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INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the World Bank published the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) to assess the logistics efficiency of countries. According to the results, Kazakhstan ranked 79th with a score of 2.7, while Uzbekistan ranked 88th with a score of 2.6. A closer examination of the index indicators shows that the difference between the two countries is relatively small. The ranking difference is mainly associated with variations in the quality of transport and logistics services.

In this context, further improving the transport and logistics infrastructure of Uzbekistan and enhancing the quality of services provided by logistics companies remain important priorities. At the same time, strengthening international transport connectivity is essential, as many of the main corridors connecting Uzbekistan with global markets are linked to maritime transport routes. Therefore, the development of alternative and efficient transport corridors can play a significant role in expanding the country's access to international trade networks and increasing the overall efficiency of logistics systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of transport corridors and transport and logistics systems is one of the key strategic factors in modern economic processes. In particular, the development of international transport corridors is of great importance for countries that do not have direct access to the sea, as it contributes to increasing the foreign trade potential of national economies. In this context, the Trans-Afghan Transport Corridor project is particularly significant because it creates new geoeconomic opportunities for the countries of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan.

During the implementation of this study, scientific works and official statistical sources were used to illustrate the impact of transport corridors on economic and regional development. In particular, international agreements signed between the countries participating in the project, analytical materials published in the media, monitoring reports of the United Nations Security Council on Afghanistan, and open statistical data from the World Bank formed the information base of the study. These sources play an important role in examining the impact of transport corridors on regional trade relations, transit potential, and economic integration processes.

The issues of modernization of transport and logistics systems and their influence on foreign trade processes have been examined by a number of researchers. In particular, the scientific article by Fazliddinova Sabohat Ilkhomovna entitled "Modernization of the Transport and Logistics System and Its Impact on Export-Import Processes: The Experience of Uzbekistan in the Context of the New Silk Road" analyzes the impact of transport infrastructure modernization on the country's export-import operations. The author emphasizes that the development of the transport and logistics system within the framework of the New Silk Road initiative is an important factor in ensuring Uzbekistan's active participation in international trade and increasing its transit potential.

In addition, in the article "If the Sea Does Not Come to Us – We Will Go to the Sea," published in the international scientific journal MODERN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH, Doniyor Kholmirezayev analyzes Uzbekistan's access to global seaports. The author examines this issue within the framework of the Trans-Afghan and Trans-Caspian transport routes and discusses the development of transport corridors in connection with regional integration processes in Central Asia, the country's accession process to the World Trade Organization, and the international legal status of landlocked countries.

The influence of transport corridors on the national transport system has also been examined in the article "Analysis of the Impact of Transport Corridors on Local Transportation" by Kamilov Mukhammadjamshid Kobuljon oglu, a master's student at the Tashkent State Transport University. This study analyzes the prospects of the Trans-Afghan transport corridor and its integration with the transport system of Uzbekistan. Particular attention is given to the analysis of statistical indicators of the Termez regional railway junction, which connects the country's railway network with this transport corridor.

From a theoretical perspective, the methodological manual "Transport Geography" by Akbarjon Abdulhamidovich is also an important scientific source for understanding the laws of territorial development of transport systems. This manual provides a theoretical explanation of the territorial organization of transport infrastructure, the influence of transport networks on economic development, and the geoeconomic significance of transport corridors.

Overall, the above-mentioned scientific studies and official data provide a solid basis for substantiating the significant role of the Trans-Afghan transport corridor not only in the development of transport infrastructure, but also in expanding regional trade relations, increasing transit potential, and strengthening Uzbekistan's position within the international transport system.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While preparing this article, the results of Uzbekistan's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) for 2007–2023 were statistically analyzed. The conclusions derived from this analysis were further examined using a macrosimulation model. For the statistical analysis of Uzbekistan's LPI results, the time-series descriptive analysis method available in the JASP (version 0.95.4.0) application was employed. This approach made it possible to evaluate the level of development of Uzbekistan's transport and logistics sector over the period 2007–2023.

In addition, a macrosimulation model was applied to forecast the potential efficiency of the Kabul corridor for Uzbekistan up to 2040. Within this model, six key economic indicators were analyzed in order to assess the expected impact of the corridor on the national transport and logistics system. The results of this analysis are presented in the form of a six-dimensional spider-chart diagram provided at the end of the article.

Comparative analysis. The Strategy for the Development of the Transport System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2035 identifies several priority areas, including improving the quality and volume of cargo transportation, reducing environmental impacts, and modernizing container terminals.

