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NEXT STAGES OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN UZBEKISTAN: GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: This article explores the recent reforms in Uzbekistan's public procurement system, emphasizing the integration of environmental criteria and the promotion of domestic producers. The study is based on the analysis of official documents, data from the Ekoplatforma portal, and international literature on sustainable procurement. Results show that public procurement has achieved higher efficiency, with average savings of 12.6 percent of initial contract values, while gradually moving toward environmentally sustainable practices. The discussion highlights the importance of green procurement in stimulating innovation, reducing import dependency, and ensuring ecological balance. Comparative insights from the European Union and South Korea are presented as international benchmarks, while Uzbekistan's experience demonstrates increasing convergence with global trends. The research concludes that the public procurement system in Uzbekistan is evolving into a dual-purpose mechanism, ensuring economic efficiency while supporting environmental sustainability and the objectives of the "Uzbekistan–2030" strategy.

Key words: Public procurement, green economy, sustainable development, Uzbekistan–2030 strategy, ecological criteria, green procurement, import substitution, eco-certification, domestic producers, economic efficiency, transparency, innovation, international experience, sustainable procurement, environmental standards, resource efficiency, institutional reform, economic security.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada O‘zbekistonning davlat xaridlari tizimidagi so‘nggi islohotlar o‘rganilib, ekologik mezonlarning integratsiyasi va mahalliy ishlab chiqaruvchilarni rag‘batlantirishga urg‘u berilgan. Tadqiqot rasmiy hujjatlar, Ekoplatforma portali ma’lumotlari va barqaror xaridlar bo‘yicha xalqaro adabiyotlar tahliliga asoslangan. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, davlat xaridlari yanada yuqori samaradorlikka erishdi, bunda o‘rtacha dastlabki shartnoma qiymatining 12,6 foizi tejaldi, shu bilan birga asta-sekin ekologik barqaror amaliyotga o‘tdi. Muhokama innovatsiyalarni rag‘batlantirish, importga qaramlikni kamaytirish va ekologik muvozanatni ta'minlashda yashil xaridlar muhimligini ta'kidlaydi. Yevropa Ittifoqi va Janubiy Koreyaning qiyosiy ma’lumotlari xalqaro mezon sifatida taqdim etilgan, O‘zbekiston tajribasi esa jahon tendentsiyalari bilan tobora yaqinlashayotganini ko‘rsatmoqda. Tadqiqot yakunlariga ko‘ra, O‘zbekistonda davlat xaridlari tizimi ekologik barqarorlikni qo‘llab-quvvatlash hamda “O‘zbekiston – 2030” strategiyasi maqsadlarini qo‘llab-quvvatlash bilan birga iqtisodiy samaradorlikni ta’minlovchi ikki maqsadli mexanizmga aylanib bormoqda.

Kalit so‘zlar: Davlat xaridlari, yashil iqtisodiyot, barqaror rivojlanish, O‘zbekiston – 2030 strategiyasi, ekologik mezonlar, yashil xaridlar, import o‘rnini bosuvchi, ekosertifikasiya, mahalliy ishlab chiqaruvchilar, iqtisodiy samaradorlik, shaffoflik, innovatsiyalar, xalqaro tajriba, barqaror xaridlar, ekologik standartlar, resurslar samaradorligi, institutsional islohotlar, iqtisodiy xavfsizlik.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются недавние реформы системы государственных закупок Узбекистана, в которых особое внимание уделяется интеграции экологических критериев и поддержке отечественных производителей. Исследование основано на анализе официальных документов, данных портала «Экоплатформа» и международной литературы по устойчивым закупкам. Результаты показывают, что государственные закупки достигли более высокой эффективности, со средней экономией 12,6% от первоначальной стоимости контрактов, при постепенном переходе к экологически устойчивым практикам. В статье подчеркивается важность «зеленых» закупок для стимулирования инноваций, снижения импортозависимости и обеспечения экологического баланса. В качестве международных ориентиров представлен сравнительный анализ Европейского союза и Южной Кореи, а опыт Узбекистана демонстрирует растущую конвергенцию с мировыми тенденциями. В исследовании сделан вывод о том, что система государственных закупок Узбекистана превращается в механизм двойного назначения, обеспечивающий экономическую эффективность, экологическую устойчивость и достижение целей стратегии «Узбекистан – 2030».

Ключевые слова: Государственные закупки, зеленая экономика, устойчивое развитие, стратегия «Узбекистан–2030», экологические критерии, зеленые закупки, импортозамещение, экосертификация, отечественные производители, экономическая эффективность, прозрачность, инновации, международный опыт, устойчивые закупки, экологические стандарты, ресурсоэффективность, институциональная реформа, экономическая безопасность.

