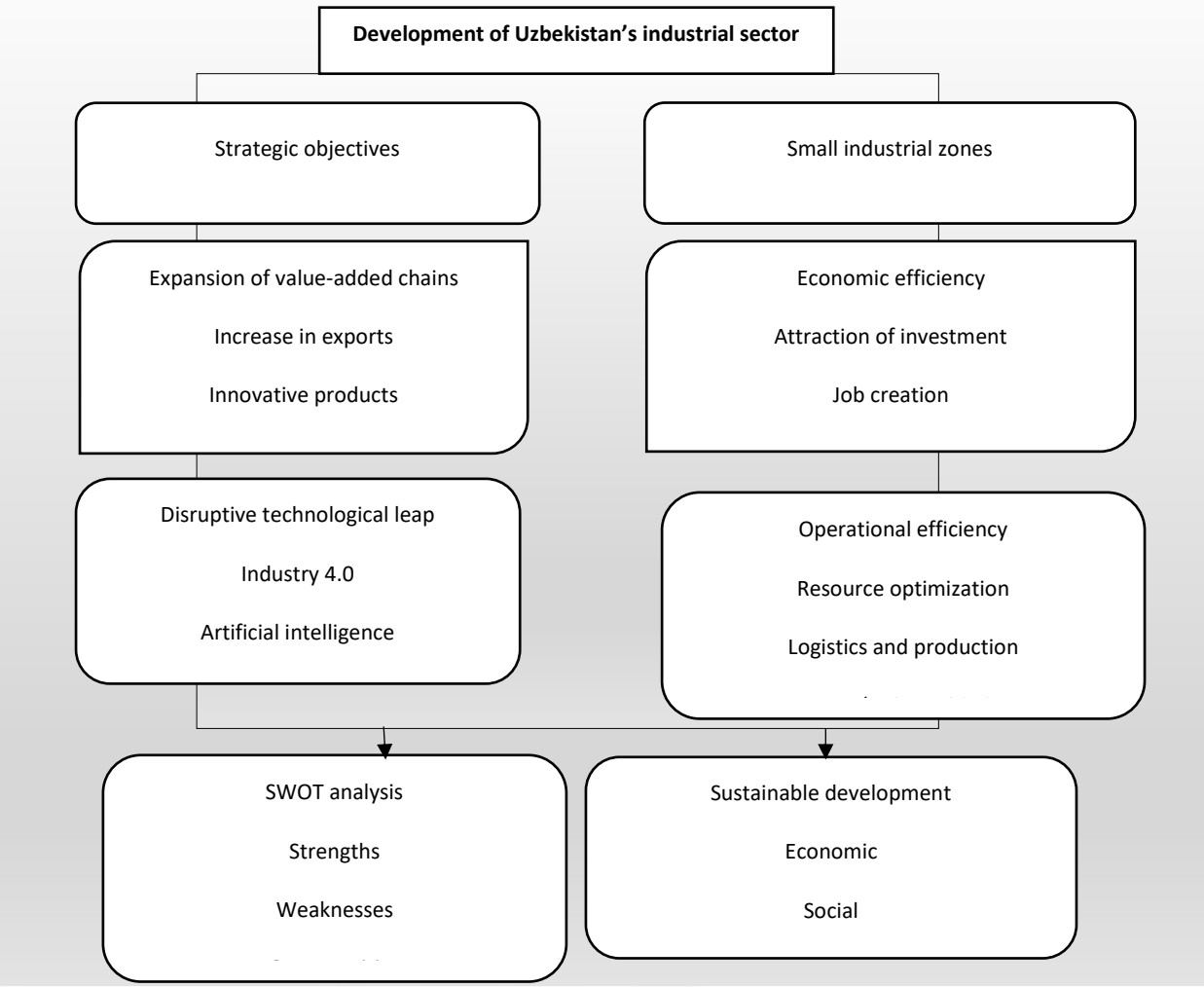


**Figure 1. Mental map of Uzbekistan's industrial development: a conceptual framework**[7]

In addition, a mental map was developed to support the advancement of this sector. The mental map illustrates the conceptual framework of the article and visually reflects the strategic significance of Uzbekistan's industrial sector and small industrial zones (SIZs). The scheme clearly demonstrates the

[7] Source: analysis developed based on the authors' independent research.