At the same time, the sector demonstrates significant opportunities for further development. Enhancing the quality of transport services can contribute to more dynamic growth in cargo transportation volumes. Increasing the level of containerization may help reduce logistics costs and improve the efficiency of freight transportation. Moreover, optimizing the balance between different modes of transport could support environmental sustainability, particularly considering that road transport currently accounts for a substantial share of emissions.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Logistics is an integral component of international trade. It ensures the efficient movement of goods and services across national borders, enabling businesses to access new markets and consumers. Effective logistics systems are essential for enterprises of all sizes, ranging from small businesses to large multinational corporations.

The experience of developed countries demonstrates that a well-functioning transport and logistics system plays a crucial role in economic development. The competitiveness of the national economy, the stability and supply of domestic markets, the provision of resources for entrepreneurs, and the expansion of export–import potential are closely linked to the level of logistics development. Therefore, a sustainable and competitive economy requires a well-developed logistics infrastructure. This is particularly important for Uzbekistan, which occupies a strategic geographical position in Central Asia.

A transport corridor can be defined as an infrastructure system that includes one or more modes of transport and ensures the efficient movement of goods and passengers along a specific geographical route. Such corridors typically integrate road, rail, air, and multimodal transport systems to facilitate international trade and regional connectivity.

At present, several major transport corridors support the foreign trade cargo transportation of Uzbekistan:

1. A corridor passing through Kazakhstan and Russia to the Baltic ports via transit routes, including Klaipėda (Lithuania), Riga, Liepāja, and Ventspils (Latvia), as well as Tallinn (Estonia).
2. A transit corridor to the European Union through Belarus and Ukraine, including the border points of Chop (Ukraine) and Brest (Belarus).
3. A corridor passing through Kazakhstan and Russia to the Ukrainian port of Illichivsk.
4. The TRACECA corridor (Transport Corridor Europe–Caucasus–Asia), passing through the transit routes of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan.
5. A corridor leading to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas through the transit routes of Turkmenistan.
6. A corridor connecting Uzbekistan with the eastern ports of China and the Far East ports of Nakhodka and Vladivostok through the Kazakhstan–China border crossing (Dostyk–Alashankou).
7. A corridor providing access to Chinese ports through transit routes via Kyrgyzstan.
8. A corridor providing access to the ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar (Islamic Republic of Iran), as well as Gwadar and Karachi (Islamic Republic of Pakistan), through transit routes via Afghanistan.

The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) published by the World Bank is widely used to assess the logistics performance of countries. According to the 2023 LPI results, the highest logistics performance in Central Asia was recorded in Kazakhstan, which ranked 79th with a score of 2.7, followed by Uzbekistan, which ranked 88th with a score of 2.6. Tajikistan ranked 97th with a score of 2.5, while Kyrgyzstan ranked 123rd with a score of 2.3. These results indicate the growing importance of improving transport and logistics infrastructure in the region and expanding international transport connectivity (Table 1).



Table 1. Dynamics of Uzbekistan's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Indicators (2007–2023)

Year	Overall LPI	Customs Efficiency	Infrastructure Quality	International Shipping	Logistics Quality	Cargo Tracking and Tracing	On-Time Delivery	Year
2007	2.16	1.94	2.00	2.07	2.15	2.08	2.73	2007
2010	2.79	2.20	2.54	2.79	2.50	2.96	3.72	2010
2012	2.46	2.25	2.25	2.38	2.39	2.53	2.96	2012
2014	2.39	1.80	2.01	2.23	2.37	2.87	3.08	2014
2016	2.40	2.32	2.45	2.36	2.39	2.05	2.83	2016
2018	2.58	2.10	2.57	2.42	2.59	2.71	3.09	2018
2023	2.60	2.60	2.40	2.60	2.60	2.40	2.80	2023

