O'ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI MARKAZIY BANKI



CONCEPT

for supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

for 2026-2030



2026

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The document defines a strategic approach aimed at developing a system of financing and support for small and medium-sized businesses and is reviewed annually.

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Abbreviations and terms



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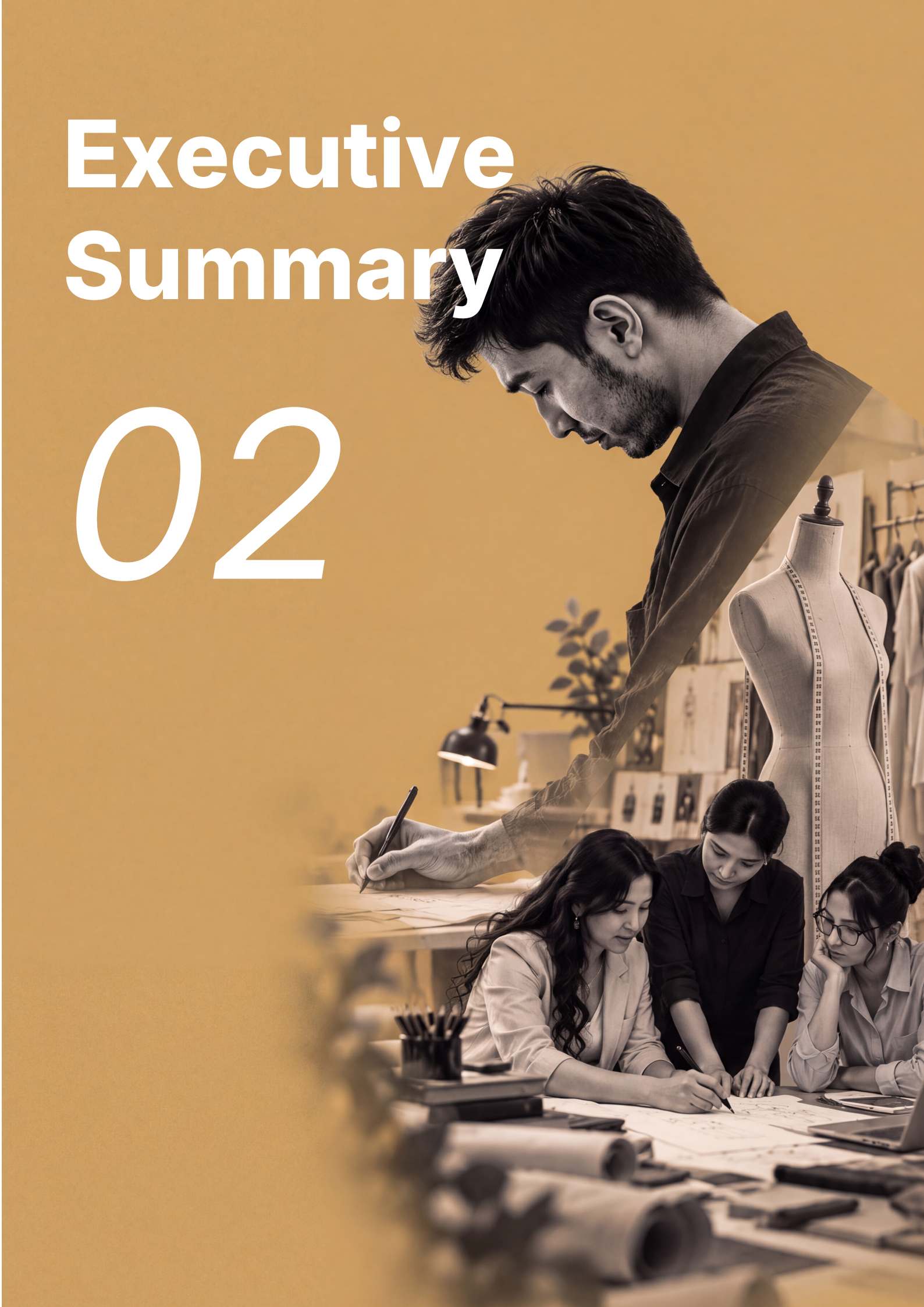
Abbreviations and terms

	Abbreviations / terms	Meaning
01	**SMEs**	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
02	**CB**	Central Bank
03	**FSAP**	Financial Sector Assessment Program of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank
04	**OECD**	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
05	**Open Banking**	A system enabling secure and standardised data sharing between banks and fintech companies, subject to customer consent
06	**API**	Application Programming Interface
07	**Regulatory Sandbox**	A special regulatory framework for testing financial services and technological solutions in a controlled environment.

Executive Summary

02



> 1/2

SMEs account for more than half of GDP.

3/4

SMEs account for nearly three-quarters of total employment.

HOWEVER

10% / 16%

10% of small businesses and 16% of medium-sized enterprises have access to credit.

The Concept brings together 25 initiatives for 2026–2030, linked to measurable targets, and is approved as a pilot framework subject to annual review.

This Concept reflects the Central Bank's vision for developing the system for financing and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in 2026–2030 and sets out a strategic approach to creating a more market-based, competitive and data-driven financial environment while maintaining financial and price stability.

The Concept has been developed to ensure the completeness and integrity of SME data; promote alternative lending approaches alongside collateral-based financing; improve alignment between the demand for and supply of finance; expand risk-sharing and credit guarantee mechanisms; enhance the effectiveness of public institutions' involvement; and diversify financial products.

Key Indicators: Current Levels and Targets for 2030

Indicators	Current Levels	Targets for 2030
SME loans as a share of GDP	12%	20%
SME Loan Portfolio	**218** UZS trillion	A twofold increase
Share of State Financial Institutions in SME Lending	73%	65% (55% if a major state-owned bank is privatised)
Share of Non-Bank Credit Institutions in Total Lending	1,7%	5%
Coverage of SMEs by Reliable and Accessible Credit Information	68% (Credit Bureau Coverage)	80%
Share of Online Microloans in Total Microloan Volume	—	60% (average delivery time is 1 hour)

Structure of the Proposed Measures

Area	Institutional	Financial infrastructure	Development of Financial Products	Overall
Number	17	5	3	25
Meaning	Legal, organisational and analytical foundations: new institutions, clear separation of functions, dispute resolution mechanisms, data quality and evidence-based decision-making.	Digital data exchange, alternative scoring, post-disbursement monitoring, collateral asset recovery, and a financial products marketplace.	Adapting products to the production cycles, cash flows and export operations of SMEs.	—

The Concept does not constitute a final or comprehensive regulatory framework.
The Concept is approved as a pilot and will be regularly discussed with market participants, experts and other stakeholders. The initiatives may be revised based on the outcomes of these discussions.



