

IMPROVING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS FOR INCREASING THE EXPORT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (CASE STUDY OF BUKHARA REGION)

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Abstract: This article examines ways to enhance strategic management in expanding the export of educational services in Uzbekistan’s regions, with a focus on Bukhara. It analyzes current export volumes, infrastructure challenges, and successful practices in higher and vocational education. Based on official statistics and the “Digital Uzbekistan-2030” framework, practical recommendations are provided for regional authorities and institutions.

Keywords: educational services export, strategic management, Bukhara region, higher education, internationalization.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in integrating its education sector into the global market. The export of educational services – attracting foreign students, offering joint programs, and providing online courses – has become a priority under national development strategies. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the number of international students in Uzbekistan reached 12,500 in the 2023/2024 academic year, generating over \$18 million in revenue.

Bukhara region, with its rich historical heritage and growing academic infrastructure, holds strong potential in this area. Home to Bukhara State University, Bukhara Engineering Technological Institute, and several vocational colleges, the region can position itself as a hub for students from Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. However, export volumes remain modest: in 2023, Bukhara hosted only 1,120 foreign students – about 9% of the national total. This article explores strategic management mechanisms to scale up educational exports, using Bukhara as a practical case.

1. Current State and Theoretical Foundations of Educational Export

The export of educational services is defined as the provision of training to non-residents, including tuition fees, accommodation, and related services. Globally, it is a \$200+ billion industry, with countries like the UK and Australia earning billions annually. In Uzbekistan, the legal framework was strengthened by Presidential Decree No. UP-6155 (2021), which aims to increase foreign student enrollment to 50,000 by 2030.

Strategic management in this context involves coordinated planning across government, universities, and private partners. Key models include Porter’s value chain (for service optimization) and Kotler’s marketing mix adapted for education (product, price, place, promotion). In Bukhara, the regional development program “Bukhara-2030” aligns with national goals, targeting a 15% annual growth in international enrollment.

Year	Total Students	From CIS	From Asia/Middle East	Revenue (USD mln)
2020	420	65%	30%	0.8
2021	680	60%	35%	1.2
2022	890	55%	40%	1.5

Year	Total Students	From CIS	From Asia/Middle East	Revenue (USD mln)
2023	1,120	50%	45%	2.1
2024 (proj)	1,450	45%	50%	2.8

Table 1. Foreign Students in Bukhara Region (2020–2024)

2. Export of Higher Education Services: Bukhara State University Experience

Bukhara State University (BSU) is the region’s flagship institution, offering programs in tourism, history, philology, and IT. In 2023, it enrolled 720 foreign students, mainly from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Revenue from tuition alone reached \$1.4 million. A key initiative was the launch of English-taught bachelor’s programs in “Silk Road Tourism” and “Digital Economy.” These attracted 180 students in the first year. Partnerships with universities in Turkey (Ankara University) and India (Jamia Millia Islamia) enabled double-degree programs, increasing applications by 35%.

However, challenges persist: only 40% of faculty are fluent in English, and dormitory capacity covers just 60% of demand. Strategic response: BSU introduced a faculty training program (2023–2025), certifying 120 lecturers in EMI (English Medium Instruction). A new 500-bed dormitory, funded partly by the Asian Development Bank, will open in 2025.

Initiative	Students Enrolled	Revenue Growth (%)	Partner Countries
English-taught programs	180	+42	5
Double-degree agreements	95	+28	3
Online short courses	220	+15	8

Table 2. Growth Drivers at BSU (2023–2024)

3. Vocational and Short-Term Training: Untapped Potential

Vocational colleges in Bukhara train specialists in textiles, handicrafts, and hospitality – sectors aligned with the region’s brand. In 2023, three colleges (Bukhara Textile College, Tourism College, and IT Lyceum) trained 180 foreign trainees under short-term programs (3–6 months), generating \$420,000. A successful model is the “Bukhara Craft Master” program, where students from Pakistan and Bangladesh learn traditional embroidery and ceramics. Completion rate: 92%. Graduates often secure jobs in their home countries or start micro-businesses, creating indirect economic impact. To scale this, a regional consortium was formed in 2024, uniting 7 colleges. It launched an online platform (BukharaSkills.uz) offering 12 certified courses in Russian, English, and Persian. First-year enrollment: 310 students from 6 countries.

Program Type	2023 Students	2025 Target	Revenue 2025 (USD)
On-campus (3–6 mo)	180	500	1.2 mln

Program Type	2023 Students	2025 Target	Revenue 2025 (USD)
Online courses	45	800	0.6 mln
Total	225	1,300	1.8 mln

Table 3. Vocational Training Export (2023–2025 proj.)

4. Challenges and Improvement Mechanisms

Despite progress, several barriers remain:

1. Language and Marketing: Limited digital presence in target languages. Only 30% of university websites are fully multilingual.
2. Infrastructure: Internet speed in rural campuses averages 25 Mbps (vs. 100 Mbps needed for online learning).
3. Visa and Recognition: Lengthy visa processing (up to 45 days) deters applicants.
4. Funding: State budget covers only 60% of internationalization costs.

Proposed Mechanisms:

- Regional Export Council: Establish a coordination body under the Bukhara Hokimiyat, including university rectors, business leaders, and tourism agencies.
- Digital Marketing Fund: Allocate \$500,000 annually for targeted ads on Google, Yandex, and WeChat, plus participation in education fairs in Almaty, Kabul, and Lahore.
- Fast-Track Visa Lane: Pilot a 15-day e-visa for education applicants from 10 priority countries.
- Public-Private Hostels: Incentivize private investment in student housing via tax breaks (5-year exemption).

The export of educational services in Bukhara region grew from \$0.8 million in 2020 to a projected \$4.6 million in 2025 – a 5.7-fold increase. Strategic management, combining policy support, institutional initiative, and digital tools, is key to sustaining this trajectory.

1. Scale English-medium and online programs across all universities by 2026.
2. Create a unified regional brand – “Study in Bukhara: Heritage Meets Innovation.”
3. Integrate educational export targets into the performance KPIs of regional officials and rectors.
4. Launch an annual “Bukhara Education Export Forum” to attract partners from 20+ countries.

With consistent implementation, Bukhara can contribute 15–20% of Uzbekistan’s national educational export revenue by 2030, while enhancing its global academic reputation.

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