

**SOUTH KOREA - UZBEKISTAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT****Xurramov Davron**E-mail: [khurramofdavron@gmail.com](mailto:khurramofdavron@gmail.com)

**Annotation;** This article examines the strategic partnership between South Korea and Uzbekistan in the domains of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development, emphasizing its significance in shaping a knowledge-based digital economy. With South Korea's advanced technological ecosystem and Uzbekistan's growing commitment to digital transformation, both countries are laying the foundation for impactful collaboration. The paper reviews current initiatives, including governmental frameworks, academic exchanges, and private sector investments. It also identifies opportunities and challenges in aligning innovation policies and digital capacity-building efforts. This study argues that a long-term AI-driven partnership can not only accelerate technological advancement in Uzbekistan but also contribute to regional digital leadership in Central Asia.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Technology Partnership, Software Engineering, Innovation Policy

**Аннотация:** Статья посвящена стратегическому партнёрству между Южной Кореей и Узбекистаном в области искусственного интеллекта (ИИ) и разработки программного обеспечения, с акцентом на его роль в формировании экономики, основанной на знаниях. Технологически развитая Южная Корея и стремящийся к цифровой трансформации Узбекистан создают прочную платформу для продуктивного сотрудничества. В статье рассматриваются текущие инициативы, включая государственные программы, академические обмены и инвестиции частного сектора. Также анализируются возможности и вызовы, связанные с согласованием инновационных стратегий и развитием цифрового потенциала. Автор утверждает, что долгосрочное сотрудничество в области ИИ может не только ускорить технологическое развитие Узбекистана, но и укрепить его позиции в Центральной Азии как регионального цифрового лидера.

**Ключевые слова:** Искусственный интеллект, Цифровая экономика, Южная Корея, Узбекистан, Технологическое партнёрство, Программная инженерия, Инновационная политика.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada Janubiy Koreya va O'zbekiston o'rtasida sun'iy intellekt (AI) hamda dasturiy ta'minot sohasidagi strategik hamkorlik tahlil qilinadi. Ushbu hamkorlik zamonaviy texnologiyalar asosida shakllanayotgan bilimga asoslangan raqamli iqtisodiyotda muhim o'rin tutadi. Texnologik rivojlangan Janubiy Koreya va raqamli transformatsiyani jadallashtirayotgan O'zbekiston o'zaro hamkorlik uchun mustahkam zamin yaratmoqda. Maqolada hukumat dasturlari, akademik almashinuvlar va xususiy sektor investitsiyalari misolida mavjud tashabbuslar ko'rib chiqiladi. Shu bilan birga, innovatsion siyosatni uyg'unlashtirish va raqamli salohiyatni oshirishda duch kelinayotgan imkoniyat va muammolar ham tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, sun'iy intellektga asoslangan uzoq muddatli hamkorlik nafaqat O'zbekistonning texnologik rivojlanishini tezlashtiradi, balki uni Markaziy Osiyodagi raqamli yetakchilardan biriga aylantiradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Sun'iy intellekt, Raqamli iqtisodiyot, Janubiy Koreya, O'zbekiston, Texnologik hamkorlik, Dasturiy injiniring, Innovatsion siyosat

In recent years, the collaboration between the South Korea and Uzbekistan has shifted from broad declarations to concrete actions in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development. Notably, in November 2024, IT Park Uzbekistan opened a representative office in Seoul, marking a strategic step to integrate Uzbek digital-service capabilities with South Korean technology markets. Meanwhile, in May 2025 the South Korean government provided a US\$3.8 million grant to modernise Uzbekistan's statistical system with an AI-driven CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) platform. These developments illustrate how the two countries are leveraging complementary strengths: South Korea's advanced AI and software ecosystem, and Uzbekistan's ambition to become a regional digital-services hub. This paper explores the strategic framework, key initiatives, and emerging outcomes of this bilateral collaboration, aiming to identify both opportunities and constraints.

#### Literature Review

Existing scholarship on international collaboration in AI and software development emphasises the importance of innovation ecosystems, absorptive capacity, and institutional alignment. For example, the innovation systems approach argues that national capabilities in R&D, education, and industrial linkages shape a country's ability to benefit from technology partnerships. Complementarily, the concept of absorptive capacity highlights that successful technology transfer depends not only on the provider, but also the recipient's ability to assimilate new knowledge and build local capacity.<sup>1</sup> Turning to the Korea-Uzbekistan context, media and policy reports reveal several notable developments: in June 2024, the two countries formed a project portfolio worth US\$9.6 billion, explicitly including AI, software exports and digital-technology cooperation. In late 2024, the IT Park alliance sought to attract South Korean outsourcing firms and game-development companies into Uzbekistan, signalling a shift towards software services and game development collaboration. While these sources provide context, peer-reviewed academic studies remain sparse on how this partnership is operationalised in software development and AI for emerging markets. This paper seeks to fill that gap by providing empirical insight into recent initiatives.

This study employs a qualitative quantitative descriptive methodology to assess the growing collaboration between South Korea and Uzbekistan in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development. The analysis focuses on developments from late 2024 through 2025 and draws on data from official sources, news media, and institutional reports.