Introduction

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The sector's role in the economy

SMEs are a cornerstone of Uzbekistan's economy. According to the National Statistics Committee, as of 1 January 2026, 403,800 of the country's 474,900 active enterprises and organisations, or 85%, were small enterprises and microfirms. As of 1 July 2026, the total number of small business entities, including individual entrepreneurs, dehkan farms and artisans, reached 1,236,100. According to a World Bank study conducted in December 2025, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) account for more than 90% of businesses in the country, approximately 75% of employment and around 55% of GDP.

In the first half of 2026, small businesses generated 50.5% of GDP, equivalent to 518.7 UZS trillion in value added. The sector's density reached 32.2 entities per 1,000 people. During these six months alone, a further 44,000 small enterprises and microfirms were established. As of 1 July 2026, the sector comprised the following:

526.7 thousand **microfirms**

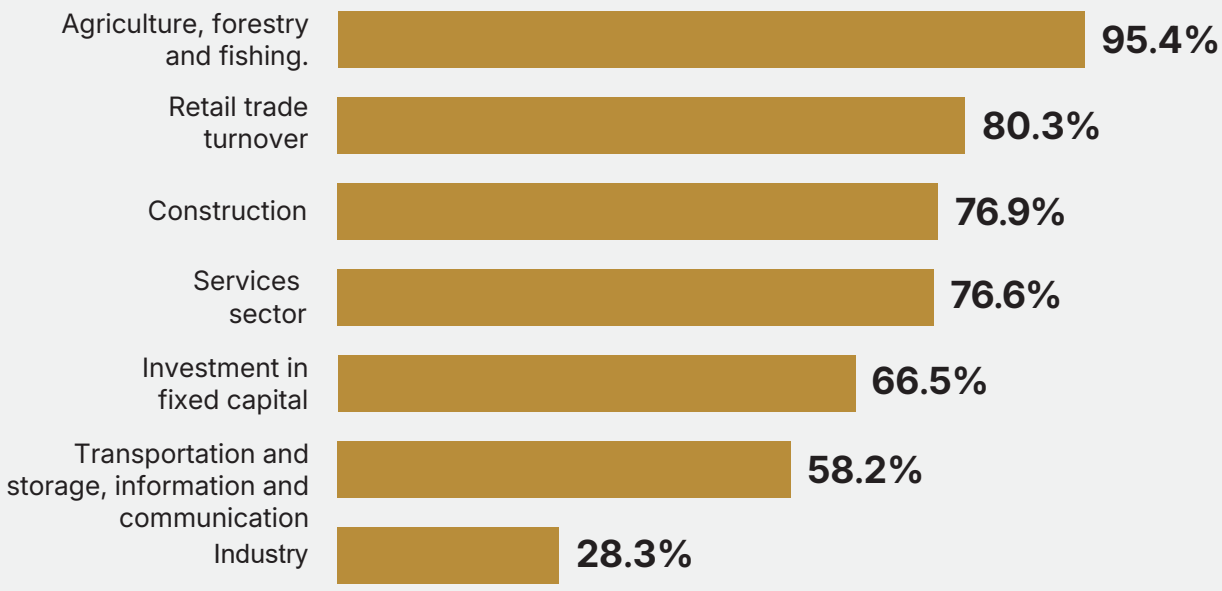
375.1 thousand **entrepreneurs**

334.4 thousand **Dehkan farms**

23.2 thousand **artisans**

5.1 thousand **family enterprises**

Share of SMEs in Key Sectors of the Economy, First Half of 2026



The sector's importance extends beyond the domestic market to international trade. In the first half of 2026, SMEs exported goods and services worth USD 7.48 billion, accounting for 47.2% of total national exports, and imported USD 13 billion, equivalent to 51.8% of total imports.

The sector remains the country's largest employer. In 2025, it employed approximately 74% of the domestic workforce, or around 10.5 million people. Employment was also distributed relatively evenly across the country's regions. In 2025, small businesses accounted for 81.9% of employment in Andijan region, 81.7% in Samarkand region, 81.3% in Namangan region and 80.3% in Khorezm region.

Purpose of the document

The Concept brings together initiatives aimed at addressing the identified challenges and organises measures that fall within the Central Bank's mandate, as well as those requiring coordination with other government bodies and financial market participants. The document reflects the Central Bank's vision for further developing SME financing and support and establishes a strategic approach to improving the relevant financial infrastructure, institutions and market mechanisms.

The Concept is intended to serve as a living document. Its provisions will be regularly discussed with financial market participants, experts and other stakeholders and progressively refined based on feedback received and monitoring results.

The document does not establish a final and fixed regulatory model. The proposed approaches will be implemented on a pilot basis, and the relevant regulatory and institutional decisions may be reviewed following an analysis of the pilot results, an assessment of associated risks and the achievement of the established targets.

The document is aligned with the objectives set out in the following documents.

01

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-50 dated 19 March 2025, "On Measures to Enhance the Role of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Economy"

02

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-100 dated 26 May 2026, "On measures to create more favorable economic and administrative conditions for the growth of small business entities".

03

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-204 dated 26 May 2026, "On further measures to increase the accessibility of financial services and expand support for small and medium-sized businesses".

Analysis of the current situation



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4.1. Sector size and financing status

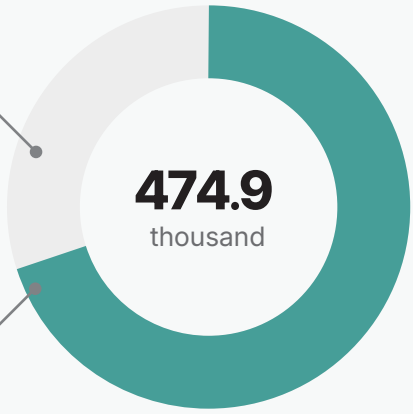
Enterprises and organisations in Uzbekistan

as of 1 January 2026

Total number of enterprises and organisations

71.1 thousand **(15%)**
Other enterprises and organisations

403.8 thousand **(85%)**
Small enterprises and microfirms



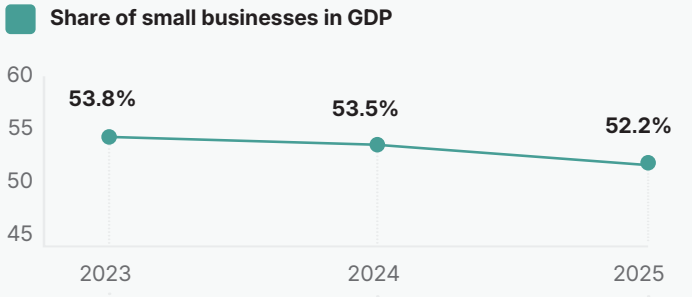
By major sectors

In the trade sector **153.4** thousand **32.3%**

Manufacturing **59.5** thousand **12.5%**

Source: National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Share of small businesses in GDP



GDP generated by small businesses, UZS trillion

678.8 → 821.4 → 965.5

Total GDP: 1 261.8 → 1 535.4 → 1 849.7 UZS trillion (+46.6%)

2023-2025

Decreased by
↓ -1.6 pp

Increased by
↑ +42.2 %

Banking system loans

as of 1 July 2026

642.8 UZS trillion
Total loan balance in the banking system

+67.6 UZS trillion
Growth compared to the same period last year

407 UZS trillion
Loans to legal entities

218 UZS trillion
Loan portfolio of SMEs

12%
This is approximately 12 percent of the gross domestic product.

