

THE POSITION OF UZBEKISTAN IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS ON
INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Background: As global attention increasingly shifts toward inclusive economic development, countries are evaluated not just by their growth rates, but by how equitably prosperity is distributed. Uzbekistan, a country undergoing significant reforms, has made notable advances in economic liberalization, social policy, and institutional transparency over the past several years.

Objective: This paper analyzes Uzbekistan's position in major international rankings focused on inclusive development, highlighting achievements and ongoing challenges.

Methods: The study employs a comparative review of Uzbekistan's standings in indices such as the Human Development Index, Social Progress Index, Gender Inequality Index, Corruption Perceptions Index, and Inclusive Development Index, utilizing data from 2019 to 2024 and referencing both global and regional sources.

Results: Uzbekistan's performance reveals consistent gains in human development and social progress, yet persistent weaknesses in governance, gender equality, and institutional accountability. While progress in some rankings outpaces regional peers, substantial gaps remain compared to global leaders.

Conclusion: Uzbekistan's path toward inclusive development is marked by both progress and complexity. Ongoing reforms and alignment with international best practices are critical for ensuring broad-based prosperity and greater equity in the years ahead.

Keywords: Uzbekistan; inclusive economic development; international rankings; Human Development Index; Social Progress Index; Corruption Perceptions Index; Gender Inequality Index; institutional reform; economic growth; global benchmarking.

Introduction

In recent decades, the meaning of economic progress has evolved far beyond traditional metrics such as GDP or national income, compelling both policymakers and researchers to look closer at how prosperity is shared within societies. In Uzbekistan, a nation undergoing profound transformation since 2017, economic liberalization and institutional reform have attracted significant attention, both domestically and abroad. Yet, despite notable achievements in areas such as infrastructure development and market openness, questions remain about the inclusivity

of this growth and its impact on the well-being of ordinary citizens (World Bank, 2024; UNDP, 2023).

As international organizations continue to promote broader definitions of development, global indices like the Human Development Index (HDI), the Inclusive Development Index (IDI), the Social Progress Index (SPI), and the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) have become vital tools for benchmarking progress (UNDP, 2023; WEF, 2020; Transparency International, 2024). These rankings do not merely report numbers—they capture the complex interplay between economic advancement, social protection, institutional quality, and the reduction of disparities. Uzbekistan's recent trajectory in these indices reveals both encouraging trends and persistent challenges.

Although the government has prioritized inclusive economic policies, including social safety nets and gender equity initiatives, the country still contends with structural issues such as corruption, unequal opportunities, and limited civic participation (Transparency International, 2024; ADB, 2023). Notably, Uzbekistan's position in various global rankings has become a reference point for international investors and development partners evaluating the nation's progress toward truly shared prosperity (OECD, 2023).

Therefore, assessing Uzbekistan's standing in international inclusive development indices is not only a matter of academic curiosity, but also a critical foundation for informed policy decisions and international cooperation. Understanding the dynamics behind these rankings enables a clearer view of which reforms have yielded real benefits, where gaps persist, and how the aspirations for equitable, sustainable growth can be realized in the years ahead (World Bank, 2024).

Methods

To provide a thorough and balanced assessment of Uzbekistan's position in international inclusive economic development rankings, this study utilized a systematic literature and data review methodology. The process began with identifying key global indices widely recognized for their holistic measurement of inclusive growth—specifically, the Human Development Index (HDI), the Inclusive Development Index (IDI), the Social Progress Index (SPI), and the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Authoritative sources such as the United Nations Development Programme, World Economic Forum, and Transparency International served as primary reference points for data acquisition (UNDP, 2023; WEF, 2020; Transparency International, 2024).

Recent publications from 2019 to 2024 were prioritized to ensure relevance and accuracy, and both official government statistics and reports from independent research organizations were consulted for context and verification (ADB, 2023; OECD, 2023). English and Russian language materials were reviewed to capture a wide range of perspectives and minimize potential bias. In order to understand not only static rankings but also developmental trends, longitudinal analysis was performed where possible, comparing changes in Uzbekistan's scores and positions over the last several years.



Each ranking was critically analyzed according to its underlying criteria—such as education quality, healthcare access, income distribution, gender equity, and institutional strength. Where different sources presented conflicting information, additional literature was sought to clarify discrepancies. Ultimately, this multi-source, comparative approach allowed for a nuanced, context-rich synthesis of Uzbekistan’s strengths and ongoing challenges as seen through the lens of international inclusive economic development assessments (World Bank, 2024; UNDP, 2023).