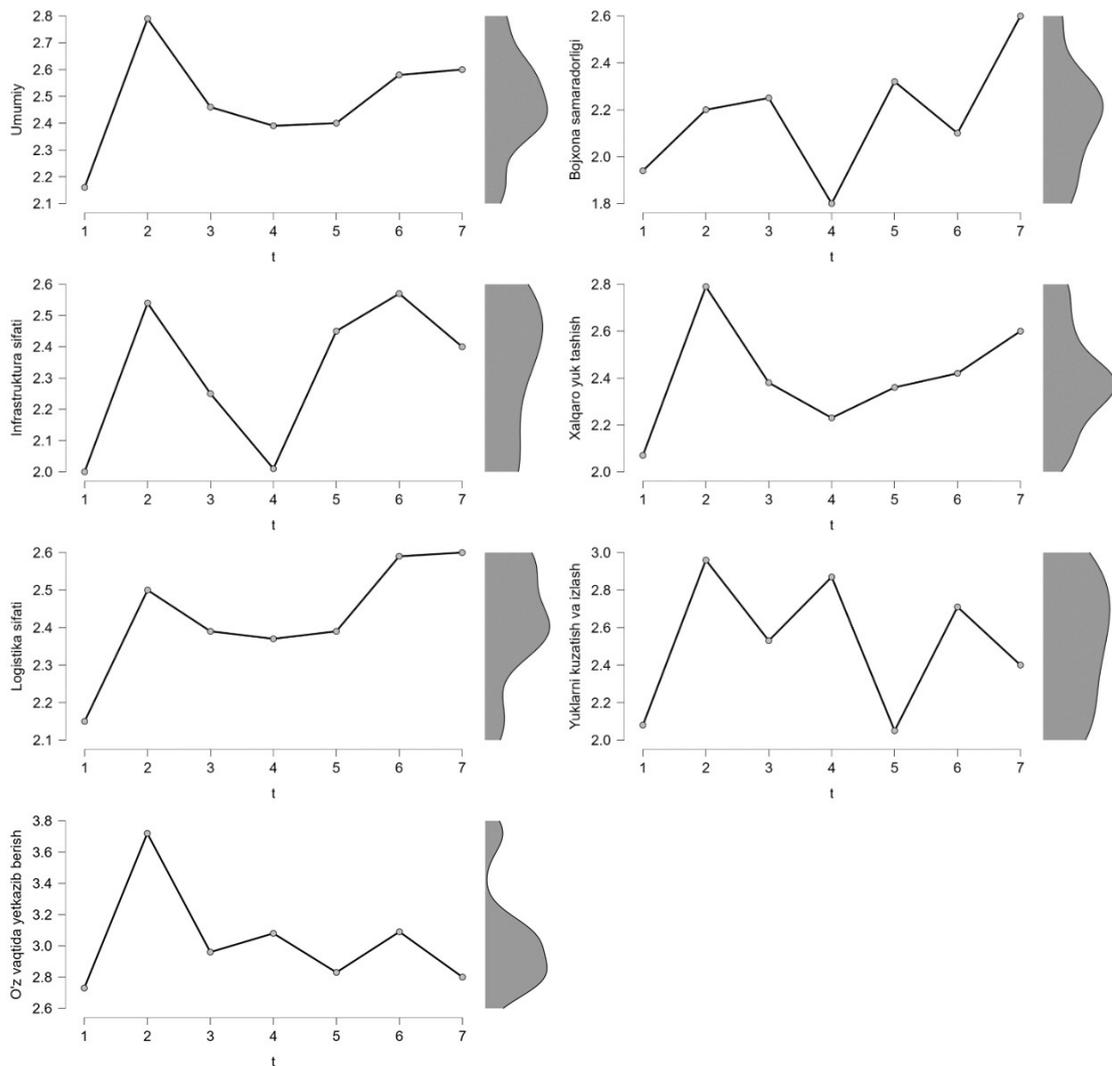


Figure 1. Dynamics of Uzbekistan's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Indicators (2007–2023)



A comparative analysis of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan can provide additional insights into their logistics performance. In Kazakhstan, customs efficiency was rated 2.6 points (74th place), infrastructure quality 2.5 points (80th place), international cargo transportation 2.6 points (91st place), logistics service quality 2.7 points (81st place), timely delivery 2.9 points (93rd place), and cargo tracking and tracing 2.8 points (80th place).

In Uzbekistan, customs efficiency was also rated 2.6 points (74th place), infrastructure quality 2.4 points (89th place), international cargo transportation 2.6 points (91st place), logistics service quality 2.6 points (92nd place), timely delivery 2.8 points (102nd place), and cargo tracking and tracing 2.4 points (105th place).

These indicators demonstrate that the main differences between the two countries are associated with the quality of infrastructure, logistics services, the reliability of delivery times, and the efficiency of cargo tracking and tracing systems.

When comparing the transport and logistics potential of Uzbekistan with that of the Republic of Kazakhstan, two important factors should be considered: access to the Caspian Sea and the Eurasian Continental Bridge railway, which connects China with Europe. The largest port on the Caspian Sea is the Aktau International Sea Trade Port, located in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In addition, Kazakhstan has an extensive network of maritime and river ports, including those in Atyrau, Bautino, and Kuryk.