USD 13.9 billion
Volume of exports of goods and services, excluding gold

+USD 3.5 billion (+34%)
in the first half of 2026, compared to the same period last year

Lending structure: substantial volume and potential to expand coverage

The share of financing allocated to SMEs is increasing, creating a strong foundation for further expanding access to finance.

34%

share of SMEs in total bank lending

36%

accounts for 36% of banks' total loan portfolio

Aligning growth in lending to the sector with an increase in the number of borrowing enterprises would enable broader access to finance.

The foreign economic activity of businesses continues to show steady growth. In the first half of 2026, exports of goods and services, excluding gold, amounted to USD 13.9 billion, an increase of USD 3.5 billion, or 34%, compared with the same period of the previous year. At the same time, the number of exporting enterprises, the range of exported products and the geographical reach of foreign markets are steadily expanding.

4.2. Expanding financing opportunities and improving the alignment of supply and demand

Expanding access to finance. According to the World Bank's 2025 assessment, 10% of small enterprises and 16% of medium-sized enterprises have access to credit. This indicates significant potential to expand financing opportunities for SMEs. The Concept aims to develop affordable commercial financing products and improve their terms, while simplifying credit application reviews, document submission requirements and the assessment of enterprises' financial conditions.

Developing risk-sharing and guarantee mechanisms. According to World Bank assessments and FSAP recommendations, existing guarantees help address collateral-related constraints by covering part of the loan amount. Banks continue to apply collateral requirements and independently assess risks for the unguaranteed portion. The Concept envisages strengthening the impact of guarantee instruments on lending decisions, diversifying their funding sources, developing counter-guarantee mechanisms and improving collateral recovery processes.

4.3. Government programmes and institutional coordination

State support mechanisms are substantial in scale. In accordance with the instructions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, UZS 140 trillion in loans is planned to be allocated to support SMEs in 2026. In addition, the following measures have been established:

- In **37** "economically disadvantaged" districts, loans under the family entrepreneurship programme are provided at an interest rate of **12%**, instead of the standard rate of **17.5%.**
- In **562** mahallas located in border and enclave areas, the maximum loan amount for projects will be increased to UZS **1 billion**.
- An additional UZS **2 trillion** will be allocated to family entrepreneurship programmes, on top of the UZS **3.6 trillion** already planned.

In accordance with Presidential Decree No. PF-176 of 26 September 2025, "On measures to support business entities based on new approaches" the Entrepreneurship Development Company is expected to support the implementation of 5,000 business projects in 2026–2027 by providing UZS 4 trillion in financial assistance.

The distribution of business support functions across several institutions enables the comprehensive use of various financial and institutional instruments. The next stage of developing this system envisages stronger coordination between programmes and better alignment of data exchange and monitoring processes.

Strengthening cooperation among support institutions

The Entrepreneurship Development Company and the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment implement programmes to support micro and small businesses through preferential financing, subsidies, grants and assistance with business projects.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance determines the parameters of government programmes, sets budget allocations and programme financing volumes, and participates in coordinating support measures. The Entrepreneurship Development Company and the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment perform their respective functions in planning, resource allocation, project assessment and implementation.

The Concept envisages more clearly defining the responsibilities of government policy commissioners, financial support operators and bodies responsible for evaluating programme effectiveness, as well as improving coordination mechanisms between them. Introducing a unified register and common performance indicators will help ensure targeted resource allocation, improve coordination between programmes and simplify the relevant processes for entrepreneurs.

Increasing the efficiency of the participation of state financial institutions

State-owned banks and support institutions play an important role in financing SMEs and facilitate the rapid allocation of resources to priority areas. Banks' engagement with specific sectors, together with the implementation of programmes involving multiple institutions, enables broader use of existing sectoral expertise and institutional capacity.

Further development of the system will involve promoting competition among banks, assessing outcomes against consistent criteria, coordinating the responsibilities of participating institutions, and regularly evaluating the economic effectiveness of government support measures.



4.4. Diversifying financial products and expanding long-term funding

Traditional bank loans play a leading role in the SME financing market. The next stage of market development envisages expanding the use of factoring, leasing, venture capital and equity investments, crowdfunding, and Islamic finance instruments. Another important priority is to develop opportunities for managing foreign exchange risks through swaps, forwards and other financial instruments.

As of **1 July 2026**, the total loan portfolio of banks amounted to UZS **642.8 trillion**, including UZS **407 trillion** in loans to legal entities. As of the same date, the volume of factoring services reached UZS **5.2 trillion**, including UZS **0.6 trillion** in international factoring. Commercial banks provided **93%** of these services, microfinance institutions **6%** and factoring companies **1%**.

The World Bank estimates the demand for equity capital in Uzbekistan at USD 20–30 billion. Meanwhile, the total commitments of private equity funds operating in the country amount to approximately USD 2 billion. These figures indicate significant potential for developing the private equity market and expanding non-bank financing instruments as alternatives to bank lending.

In the SME segment, banks mainly offer standard loans that require collateral. Adapting financial products to the needs of different sectors and business models would make financing more accessible for seasonal agricultural activities, construction and service projects, as well as businesses whose main assets are equipment, inventory or money owed to them by customers.

4.5. Digital financial services and the regulatory sandbox

Uzbekistan has made significant progress in developing its digital infrastructure, including payment systems, remote banking services and electronic factoring platforms. However, SME adoption of digital channels remains uneven. According to the World Bank, **less than 30%** of SME sales are conducted electronically.

In 2026, the Central Bank published pilot calculations of national financial inclusion indices. The indices were developed in cooperation with international experts, based on the methodologies of **16** organisations, including the World Bank, OECD and the Alliance for Financial Inclusion. They measure the availability, use and quality of financial services, such as lending, deposits and payments. According to the report, **24%** of SMEs have active loan accounts, while **68%** are registered with a credit bureau.