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interconnections between strategic objectives, value creation, the disruptive technological leap, the economic and operational efficiency of SIZs, SWOT analysis, and sustainable development blocks.

Based on an analysis of the current status of SIZ residents, the following SWOT matrix was formulated. These indicators provide a basis for implementing an effective risk management framework.

Figure 2. SWOT analysis of small business entities operating in small industrial zones [8]

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| •Clear specialization in specific product types and high adaptability to market demand<br>•Availability of opportunities to introduce new and innovative technologies<br>•Ability to rapidly identify market demand and adjust product assortments accordingly<br>•Capacity to establish effective communication with consumers across different market segments<br>•Rapid and precise identification of target audiences<br>•Potential to offer supplementary and mobile services (servitization)<br>•Opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with other enterprises and clusters<br>•Capacity to develop a unique selling proposition (USP)<br>•Positive and sustainable social relations with the local community<br>•Availability of state support mechanisms | •Insufficiency or limited availability of financial resources<br>•Low competitiveness of certain product categories<br>•Weak market reputation of companies and resident enterprises<br>•Difficulties in bringing products to the market<br>•Underdeveloped marketing activities<br>•Weakly established corporate governance and organizational culture<br>•Lack of strategic planning<br>•Low qualification levels of personnel<br>•Insufficient employee motivation<br>•Limited brand recognition<br>•Underdeveloped after-sales service systems<br>•Limited availability of additional and mobile service offerings |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| •Growing demand for substitute products in domestic and foreign markets<br>•Opportunities to implement digital technologies and Industry 4.0 solutions<br>•Access to export markets and expansion of value-added chains<br>•Implementation of new projects through public–private partnerships (PPP)<br>•Attraction of foreign investment and advanced technologies<br>•Development of logistics and infrastructure systems<br>•Adoption of circular economy and industrial symbiosis principles<br>•Utilization of support programs for small and medium-sized enterprises<br>•Formation of regional industrial clusters<br>•Integration with innovative startups and research and development centers | •Dominant market positions held by large competitors<br>•Supply chain instability and shortages of raw materials<br>•Declining demand in domestic and international markets<br>•Rapid changes in technological trends and consumer preferences<br>•Regulatory uncertainty and changes in customs and tax policies<br>•Intensifying competitive pressure<br>•Dependence of sales on seasonality factors<br>•Macroeconomic instability and risks of economic downturn |

[8] Source: analysis developed based on the authors' independent research.

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At this stage, several issues that require resolution can be identified:
– the absence of a fully developed system for accounting, in both physical and value terms, for products and services produced by small manufacturing enterprises by production lines, as well as for calculating their share in total output;
– insufficient attention to in-depth analysis of the problems associated with the development of small manufacturing entrepreneurship within small industrial zones and to the formulation of effective solutions;
– inadequate development of mechanisms for utilizing leasing and factoring services in the advancement of small manufacturing entrepreneurship.
In turn, the regulation of entrepreneurial activity within small industrial zones objectively requires consideration of the following factors:
– limited availability of material resources and production assets necessary for manufacturing activities;
– the need to consistently address socio-economic challenges under all economic conditions, including in a market economy;
– the inability, in all cases, to allocate material resources strictly based on market principles;
– the necessity of taking into account not only current needs but also long-term prospective requirements in the development of entrepreneurial activity.