The Eurasian Continental Bridge represents a modernized development of the historical Trans-Siberian Railway, which was completed in 1916 and connected Moscow with Pacific ports such as Vladivostok. Between the 1960s–1990s, this railway served as one of the main land transport routes linking Europe and Asia. In recent years, however, the use of this route has declined due to differences in railway gauge standards between the former Soviet railway system and the modern railway systems of Europe and China.

Until 1990, the Chinese railway system was connected to the Trans-Siberian Railway through northeastern China and Mongolia. Later, after the development of the Second Eurasian Continental Bridge, China increasingly began to use this alternative route. This corridor emerged through the construction of railway connections between China and Kazakhstan, followed by links extending toward Iran, the Middle East, and Central Asian countries. In 2013, an additional connection between Asia and Europe was strengthened through the Marmaray Tunnel project, which created a railway link across the Bosphorus Strait.

As geopolitical conditions in the region have evolved, the importance of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor has increased. This development has further emphasized the role of railway routes passing through Kazakhstan in facilitating Eurasian trade connectivity.

For Uzbekistan, improving transport and logistics efficiency requires the diversification of international transport routes and the expansion of regional connectivity. In this context, the development of the Kabul corridor could provide Uzbekistan with additional access to maritime trade routes and strengthen its integration into global transport networks.

According to the international ranking of the Logistics Performance Index, Uzbekistan ranked 118th in 2016. As a result of ongoing reforms and infrastructure improvements, the country improved its position to 88th place in 2023 (Figure 1).

Following the publication of these results, the first Shanghai Cooperation Organization Transport Forum 2023 was held on November 1, 2023 at the Uzexpocenter Congress Hall in Tashkent. During the forum, participants discussed the establishment and development of the Belarus–Russia–Kazakhstan–Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan international transport corridor.

Pakistan represents a significant trade partner for Uzbekistan, with a population of approximately 230 million people. Its seaports, including Port of Karachi, Port Qasim, and Gwadar Port, provide access to markets in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

In 2024, the Minister of Transport of Uzbekistan, Ilhom Mahkamov, held a working meeting in Astana with the Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, Marat Karabayev. The meeting focused on launching the Belarus–Russia–Kazakhstan–Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan multimodal transport corridor and equipping it with modern technologies. The corridor begins in Minsk (Belarus), passes through Central Asia, and provides access to the Indian Ocean through Karachi, Pakistan. For Uzbekistan, this route offers significant economic opportunities, as the Port of Karachi is a major international port with approximately 30 cargo berths equipped with modern Panamax cranes.

The potential launch of a railway line through the Kabul corridor can be evaluated using a macrosimulation model. Based on forecasts for the period 2025–2040, three development scenarios can be considered:

- Conservative scenario. Security-related uncertainties may slow cargo transportation, resulting in a railway capacity of up to 15 million tons, with construction costs reduced by approximately 20%.
- Baseline scenario. The railway is expected to be launched by 2028, with construction efficiency improvements of about 40% and a transport capacity of approximately 28 million tons of cargo.
- Optimistic scenario. If the corridor becomes fully operational by 2027, Uzbekistan could develop into a major regional logistics hub, with cargo volumes reaching 40 million tons, particularly due to expanding trade relations with India.



Within the macrosimulation model, the following key indicators are analyzed: GDP growth, job creation, cargo volume, expected transit revenues, trade expansion, and foreign investment inflows, with forecasts extending to 2040.

A six-dimensional radar analysis for 2040 includes the following indicators:

- Cargo volume;
- Expected transit revenue;
- GDP dynamics;
- Export growth;
- Foreign direct investment inflows;
- Risk and uncertainty factors.

According to the model projections, by 2040 the maximum cargo volume transported through the corridor could reach approximately 40 million tons (Table 2).

Table 2. Forecast Cargo Capacity of the Kabul Corridor Railway under Macrosimulation Scenarios

Scenario	100-Point Assessment	Cargo Capacity
Optimistic Scenario (High Profit Probability)	~100	40 million tons
Baseline Scenario (Main Probability)	~70	28 million tons
Risk Scenario (Low Profit Probability)	~38	15 million tons

The Trans-Afghan Railway project planned for 2025 includes the following approved parameters:

- The total project cost is estimated at approximately USD 4.8 billion.
- The railway route is planned to extend from Termez (Uzbekistan) to Kharlachi, passing through the Afghan cities of Naybabad, Maidanshahr, and Logar.
- The estimated construction period of the railway is about five years.
- The total length of the railway line will be approximately 647 kilometers.
- The project is expected to create significant employment opportunities, contributing to the development of regional labor markets.
- The transportation time for cargo between Pakistan and Uzbekistan is expected to decrease substantially, from approximately 35 days to 3–5 days.
- The railway will use a track gauge of 1520 mm, which is compatible with the railway standards widely used in Central Asia.