Reforms at the KATM credit bureau have enabled **678,000** potential borrowers to improve their credit scores, demonstrating progress in strengthening the credit infrastructure.

Regulatory sandbox

The regulatory sandbox regime was introduced by the Central Bank in accordance with Resolution № PQ-364 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 30 August 2022. The following solutions have been tested within this framework:

- enabling businesses to withdraw cash through ATMs for salary payments and operating expenses without visiting a bank cashier.
- enabling individual entrepreneurs to use e-wallets and credit cards.
- allowing applications for bank microloans to be submitted through mobile apps and the agent networks of payment service providers.
- additional digital channels for international money transfers and currency exchange.
- enabling payment service provider agents to provide cash to bank cardholders.

Testing modern fintech solutions covers several areas, including taxation, e-commerce, digital identification, personal data protection, telecommunications, employment relations and public services. Therefore, it would be appropriate to expand the regulatory sandbox's institutional scope and establish a unified coordination mechanism involving the relevant government bodies. This would enable comprehensive and timely project reviews, provide businesses with greater legal certainty and help reduce related costs.

Gradually expanding testing parameters across regions, customer groups and transaction volumes would make it possible to assess actual demand, technical reliability under high transaction loads, cybersecurity and consumer protection mechanisms. The Concept also envisages establishing a clear and consistent procedure for moving successful solutions from the pilot stage to wider implementation.



International experience



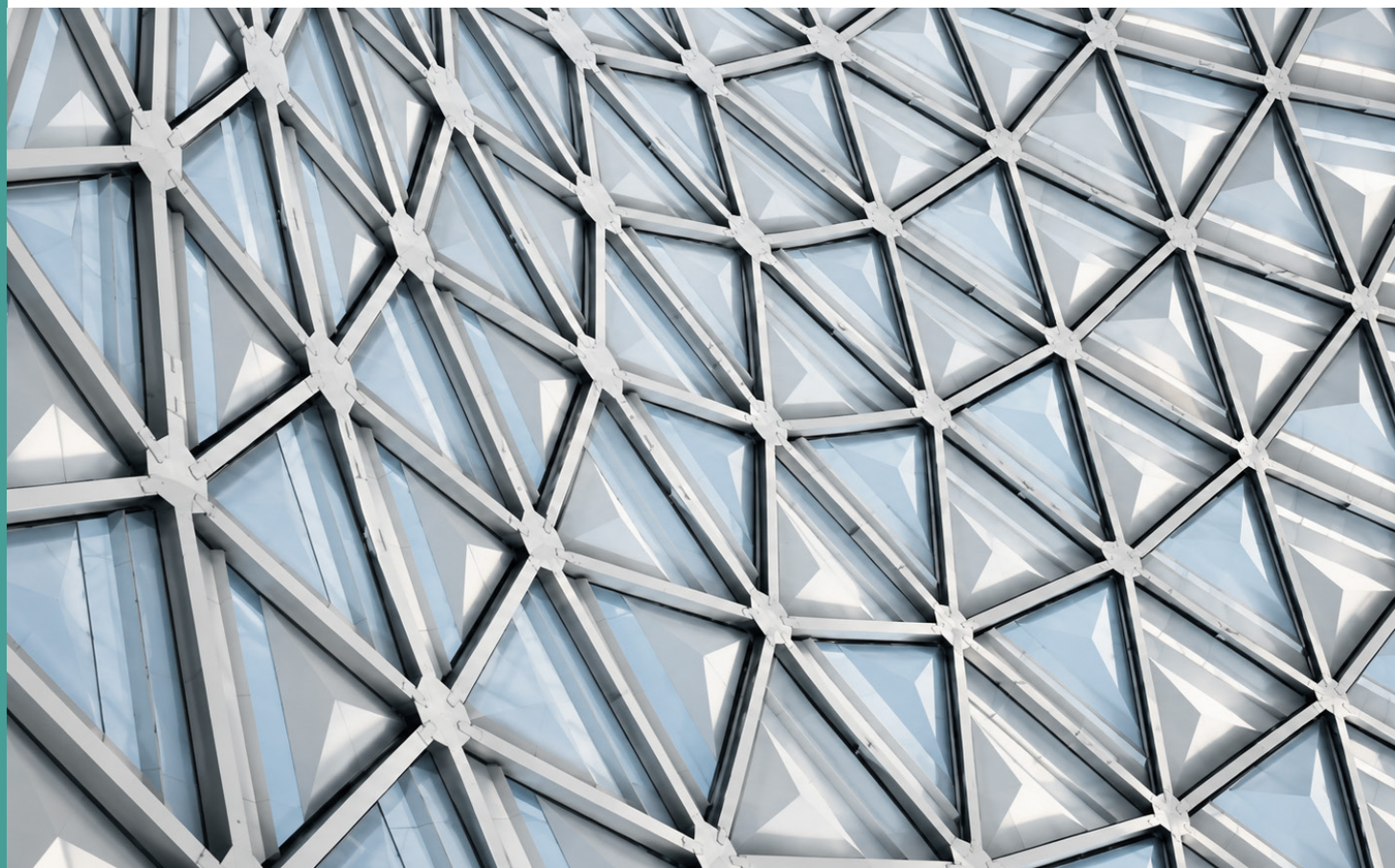
05

Operating models of the development institutions studied

Institution, country	Applicable element of the model
01 KfW	Wholesale refinancing and risk-sharing through commercial banks, while preserving market-based allocation of credit.
02 British Business Bank	Methodology for the systematic diversification of financing proposals and the assessment of market disparities.
03 Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)	Providing financing in conditions where the enterprise base is fragmented and partially informal; digital lending platforms.
04 Korea Credit Guarantee Fund (KODIT)	Integration of partial credit guarantee mechanisms and credit information systems to serve first-time borrowers.

In addition, the policy frameworks of three foreign institutions responsible for enterprise development were reviewed: the Ministry of SMEs and Startups (Republic of Korea), the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency under Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and Brazil's Ministry of Entrepreneurship, Microenterprise and Small Business.

International experience will be adapted for practical application, taking into account Uzbekistan's national context and the specific features of its financial system.



Purpose, objectives, and principles of the Concept



06

6.1. Main objective

By 2030, to establish an SME financing system in Uzbekistan based on market principles, digital data and competition, while ensuring that SMEs have equal and sustainable access to financial resources and maintaining financial and price stability.

The main objective consists of three parts:

1. Sustainable growth of SMEs. Financing should match each business's stage of development and encourage microbusinesses to grow into small businesses, and small businesses into medium-sized enterprises.
2. Equal access to finance. Access to financing should depend on the economic viability of the business, not its location, the owner's gender or age, or the availability of collateral.
3. Financial system stability. Expanding lending while ensuring compliance with prudential requirements for banks.