**Table 2. Economic efficiency of small industrial zones** [9]

| **Indicator** | **Traditional industry** | **SIZ model** |
|---|---|---|
| **Transaction costs** | High | Low |
| **Time to launch** | 18–24 months | 6–9 months |
| Infrastructure readiness | Limited | Full (plug-and-play) |
| **Service support** | Absent | Servitization |
| **Resource efficiency** | Low | High (circular model) |

[9] Source: analysis developed based on the authors' independent research.

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As shown in the table, small industrial zones play a significant role in enhancing economic efficiency. They facilitate the effective attraction of investments and innovative technologies, contribute to job creation, and increase value added. The operation of SIZs improves economic outcomes through efficient resource utilization and the optimization of logistics and production processes. At the same time, they ensure greater stability in supplying products to both domestic and export markets.

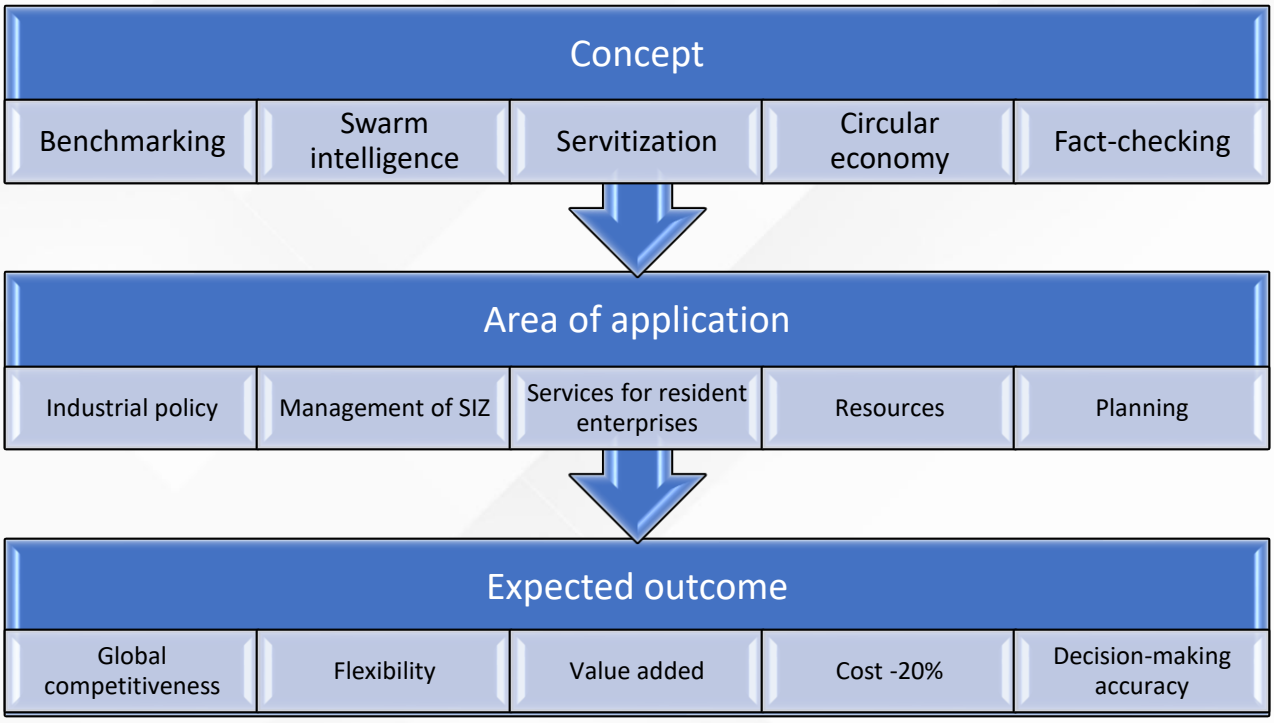


**Figure 3. Integration of modern concepts in industrial governance**[10]

**Existing Challenges and Proposed Solutions.** Accounting system: The methodology for accurately calculating the share of small business entities in total industrial output remains insufficiently developed.

[10] Source: analysis developed based on the authors' independent research.