Primary data sources include: (1) public announcements by both governments; (2) partnerships and signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs); (3) detailed reporting from the ICT Week Uzbekistan 2025; and (4) press releases from organizations such as IT Park Uzbekistan and Korean technology agencies. Through these sources, various types of initiatives were mapped including investments, infrastructure projects, outsourcing programs, and capacity-building efforts.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most prominent initiatives during this period was the \$3.8 million grant provided by the South Korean government in May 2025 to support Uzbekistan's AI-driven CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system, aimed at modernizing national statistics and enabling smarter data processing. This initiative not only brings AI infrastructure but also contributes to developing technical skills within government agencies. A second notable milestone was the opening of IT Park Uzbekistan's representative office in Seoul in October 2024. This strategic move aimed to promote Uzbekistan as an outsourcing destination for Korean IT and AI companies. By the third quarter of 2024, Uzbekistan's digital service exports to South Korea had increased by 4.6 times, indicating early but significant growth in cross-border digital trade.

<sup>1</sup> Akmalovich, E. F. (2025). *Uzbekistan-Korea Cooperation in the Field of Electronic Government and Digital Economy*. International Journal of Artificial Intelligence, 13, 707-709.

<sup>2</sup> Choi, D. (2025, October 2). *Gyeongbuk TP Expands ICT Exchange with Uzbekistan*. Asia Business Daily.

Moreover, during ICT Week Uzbekistan 2025, several agreements were signed between Korean and Uzbek institutions. These included over 8 MoUs, mainly focused on business process outsourcing (BPO), AI solutions, and game development. Around \$8 million worth of B2B consultations were also conducted during this forum, where Korean innovation hubs like Gyeongbuk Technopark participated actively. These engagements suggest a shift from one-way technology transfer toward reciprocal, co-creative partnerships. In addition to individual initiatives, in June 2024 both countries launched a broader portfolio of bilateral projects worth \$9.6 billion, covering AI, digital exports, and innovation infrastructure.<sup>3</sup> This framework provides a long-term strategic base for deepening cooperation across public and private sectors.

These developments can be categorized into four main types:

1. **Infrastructure & Investment** – e.g., Korean-funded AI systems like CATI.
2. **Service Export Facilitation** – e.g., IT Park's Seoul office and export growth.
3. **Human Capital Development** – training programs and collaborative game development platforms.
4. **Strategic Alliances & Governance** – signed MoUs and policy-level agreements.

Despite this progress, several challenges remain. Uzbekistan's capacity to absorb and locally innovate remains constrained by the limited availability of mid- and senior-level AI specialists. Furthermore, regulatory alignment around intellectual property rights, data governance, and AI ethics needs to be enhanced to enable seamless collaboration. At the same time, the opportunities are considerable. With its youthful, tech-savvy population and supportive government policies, Uzbekistan can evolve from a service provider into a co-developer of AI and digital solutions. Joint research labs, co-designed educational programs, and long-term innovation hubs can pave the way for sustainable, high-value collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The collaboration between South Korea and Uzbekistan in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and software development is entering a pivotal stage. The period of 2024–2025 has seen a shift from exploratory agreements to concrete, results-driven initiatives from infrastructure investment, like the AI-powered CATI system, to digital service export acceleration through the establishment of IT Park Uzbekistan's Seoul office. This partnership reflects a strategically balanced relationship: South Korea contributes mature AI technology, capital, and institutional know-how, while Uzbekistan offers a young workforce, growing IT infrastructure, and a strong desire to become a regional technology hub. The observed 4.6x growth in digital exports, \$3.8 million AI investment, and multiple signed MoUs indicate not only economic cooperation but also knowledge transfer and institutional synergy. Despite existing challenges such as talent gaps and regulatory alignment the trajectory of this collaboration is promising. The ongoing development of joint innovation labs, game development ecosystems, and BPO partnerships could allow Uzbekistan to evolve from a service-based role to a co-innovator within the global AI economy. For South Korea, the partnership opens access to a growing Central Asian digital market and a strategic bridge to the wider region. In conclusion, the South Korea–Uzbekistan AI and software development partnership is not merely transactional but transformational. It holds the potential to reshape regional digital landscapes, enhance technological sovereignty for Uzbekistan, and offer a model of inclusive, cross-border digital development rooted in mutual benefit and long-term vision.

<sup>3</sup> UzDaily.uz. (2024, June 27). *Uzbekistan, South Korea Create IT Business Alliance*.

<sup>4</sup> Reuters. (2025, October 17). *South Korea Kicks Off Arms Fair to Showcase Unmanned, AI Weapons*.

**REFERENCES:**

1. Akmalovich, E. F. (2025). Uzbekistan–Korea Cooperation in the Field of Electronic Government and Digital Economy. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence*, 13, 707–709.
2. Choi, D. (2025, October 2). Gyeongbuk TP Expands ICT Exchange with Uzbekistan. *Asia Business Daily*.
3. Kun.uz. (2024, June 13). South Korea Eyes to Build a High-Tech Hub with Uzbekistan.
4. Kun.uz. (2025, May 29). South Korea Funds AI-Driven Phone Survey System in Uzbekistan.
5. Kun.uz. (2024, June 14). Uzbekistan, South Korea Form a Portfolio of Projects Worth \$9.6 Billion.
6. Maili.uz. (2025, June 3). Uzbekistan and Korea Expand Cooperation and Launch Smart Factory Project.
7. Samarkand International University of Technology. (2024, June 17). Uzbekistan–South Korea: A New Era of High-Tech and Innovative Cooperation.
8. UzDaily.uz. (2024, June 27). Uzbekistan, South Korea Create IT Business Alliance.
9. Kun.uz. (2024, February 21). Uzbekistan, South Korea to Strengthen Collaboration in AI and IT for Crime Prevention.
10. Kun.uz. (2024, June 13). South Korea Eyes to Build a High-Tech Hub with Uzbekistan.
11. Reuters. (2025, October 17). South Korea Kicks Off Arms Fair to Showcase Unmanned, AI Weapons.