6.2. Quantitative targets for 2030

The Concept sets out the following quantitative targets for 2030:

Double the loan portfolio allocated to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Increase the share of SME loans in GDP to **20%.**

Enabling banks to issue online microloans within an average of **one hour**.

Increasing the share of online microloans to **60%**

Expand access to financial services for SMEs with no credit history.

6.3. Role of the Central Bank

Within its mandate, the Central Bank aims to contribute to achieving the main objective by developing financial and digital infrastructure, improving data quality and strengthening consumer protection mechanisms for financial services.

The Central Bank's role is to create conditions in which market participants can provide SMEs with sustainable and efficient financial services while maintaining price and financial stability. Ultimately, implementing these initiatives is expected to create jobs, increase incomes and improve public welfare.

An additional principle of the Concept is the continuous development of the Central Bank's analytical capacity to support the design and monitoring of policy measures.



Proposed approach: 25 initiatives for 2026–2030



07

Initiatives for 2026–2030

25 interconnected initiatives

17
Institutional initiatives

5
Initiatives to develop financial infrastructure

3
Initiatives to develop financial products

The initiatives are designed as an interconnected set of measures based on identified market constraints and the current state of the sector.

The alignment of individual initiatives with specific problems is reflected in their content and performance indicators.

7.1. Institutional measures (17 initiatives)

Institutional measures aim to improve coordination among organisations involved in SME support, expand access to finance, develop regular evaluation mechanisms and strengthen the legal framework for introducing new financial services.

This area focuses on improving the legal, organisational and analytical foundations of SME financing and support. It includes streamlining processes, strengthening the role of existing financial institutions, improving dispute resolution mechanisms, enhancing the quality of SME sector data and promoting evidence-based decision-making.

Institutional measures are a priority in terms of timing, as they establish the legal framework needed to move infrastructure and product initiatives beyond the pilot stage. They also clarify the roles of government policy commissioners, financial support operators and bodies responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of that support.

7.1.1. Transformation of the Business Development Bank

The transformation of BDB is intended to bring together three functions within a single system: providing long-term financing to SMEs, attracting resources from international financial institutions, and distributing targeted funding through financial intermediaries.

International practice identifies three main models for development finance institutions supporting SME financing. Under the *Competing model*, the institution provides financial services directly to SMEs, like commercial banks. Under the *Complementing model*, it focuses on sectors that receive insufficient financing. Under the *Enabling model*, it encourages commercial banks to lend to SMEs through funding, guarantees and risk-sharing mechanisms.

Regardless of the chosen model, the institution will be assigned a mechanism for applying prudential regulation and supervision on a general basis, taking commercial operations and state support measures into account separately, disclosing the value of the subsidy, and periodically revising the mandate with predetermined conditions for reduction or termination of activities.

The next step is to create a more unified system for supporting SMEs, with one central body responsible for overall strategy. This body would lead strategic planning, attract long-term funding, work with international financial institutions and capital markets, and set common standards for risk management and corporate governance. Other specialised institutions would handle specific tasks, such as government support programmes, guarantees, equity investments and venture capital financing.

7.1.2. Proposal to introduce a financial ombudsman system

The initiative proposes introducing an alternative, out-of-court dispute resolution mechanism. A financial ombudsman would help resolve disputes between financial institutions and businesses quickly, at relatively low cost, and without going to court.

The law should define the financial ombudsman's status, guarantees of independence, appointment and funding procedures, the maximum claim amount for which its decision is binding on a financial institution, and the deadlines for handling complaints. It is essential that the ombudsman's authority cover not only individual consumers but also micro and small businesses.

The initiative is expected to reduce the average time needed to resolve disputes compared with court proceedings, increase the share of claims settled without going to court, and reduce recurring violations by certain financial institutions.

7.1.3. Developing comprehensive advisory services

The initiative proposes allowing banks to provide legal and consulting services. Banking services would be complemented by advice on business planning, contract preparation, financial management and entering foreign markets.

A significant share of loan rejections for micro and small businesses is due not to a lack of business viability, but to poor application preparation. Common issues include missing management accounts, inaccurate cash flow calculations and unclear property rights. Independent consultants are often too expensive for these businesses, while banks already have sector-specific data and qualified staff.

Legislation will be amended to allow banks to provide accounting, tax, legal and consulting services.

The initiative is expected to increase the share of approved applications from micro and small businesses by improving the quality of their documentation, reduce rejection rates, and help banks develop additional sources of income, reducing their reliance on interest margins.

7.1.4. Developing the methodological framework for Islamic finance

The initiative aims to establish a unified methodological framework for regulating, accounting for, managing risks related to, and supervising Islamic finance products, as well as enabling the launch of Islamic financial services.

Developing financial products based on profit and loss sharing is important for expanding businesses' access to financial services and directing more savings into business activities. To support this, the initiative envisages establishing a methodological framework covering accounting rules, asset classification, provisioning and taxation for these transactions.

The initiative will involve developing regulations for banks offering Islamic financial services and the prudential supervision of their activities. Accounting principles will be aligned with internationally recognised standards. A licensing framework will be introduced, starting with pilot banks, including Islamic windows within existing banks, and later expanding to more licensed institutions. Tax neutrality will also be addressed, particularly to prevent double taxation in transactions involving successive transfers of ownership.

The initiative also envisages improving regulations governing liquidity provision and funding mechanisms to help banks offering Islamic financial services manage their liquidity more effectively. This will help banks manage liquidity risks and create the conditions for the stable integration of Islamic finance instruments into the banking system.

7.1.5. Increasing the role of microfinance institutions in business financing

The initiative aims to expand the funding base of microfinance institutions and develop them as an alternative to bank loans for micro and small businesses.

Microfinance institutions can offer flexible services tailored to businesses that need small loans, short-term financing, have varying levels of financial reporting, or operate in remote areas. Building a stable and diversified funding base would help reduce financing costs and expand their operations.

Apex Fund resources will be allocated competitively to microfinance institutions based on transparent criteria, including portfolio quality, risk management systems and coverage of rural areas. Guarantee products will be developed to enable microfinance institutions to obtain loans from commercial banks backed by a guarantee from a guarantee institution. At the same time, staff will receive training in creditworthiness assessment, including the use of cash flow instead of collateral.

7.1.6. Establishing an innovation hub

The innovation hub will serve as a platform for testing financial technologies, new business models and digital financial products for SMEs in a controlled environment.