According to macroeconomic projections, the customs revenues that Uzbekistan could receive from cargo transported along this corridor are estimated to reach approximately USD 0.88 billion by 2040, reflecting the growing transit potential of the route (Table 3).

Table 3. Forecast of Expected Transit Revenue from the Kabul Corridor Project (Macrosimulation Scenarios)

Scenario	100-Point Assessment	Expected Annual Income
Optimistic Scenario (High Profit Probability)	~100	~0.88 billion USD per year
Baseline Scenario (Main Probability)	~57	~0.50 billion USD per year
Risk Scenario (Low Profit Probability)	~24	~0.18 billion USD per year

Value added per year in percentage terms relative to the base GDP value (\$90 billion) (with a transit infrastructure multiplier effect of 2.1) (Table 4).

Table 4. Forecast Impact of the Kabul Corridor Project on Uzbekistan's GDP Based on Macrosimulation Scenarios (to 2040)

Scenario	100-Point Assessment	Expected GDP Change
Optimistic Scenario (High Profit Probability)	~96	+3.2% GDP (maximum annual impact)
Baseline Scenario (Main Probability)	~54	+1.8% GDP (maximum annual impact)
Risk Scenario (Low Profit Probability)	~24	+0.8% GDP (maximum annual impact)



Increase in Uzbekistan's export volume through the use of Pakistani ports by 2040 (baseline volume - \$19 billion)

Table 5. Forecast of Export Growth under Macrosimulation Scenarios of the Kabul Corridor Project (by 2040)

Scenario	100-Point Assessment	Total Export Value by 2040
Optimistic Scenario (High Profit Probability)	~85	~38–42 billion USD
Baseline Scenario (Main Probability)	~55	~28–32 billion USD
Risk Scenario (Low Profit Probability)	~28	~22–25 billion USD

Growth in Foreign Direct Investment

There are several threats that prevent the Kabul Corridor from delivering the expected results for our country's economy in the future. The first of these is the ISKP (Islamic State Khorasan Province) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which has more than 20 international and local terrorist organizations (Table 6).

Table 6. Macrosimulation Scenario Analysis of the Kabul Corridor Economic Impact (Forecast to 2040)

Economic Factor	Risk Scenario	Baseline Scenario	Optimistic Scenario
Cargo Capacity	38	70	100
Transit Revenue	24	57	100
Impact on GDP	24	54	96
Export Growth	28	55	85
Transport Infrastructure Investment Growth	30	55	80
Security Stability	25	55	80

In February–2026, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed an intergovernmental agreement concerning the technical and economic feasibility study of the Naybabad–Kharlachi railway line. At present, the implementation of this project is being coordinated by the Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan.

To ensure effective financing and implementation, it is planned to establish a multinational consortium that will include national governments, international financial institutions, commercial banks, and private logistics companies. Such a structure is expected to facilitate coordinated investment and technical cooperation among the participating stakeholders.

According to analytical assessments conducted by the Eurasian Development Bank, the estimated cost of the Trans-Afghan Corridor project is approximately USD 4.8 billion, based on long-term economic forecasts and infrastructure development projections.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The construction of a railway line within the eastern section of the Trans-Afghan Corridor (Kabul Corridor) represents one of the shortest and most efficient routes for Uzbekistan to gain access to maritime trade routes. In recent years, the volume of cargo transported by road through the Kabul Corridor has increased significantly, rising from approximately 300 thousand tons to more than 1 million tons, and this trend continues to demonstrate positive growth.

Recent geopolitical developments have also influenced the configuration of international transport routes. In particular, evolving geopolitical conditions in the Russia–Ukraine region have increased interest in alternative transport corridors across Eurasia. At the same time, uncertainties in regional logistics routes have encouraged countries to diversify their transport connections and strengthen regional infrastructure cooperation.

In this context, Uzbekistan, together with other countries seeking to enhance their transport and logistics potential, is actively exploring the most efficient and sustainable international transport corridors. The development of the railway line within the Kabul Corridor of the Trans-Afghan transport route may therefore serve as an important strategic project for improving regional connectivity and expanding access to global markets.

In summary, the analysis conducted in this study indicates that the development of the Kabul Corridor railway line could provide significant economic and logistical advantages for Uzbekistan. Compared with other large-scale regional initiatives, such as the China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan transport corridor and the Trans-



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