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"MILLIY STATISTIKA TIZIMIDA YANGI BOSQICH: BARQAROR RIVOJLANISH MAQSADLARI, XALQARO STANDARTLAR VA ZAMONAVIY TENDENSIYALAR"

POSSIBILITIES OF APPLYING FOREIGN REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS POLICIES TO UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

Regional competitiveness policy has become one of the most important directions of modern economic governance. Countries that successfully reduced territorial disparities and increased regional productivity achieved these results not only through investment growth, but also through effective strategic management, institutional coordination, innovation support, and differentiated regional policies. For Uzbekistan, which is currently implementing large-scale economic reforms and territorial modernization programs, the study of foreign regional competitiveness models has significant practical importance.

Keywords: *regional competitiveness policy, place-based development, innovation clusters, comparative policy analysis, territorial differentiation.*

This thesis analyzes the regional competitiveness policies of the European Union, South Korea, China, Kazakhstan, and Finland, and evaluates the possibilities of adapting their experiences to Uzbekistan. The research is based on comparative policy analysis and focuses on strategic planning systems, innovation support mechanisms, cluster development, institutional coordination, and regional governance models. Unlike econometric studies, this research follows a conceptual and policy-oriented approach aimed at identifying practical recommendations for regional development management in Uzbekistan.

International experience demonstrates that successful regional competitiveness policies depend on the interaction between strategic governance, institutional flexibility, innovation systems, and territorial specialization. Different countries apply different approaches depending on their economic structure, governance tradition, and level of development.

The European Union follows a place-based regional policy model that prioritizes institutional quality, infrastructure modernization, innovation ecosystems, and regional cohesion. Through the European Regional Development Fund and Smart Specialization Strategy, EU regions receive differentiated support according to their economic potential and structural conditions. The key lesson for Uzbekistan is the importance of

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differentiated regional policy instead of uniform nationwide approaches.

South Korea represents a highly centralized but innovation-oriented regional development model. The country successfully transformed regional economies through industrial clusters, export-oriented industrialization, and technological modernization. Government coordination played a decisive role in supporting strategic industries and linking universities with manufacturing sectors. This experience demonstrates the importance of innovation-driven industrial policy for Uzbekistan’s regions.

China’s regional competitiveness policy is based on experimental regional governance and special economic zones. Chinese reforms allowed selected territories to test new economic mechanisms before expanding them nationwide. Regional competition between provinces stimulated investment attraction, export growth, and infrastructure development. For Uzbekistan, the Chinese experience highlights the importance of decentralization, investment-oriented governance, and pilot regional reforms.

Kazakhstan’s regional policy focuses on infrastructure integration, industrial diversification, and state-led territorial modernization. Due to similarities in post-Soviet institutional structures and resource dependence, Kazakhstan provides one of the most relevant comparative cases for Uzbekistan. The country’s efforts to reduce regional disparities through industrial programs and transport corridors demonstrate the importance of coordinated territorial planning.

Finland represents a knowledge-based regional development model built on innovation systems, education quality, and local governance autonomy. Finnish regions emphasize technological adaptation, digitalization, and cooperation between universities, local governments, and private firms. The Finnish experience illustrates that long-term competitiveness depends not only on industrial investment but also on human capital and institutional trust.

The following table summarizes the major features of regional competitiveness policy models and their possible adaptation to Uzbekistan.

Country/Region	Main Policy Features	Strategic Strength	Relevance for Uzbekistan
European Union	Place-based regional policy; Smart Specialization Strategy; cohesion funds	Balanced territorial development and institutional coordination	Useful for differentiated regional policies and reducing territorial inequality

South Korea	Innovation-oriented industrial clusters and export-led regional development	Strong coordination between state, industry, and universities	Applicable for industrial modernization and innovation clusters
China	Special economic zones and experimental regional governance	Flexible regional reforms and investment attraction	Important for pilot reforms and regional investment competition
Kazakhstan	Infrastructure integration and industrial diversification	State-led regional modernization	Relevant due to similar institutional and economic conditions
Finland	Knowledge economy, education systems, and local governance autonomy	Human capital and technological innovation	Important for digital transformation and regional innovation systems

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Policy Recommendations for Uzbekistan

Introduce differentiated regional development strategies based on the economic specialization and structural conditions of each region.

Expand innovation-oriented industrial clusters and strengthen cooperation between universities, research institutions, and enterprises.

Develop pilot regional reform zones where new investment and governance mechanisms can be tested before nationwide implementation.

Strengthen institutional coordination between central government, regional authorities, and local economic actors to improve strategic governance quality.

Prioritize human capital development, digitalization, and regional innovation systems as long-term sources of competitiveness.

Conclusions

The comparative analysis demonstrates that regional competitiveness is not achieved through investment policies alone. Successful international models combine strategic governance, institutional flexibility, innovation systems, and differentiated territorial management. Although each country follows its own development path, several universal principles emerge: the importance of innovation ecosystems, decentralized strategic management, institutional coordination, and region-specific policy design. For Uzbekistan, the adaptation of foreign experience should not involve direct imitation. Instead, international practices must be selectively adjusted to national institutional conditions and regional characteristics. The experiences of the European Union, South Korea, China, Kazakhstan, and Finland collectively show that long-term regional competitiveness requires both economic modernization and institutional transformation. The study concludes that Uzbekistan’s future regional policy should move toward a more place-based and innovation-oriented model where each region develops according to its own strategic advantages. Such an approach would strengthen territorial competitiveness, reduce regional disparities, and support sustainable national economic growth.

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