The hub will serve as an advisory centre and accelerator. It will set participant selection criteria, run incubation and acceleration programmes, provide access to testing environments and datasets, and connect startups with banks and microfinance institutions. Priority will be given to solutions that reduce the cost of serving SMEs, improve creditworthiness assessment using alternative methods, and digitise payments and settlements.

The institutional status of the hub is officially defined as follows: The Innovation Hub is a structural subdivision of the Financial Technology Development Department of the Central Bank and serves as a platform for the development and commercialization of financial technology projects, uniting entrepreneurs, researchers, companies, and investors. Its programs are divided into incubation - an educational and practical program for the formation and development of a startup project idea - and acceleration - an educational and practical program for the development of startup projects through the testing and development of a business model with the organizational and advisory support of mentors and industry experts.

Performance indicators include the number of solutions implemented from the idea stage to sandbox testing, the number of partnerships between startups and financial institutions, and the volume of funding attracted by hub participants.

7.1.7. Improving communication on inflation and monetary policy for SMEs

Communication mechanisms will be improved to raise SMEs' awareness of inflation, its main drivers, monetary policy decisions and their impact on business activity.

Priority will be given to explaining the practical importance of information on inflation and monetary policy for SMEs. In particular, practical information materials will be prepared on the monetary and non-monetary drivers of inflation, the impact of the policy rate on economic activity and prices, how inflation expectations are formed, and how businesses can take macroeconomic changes into account when making decisions.

Open discussions will be held with SMEs, banks and business associations to identify their information needs regarding inflation and monetary policy.

The initiative is expected to help SMEs better understand macroeconomic developments and monetary policy decisions, make more effective use of macroeconomic information when making business decisions, and improve the accuracy of their inflation expectations.

7.1.8. Introducing a system of quarterly analytical reports on SME conditions

Quarterly reports by sector and region will make it possible to regularly monitor SMEs' financial condition, lending trends and development patterns.

Regular, transparent and segmented data on SME conditions will support the evidence-based and targeted allocation of credit resources. Enriching banking statistics with data by sector, region and business size will help identify financing needs, plan targeted supervisory measures and improve banking products.

The quarterly report will be prepared using a unified methodology and will cover the number of SMEs and changes in their turnover, the structure and quality of the loan portfolio, average interest rates and loan terms, application processing times and rejection rates, and the use of non-bank financing instruments. It will also include data by sector, region and business size. The report will be published quarterly on the Central Bank's official website.

The initiative is expected to establish a common evidence base for decisions on SME financing policy, improve data comparability across government agencies, and enable the ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the initiatives being implemented.

7.1.9. Modelling the behaviour of economic agents (businesses and consumers) using big data

Big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence will be used to identify changes in business activity, consumer expectations and economic decision-making faster than traditional statistics allow.

Official statistics are published with a delay, meaning decisions may be based on an outdated picture of the economy. Meanwhile, data from payment systems, online cash registers, sales platforms and public sources can help identify changes in business activity much earlier.

A set of real-time indicators will be developed using transaction data. Machine learning methods will be used to assess inflation expectations and business activity, with the results compared against official statistics to calibrate the models. Data will be provided in compliance with banking secrecy and personal data protection requirements.

7.1.10. Improving support mechanisms for sectoral enterprises

The initiative aims to study the operational and financial challenges faced by businesses in selected sectors in depth and develop targeted support mechanisms for them.

The deterioration in loan portfolio quality is concentrated in certain sectors where the underlying problems are operational rather than financial. These include outdated technologies, underutilisation of production capacity, disruptions in sales chains, and products that do not meet the requirements of foreign markets. Without addressing these root causes, debt restructuring merely delays the recognition of losses.

The initiative envisages a comprehensive assessment of the financial and operational condition of enterprises in priority sectors. Based on the findings, financial recovery programmes will be developed.

As a result of the initiative, the share of non-performing assets in the sectors covered by the programme is expected to decline, enterprises' ability to meet their financial obligations is expected to be restored without additional budgetary costs, and sector-specific risk assessment methodologies are expected to be widely adopted across the banking system.

7.1.11. Measuring the baseline SME financing gap

Regularly assessing the SME financing gap by sector, region and business category will make it possible to tailor banking products to actual demand and develop recommendations for banks based on the findings.

Estimates of the SME financing gap will be developed with the support of international organisations, taking current market conditions into account. A regularly updated assessment system will be established to identify the largest gaps between financing needs and actual supply across sectors and regions, and determine what proportion of these gaps is attributable to a lack of collateral, insufficient credit history or unaffordable financing costs.

7.1.12. Introducing a mechanism to use the collateral value agreed by the parties as the initial auction price

The mechanism aims to make price formation during collateral realisation more transparent and predictable, while balancing the legal interests of creditors and borrowers.

Lengthy collateral realisation processes and unpredictable sale prices directly affect lending decisions. The higher the expected losses in the event of collateral enforcement, the more security banks require. The gap between the appraised value and the actual sale price, as well as repeated reductions in the initial price during successive auctions, increases the discounts banks apply to collateral values, thereby reducing the amount of credit available to businesses.

Legislation will establish the right of the parties to agree in writing on the value of the collateral and use it as the initial auction price. The initial price will be generated automatically in the electronic auction system based on the collateral agreement, the parties' agreement and an independent appraiser's report, preventing arbitrary changes. Procedures for revising the agreed value when market conditions change significantly, as well as mechanisms for resolving disputes, will also be established.

7.1.13. Developing the foreign exchange risk hedging market

Effective management of foreign exchange risks amid fluctuations in interest rates and exchange rates is essential for SMEs to plan costs and cash flows reliably, maintain liquidity and protect their financial performance.

The initiative aims to improve the institutional structure of the market to minimise foreign exchange risks and the risk of shocks spreading through the banking and financial system. It also seeks to develop instruments to protect exporting and importing businesses against sharp exchange rate fluctuations, including the establishment of a National Hedging Company, and to improve foreign exchange risk management across the banking system.

SMEs engaged in export and import activities will bear the full responsibility for managing their foreign exchange risks, with mechanisms to manage these risks effectively being developed. Specifically, the establishment of a National Hedging Company will introduce a new "Client–Bank–Company" system for managing foreign exchange and interest rate risks, making effective use of existing infrastructure.

The Company will be responsible for providing continuous quotes for derivative financial instruments in the domestic foreign exchange and money markets to ensure market liquidity and alignment between hedging prices for derivative financial instruments in domestic and international financial markets.



7.1.14. Introducing a counter-guarantee system

The initiative aims to shift from a model in which the financial burden of guarantee coverage is concentrated in public funds to one in which credit risk is shared among the state, guarantee institutions, commercial banks and private capital. The counter-guarantee system will help mobilise additional resources backed by public funds and increase the coverage ratio for loans to SMEs that lack sufficient collateral.