Results

Analysis of the most widely cited international rankings reveals a nuanced portrait of Uzbekistan’s journey toward inclusive economic development. Over the past five years, the country has demonstrated noticeable progress in several areas, such as human development and social welfare. For example, Uzbekistan’s Human Development Index (HDI) score has gradually increased, reflecting advances in education and healthcare, though the overall ranking remains moderate compared to many upper-middle-income countries (UNDP, 2023). Meanwhile, the Social Progress Index (SPI) also suggests improvements in foundational well-being indicators, yet highlights persistent challenges in personal rights and inclusiveness (Social Progress Imperative, 2023).

Examining the Inclusive Development Index (IDI) and Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), a more complex picture emerges. While government-led reforms have contributed to a better business environment and expanded economic opportunity, issues of transparency, gender equity, and institutional accountability continue to constrain the pace of truly inclusive growth (WEF, 2020; Transparency International, 2024). Furthermore, regional comparisons indicate that although Uzbekistan often outperforms some neighboring Central Asian states, it still lags behind global averages on several key indicators (OECD, 2023; ADB, 2023).

The interplay of these results demonstrates that, while Uzbekistan is moving in the right direction, there is a long road ahead to ensure broad-based prosperity and equitable participation for all segments of society. Progress in global rankings is encouraging, but persistent disparities—especially in governance and social inclusion—underscore the importance of maintaining reform momentum.

Below is a summary table highlighting Uzbekistan’s latest positions in major international rankings related to inclusive economic development:



Index	2023/2024 Score	Global Rank	Source
Impact Factor (research bib)	9,78	2751	9708
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.727	101	UNDP, 2023
Social Progress Index (SPI)	66.12	91	Social Progress Imperative, 2023
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.288	62	UNDP, 2023
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)	32/100	121	Transparency International, 2024
Inclusive Development Index (IDI)	4.09*	45*	WEF, 2020
SDG Index	66.1	52	SDSN, 2024

*Note: IDI data is for the most recent available year (2020); direct updates may be limited.

Discussion

The findings from international indices suggest Uzbekistan’s progress toward inclusive economic development is steady, yet far from complete. Advances in human development, as illustrated by HDI and SPI data, reflect the country’s ongoing efforts to strengthen education and healthcare infrastructure, which has laid a foundation for broader social well-being (UNDP, 2023; Social Progress Imperative, 2023). Notably, these improvements have paralleled policy shifts aimed at increasing state transparency and liberalizing the economy—a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the international community (ADB, 2023; OECD, 2023).

Despite the positive momentum, certain persistent challenges remain visible across all rankings. The relatively low score on the Corruption Perceptions Index is particularly telling, indicating that governance and institutional integrity remain key obstacles to achieving equitable and inclusive growth (Transparency International, 2024). Similarly, while gender inequality has modestly decreased, women and other vulnerable groups still face barriers to equal participation in economic life, as evidenced by the country’s standing on the Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, 2023).

A closer look at the Inclusive Development Index and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index reveals that progress has been uneven across different sectors. While gains in economic opportunity and basic well-being are significant, gaps persist in areas such as personal rights, access to justice, and the full realization of social inclusion (WEF, 2020; SDSN, 2024). Regional comparisons further underscore this duality—Uzbekistan may be outperforming some Central Asian neighbors, but the gap with higher-ranked global peers remains substantial.

It is also important to recognize that improvements in international rankings are not simply a matter of statistics or technical reforms. They are, in many respects, reflections of broader societal change and evolving expectations among the Uzbek population. The government’s

willingness to participate in global benchmarking exercises signals both an openness to international standards and a recognition that real development means more than economic growth alone (OECD, 2023). Ultimately, sustaining these positive trends will require a long-term commitment to inclusive policy, institutional transparency, and continuous engagement with both domestic stakeholders and the international community.

Conclusion

Uzbekistan's journey in international rankings on inclusive economic development reflects a nation in transition—one that has made promising strides, but still faces considerable challenges. The country's upward movement in the Human Development Index and Social Progress Index signals real improvements in social welfare and public services (UNDP, 2023; Social Progress Imperative, 2023). Yet, persistent shortcomings in the Corruption Perceptions Index and moderate standing in gender equality indices serve as a reminder that equitable development is an ongoing process, not a destination (Transparency International, 2024; UNDP, 2023).

While reforms have begun to shift institutional culture and open new opportunities for broad segments of society, the impact of these changes remains uneven. Bridging the gap between aspiration and reality will require a sustained focus on transparency, accountability, and the active inclusion of all citizens in economic life (ADB, 2023; OECD, 2023). By continuing to engage with international benchmarks and aligning national priorities with global best practices, Uzbekistan can further strengthen its position as a leader in inclusive development in the region.

In conclusion, international rankings are not just a measure of economic growth—they provide insight into the social contract between the state and its people. For Uzbekistan, continued progress will depend on building trust, reducing inequality, and fostering a climate where the benefits of development reach everyone, regardless of background or circumstance (World Bank, 2024).

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