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**Recommendations:**

Digital transformation through the enhancement of the invest.gov.uz platform with artificial intelligence components.

Science–industry integration: establishment of technology transfer centers within small industrial zones (SIZs).

Green transformation: introduction of Green Taxonomy standards aimed at reducing energy consumption in industry.

Financial instruments: limited adoption of leasing and factoring services among SIZ residents.

Analytical findings indicate that Uzbekistan is gradually transitioning toward the Industry 4.0 model. The establishment of a Fourth Industrial Revolution Center serves as an institutional foundation for the adoption of robotics and artificial intelligence.

To enhance the efficiency of SIZs, the following measures are proposed:

Digital monitoring: implementation of an automated evaluation system based on key performance indicators (KPIs) for each zone.

Environmental transformation: broader adoption of “green” standards and circular economy mechanisms.

Integration with science: establishment of technology transfer centers within SIZs and support for innovative startups.

Mental mapping: visualization of regional industrial development strategies and optimization of managerial decision-making based on mental maps.

In national industrial policy, the gradual transformation of existing SIZs into eco-industrial zone (EIZ) models is of strategic importance. The expected outcomes of such integration include a reduction in resource and logistics costs by 15–25 percent, a decrease in harmful environmental emissions by more than 30 percent, and enhanced opportunities to attract international grants and concessional financing for “green” projects.

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## Conclusion

Uzbekistan's industrial policy has entered a phase of profound qualitative transformation. The shift from an economy based on traditional production toward an innovation-driven, knowledge-based industrial system with high value added has become a key priority of state policy. Within this transformation, the disruptive technological leap approach plays a central role, emphasizing modernization through qualitative breakthroughs rather than incremental change. This approach enables the rapid elimination of technological lag, accelerated integration into global value chains, and enhanced competitiveness of the national industrial sector.

The priority objectives outlined in the 2025 Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan are aimed at guiding industry toward technological sovereignty, innovation independence, and export-oriented production. These objectives necessitate not only an expansion of production volumes but also a fundamental renewal of institutional and governance models within industry. In this regard, state-led institutional reforms—including the development of small industrial zones, the introduction of digital governance mechanisms, and the liberalization of the investment climate—have become integral components of industrial policy.

Small industrial zones are emerging as a strategic platform within this process. SIZs contribute to regional balance in production, stimulate entrepreneurial activity, increase employment, and facilitate the rapid adoption of innovations. Their flexibility, cost-efficient infrastructure model, and servitization-based approach complement large-scale industrial projects, forming a coherent industrial ecosystem. As a result, a synergistic effect is achieved between the strategic potential of major state-led projects and the operational flexibility of SIZs.

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At the same time, modern industrial development extends beyond the mere adoption of technologies. Research findings demonstrate that human capital, knowledge exchange, and new management and governance models—particularly those based on the principles of swarm intelligence (collective intelligence)—are critical to enhancing industrial efficiency. This model promotes a decentralized, adaptive, and data-driven approach to decision-making, as opposed to centralized governance, thereby strengthening the resilience of industrial systems to external shocks.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's industrial policy is not limited to adapting to global trends; rather, it is actively shaping a national industrial development model grounded in innovation, human capital, and advanced governance concepts. The integration of the disruptive technological leap strategy, institutional reforms, and the development of small industrial zones provides a solid foundation for long-term sustainable economic growth, stronger positioning in global value chains, and the country's transition toward a high-income economy.

Furthermore, the introduction of eco-industrial zones specialized in household waste recycling represents a practical embodiment of the DTL approach within Uzbekistan's industrial policy, integrating economic efficiency, environmental sustainability, and institutional transformation. The implementation of the eco-model in SIZs ensures cascading resource exchanges, effectively decoupling economic growth from environmental pressure. As a result, Uzbekistan's industrial sector aligns with global sustainable development standards, reinforcing its long-term resilience and competitiveness.

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