At the open discussion between the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and entrepreneurs on 18 August 2026, the introduction of a counter-guarantee system was announced to ease collateral requirements for small businesses. Under the new arrangement, entrepreneurs seeking loans of up to UZS 10 billion will only need to provide collateral worth 25% of the loan amount.

Partial credit guarantees enable private institutions to lend to borrowers whose applications would otherwise be rejected due to insufficient collateral.

7.1.15. Extending the deadline for repatriation of export proceeds

The initiative proposes allowing exporters selling goods through foreign trading houses, consignment warehouses and distribution networks to repatriate export proceeds within the time limits specified in their contracts, based on the nature of the goods and the destination country, instead of the current limit of 180 calendar days.

Under this business model, delivering and selling products to the final customer may take a considerable amount of time. Therefore, allowing repatriation deadlines to be set in line with the sales process and the characteristics of foreign markets, alongside the existing 180-calendar-day period, would encourage wider use of modern distribution channels and help expand export markets.

In this regard, a draft regulatory legal act will be developed jointly with the relevant competent authorities, agreed with the ministries and agencies, and submitted in accordance with the established procedure.

In this regard, the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade, the Tax Committee, the Customs Committee, the Agency for Technical Regulation and the Central Bank will assess whether extending repatriation deadlines to the periods specified in contracts is justified, taking into account the nature of goods exported through foreign trading houses, consignment warehouses and distribution networks, as well as the destination country.

In addition, a monitoring system will be introduced jointly with the relevant authorities to verify whether goods are actually held in stock or have been sold through consignment warehouses and distribution networks. With the entrepreneur's consent, this will be carried out through online monitoring by the tax authorities or reconciliation statements.

7.1.16. Transitioning to an expanded inter-agency regulatory sandbox

The initiative aims to develop a special regulatory framework for financial services by bringing all relevant government authorities into a single decision-making mechanism. Under the expanded regulatory sandbox, projects will be reviewed through a "one-stop shop" approach, with all relevant authorities jointly determining the necessary temporary legal exemptions, technical requirements, risk limits and supervisory measures in a single comprehensive decision.

The initiative includes establishing a coordinated testing environment for innovative projects developed by startups and technology companies, including those operating outside the financial services sector; clarifying the powers of government authorities; developing inter-agency cooperation and a unified decision-making mechanism; establishing a special regulatory framework, temporary exemptions and risk management criteria; selecting and testing pilot projects; and monitoring and evaluating the results. Based on these results, the initiative aims to promote the development of innovative solutions across various sectors and the wider implementation of effective solutions.

7.1.17. Implementing the "2,000 Exporting Enterprises" Programme

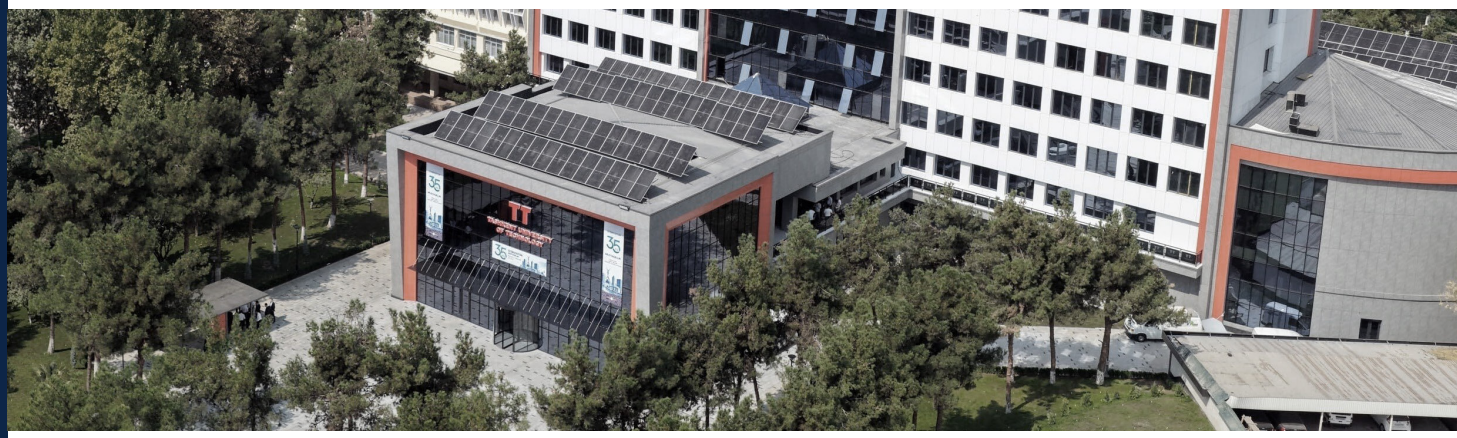
The initiative envisages developing a targeted support programme for medium-sized businesses that are already exporting or have export potential.

Medium-sized businesses represent the largest segment whose export potential remains underutilised. These enterprises already have production capacity and experience but face constraints related to working capital, certification and access to new markets. Supporting individual enterprises separately does not make it possible to identify the systemic nature of these barriers.

Initial practical work is planned to begin with the establishment of a working group involving the Central Bank, the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade, commercial banks and other relevant government authorities.

Expected outcomes of the institutional measures

The implementation of the institutional measures is expected to clarify the responsibilities of SME support institutions, strengthen the use of data in decision-making, and establish the legal framework needed to introduce new financial instruments. It is also expected to expand credit risk-sharing mechanisms and liberalise SMEs' foreign trade operations to encourage their export activities.



7.2. Infrastructure development (5 initiatives)

This area aims to address information asymmetry in SME financing, including high transaction costs and limited capacity to assess credit risks. Its initiatives focus on developing interconnected financial infrastructure for digital data exchange, alternative credit scoring, credit history, post-disbursement monitoring and collateral realisation systems.

7.2.1. Establishing a centralised digital platform for the sale of collateral and distressed assets

Coordinating processes across systems, departments and organisations is essential for banks when managing collateral and distressed assets. Organising the stages of asset registration, valuation, enforcement and sale within a single digital environment will enable faster data verification and comparison, reduce duplicate operations, and optimise time and administrative costs.

The initiative envisages integrating the registration, valuation, enforcement monitoring and sale of collateral and distressed assets into a single digital platform.

The platform will include improvements to the Collateral Register, an assessment of existing legal and technical constraints, the establishment of a unified notification-based online register covering the main categories of movable property, and API integration with banks, marketplaces and other relevant information systems.

The initiative also envisages introducing a mechanism to automatically remove restrictions on pledged assets once the underlying obligations have been fully fulfilled.

7.2.2. Establishing a post-disbursement monitoring and early warning system

The system will enable the assessment of credit utilisation across regions, sectors, business segments and financial instruments; the early detection of financing-related warning signals; continuous monitoring of disbursed loans; and more informed financing decisions.

Directing credit monitoring to the stage preceding the emergence of non-performing loans will allow for the timely adoption of appropriate measures. At the same time, the number of jobs created in the financed projects, the dynamics of revenues, the timeliness of tax payments, and changes in financial ratios are monitored as early warning signals.

A post-disbursement monitoring methodology will be developed, covering a list of early warning indicators and procedures for analysis by sector, region, business segment and financial instrument. The system will be implemented in phases with technical assistance from international organisations.

The system is expected to improve the allocation of credit resources, support results-based financing, enable more informed financing decisions, reduce non-performing loans and lower banks' loan-loss provisioning costs.

7.2.3. Implementing open banking

The initiative envisages introducing a system for secure, standardised data exchange between banks and fintech companies based on customer consent. Open banking infrastructure will support the development of new financial services and reduce the costs of assessing loan applications.

The process will be implemented in phases, beginning with the launch of a testing environment for participants, followed by the gradual connection of commercial banks and payment organisations to the pilot project through application programming interfaces (APIs). Based on the pilot results, standards will be improved, the system will be launched in a production environment, and the range of services and participants will be expanded. In the future, non-bank credit institutions are also expected to join the system.

Open banking allows businesses, with their consent, to provide potential lenders with verified information on transactions in accounts held with other banks. This removes the existing bank's key competitive advantage - exclusive access to the customer's payment history - and creates competition among banks for creditworthy borrowers. This can lead to lower interest rates and shorter loan processing times.
In addition, this data can be used to develop services for cash flow management, automated accounting and forecasting cash flow shortfalls.

7.2.4. Developing a credit scoring model based on alternative data

Using tax, payment, sales, utility and other digital data to assess SMEs with limited traditional credit histories will help expand their access to credit.

Businesses without a credit history, including newly established companies, service and technology firms, as well as a significant share of microbusinesses, are assessed by banks using traditional methods despite insufficient available data.

The scoring model will be institutionalised, with requirements established for data quality, model documentation, regular validation and impact assessment. A mechanism will also be introduced to allow borrowers to request an explanation when a loan application is rejected.

The initiative is expected to increase the number of SMEs obtaining credit for the first time, raise the share of decisions made remotely and automatically, and shorten the processing time for microloan applications.

7.2.5. Improving and promoting the digital financial platform for SMEs

The marketplace will be developed as a single digital channel enabling SMEs to compare products offered by banks and non-bank financial institutions, submit applications and obtain information on financing terms.

Entrepreneurs without in-house financial specialists usually approach a single bank they are familiar with and have limited opportunities to compare the terms offered by several lenders. The lack of comparison options restricts price competition, meaning that financing costs depend more on borrowers' awareness of financial services and available offers than on their actual risk levels.

As part of the initiative, the range of data integrated into the marketplace will be expanded, a mobile version will be developed, and non-financial services will be introduced. Non-bank credit institutions and fintech market participants will also be connected to the platform. Loan terms will be disclosed clearly, including the total cost of financing, collateral requirements and application processing times.

Performance indicators will include the number of SMEs applying through the platform, the share of applications resulting in signed contracts, the number of participating financial institutions, and a reduction in the variation of interest rates for comparable products as an indicator of increased competition.

7.3. Financial product development (3 initiatives)

The development of banking products builds on the institutional and infrastructure measures by translating them into financial services directly available to SMEs. The main objective is to adapt banking products to businesses' production cycles, cash flows, export contracts and sector-specific needs.

7.3.1. Developing pre-export financing mechanisms

The initiative envisages providing SMEs with export contracts with specialised loan products to finance raw material purchases, production, packaging, certification and logistics costs.

Costs related to raw material purchases, production, packaging, certification and logistics are incurred before goods are shipped. Export proceeds, however, are received after delivery, often only once the goods have been sold to the final customer. This timing gap creates working capital shortages for exporters. For SMEs, it is a major barrier to accepting large export orders, even when they have sufficient production capacity.

It is proposed to develop pre-export financing as a specialised product linked to the export contract and its associated cash flows, using the risk-sharing and insurance mechanisms envisaged in the Concept.





7.3.2. Expanding the range of financial products

The initiative envisages reviewing existing banking products, assessing SME needs by sector and business model, and developing products that differ from standard loans and better meet the needs of businesses.

Based on surveys and analyses of sector-specific business models, mismatches between financing terms and business cash flows will be identified. In cooperation with commercial banks, new products will be developed, including seasonal repayment schedules, revolving credit lines for working capital, financing secured by equipment and inventory, and products for businesses without collateral.
The development of new products will be accompanied by risk assessment guidelines to ensure that formal criteria do not replace cash flow analysis.

7.3.3. Developing international factoring practices

10 billion UZS

Maximum guarantee amount for international factoring services

≤ 50%

A guarantee will be provided for an amount not exceeding 50% of the factoring transaction value.

50% / ≤ 4%

Until 1 January 2029, 50% of the discount or accrued interest amount will be reimbursed, subject to an annual rate cap of 4%.

In this regard, the government will support exporting businesses by introducing measures to compensate interest costs on international factoring transactions and establishing guarantee and insurance mechanisms.

Specifically, the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade will establish a guarantee institution under the Trade Development Company JSC. The institution will provide guarantees with recourse for international factoring services of up to the equivalent of UZS 10 billion, but not exceeding 50% of the factoring transaction value.

At the same time, until 1 January 2029, Trade Development Company JSC will reimburse 50% of the discount or accrued interest on international factoring services, subject to an annual rate cap of 4%.

In cooperation with the National Agency for Prospective Projects, a standard insurance product will be developed, providing for a simplified procedure for paying insurance compensation in cases where a foreign debtor fails to fulfil its payment obligations.

Assessing the effectiveness of the measures

The effectiveness of financial product development will be assessed not by the number of new products introduced, but by the number of SMEs using them, the volume of financing provided, application processing times, export revenues and loan portfolio quality.

Concept revision



08

Annual review of the Concept

To keep the document up to date and continuously improve the effectiveness of the proposed measures, the Concept will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted at the end of each calendar year based on the following:

- results of monitoring the target indicators;
- implementation of the initiatives;
- changes in the macroeconomic and regulatory environment;
- the state of the financial market;
- assessment of risks to financial and price stability;
- outcomes of discussions with market participants, experts and other stakeholders.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