INTRODUCTION

Public procurement – the process of government purchasing goods, services, and works – is one of the key components of the national economy. International studies show that public procurement accounts for an average of 12 percent of GDP in OECD countries, while in developing countries it ranges from 20–30 percent. In Uzbekistan, public procurement represents about 20 percent of GDP. In recent years, major reforms have been implemented in this sector: starting from this year, tenders are evaluated not only on the lowest price but also on socially and environmentally acceptable offers. Similar strategic changes are also envisaged in the field of the "green economy." For example, the government has planned that by 2026 at least 15 percent of public procurement will consist of environmentally friendly products, increasing by 5 percent each year to reach 30 percent by 2030. Achieving these goals requires supporting domestic producers and harmonizing ecological criteria. UNCTAD's analysis on "Sustainable public procurement" emphasizes that procurement is an important tool in achieving sustainable development goals (environmental, social, economic).

The ISO 20400:2017 standard (Sustainable Procurement — Guidance) provides recommendations to public and private sector organizations on how to incorporate environmental, social responsibility, and economic efficiency criteria into procurement processes. The OECD report Harnessing Public Procurement for the Green Transition highlights that when procurement is organized in line with Green Public Procurement (GPP) principles, innovation and sustainable infrastructure development accelerate, resource efficiency improves, and carbon footprints decrease.

As the next stage in the public procurement system, Uzbekistan has strengthened its legal framework — the Law "On Public Procurement" adopted on April 22, 2021, by the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is regularly supplemented with additional normative acts and regulations. According to the amendments introduced by the Law of November 27, 2024, "On introducing amendments and additions to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Public Procurement to further improve the public procurement system," two-stage procurement, sustainability as a basic principle, centralized procurement mechanisms, and framework contracts are envisaged. Moreover, according to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 371 of June 18, 2025, "On measures to improve the system of supporting 'green' public procurement," from 2026 it will be mandatory to include ecological criteria in procurement documentation, and requirements such as environmental certificates, use of recycled materials, and energy-saving technologies will be encouraged in tenders.

Additionally, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-417 of December 3, 2024, "On additional measures to support producers in public procurement and create broad opportunities for them," was adopted. This decree, in line with the objectives set out in the "Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy, aims to support domestic producers, expand their participation in public procurement, reduce import dependency, and implement sustainable development criteria.

According to the resolution, starting from 2025, an "ecosystem" will be established for producers, which will include:

- creation of an industrial map by region and sector,
- establishment of direct cooperation links with state customers,

• organization of marketplace-type trading platforms,
• reduction of intermediary fees for producers and elimination of additional collateral requirements.

At the same time, reducing the share of imports has been defined as the main efficiency criterion in evaluating the performance of managers participating in public procurement. This, in turn, makes it possible to view public procurement as a strategic instrument for the national economy's development.

For Uzbekistan, the public procurement system has a dual significance: first, it meets the needs of the public sector, and second, it serves as a strategic tool for ensuring sustainable economic growth, diversifying industry, and maintaining ecological balance. Therefore, in-depth study of this sector and comparative analysis of its results with international experience are considered scientifically and practically relevant.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The public procurement system today is regarded not only as a mechanism of economic efficiency but also as an important tool for sustainable development. Extensive research has been conducted in this field in international literature. For example, scholars such as Arrowsmith (2010) and Yukins (2016) have elaborated on the theoretical foundations of regulating public procurement, emphasizing that it can serve as an instrument for achieving governments' social and environmental objectives. The OECD (2021) report identifies public procurement as one of the most crucial instruments of the "green transition," since it can stimulate innovation and promote efficient use of resources.

International documents also play an important role in addressing sustainable procurement. The ISO 20400:2017 standard was developed as a practical guide for both the public and private sectors on sustainable procurement. Reports published by the United Nations and UNCTAD also highlight the necessity of linking public procurement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the UNCTAD (2021) report on Sustainable Public Procurement interprets the integration of ecological criteria into procurement processes as one of the key measures in combating climate change.

The concept of Green Public Procurement (GPP) is widely applied in European Union countries. The 2016 recommendations of the European Commission prescribe evaluating procurement on the basis of life-cycle costing, prioritizing products made from recycled materials, and mandating the use of energy-efficient technologies. The Chatham House (2020) report further emphasizes the close interconnection of Green Public Procurement with social justice and economic efficiency.

The development of Uzbekistan's procurement legislation has also been progressing in harmony with international standards. The Law "On Public Procurement," adopted on April 22, 2021, and its subsequent revisions, have strengthened the legal foundations of the process. The Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan PQ-417 dated December 3, 2024, "On additional measures to support producers in public procurement and create broad opportunities for them," introduced measures to support domestic producers, expand their participation in public contracts, and reduce the share of imports. Moreover, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan No. 371 of June 18, 2025, "On measures to improve the system of supporting 'green' public procurement," provided for the improvement of the GPP support system and made the inclusion of ecological criteria in tender requirements mandatory.

The review of both international and national literature thus shows that public procurement serves not only as an economic mechanism but also as a crucial political instrument for ensuring environmental and social sustainability. Uzbekistan, in this regard, is moving closer to international practice, taking significant steps towards a green economy by supporting domestic producers through laws and decrees while simultaneously embedding sustainability into procurement policies.

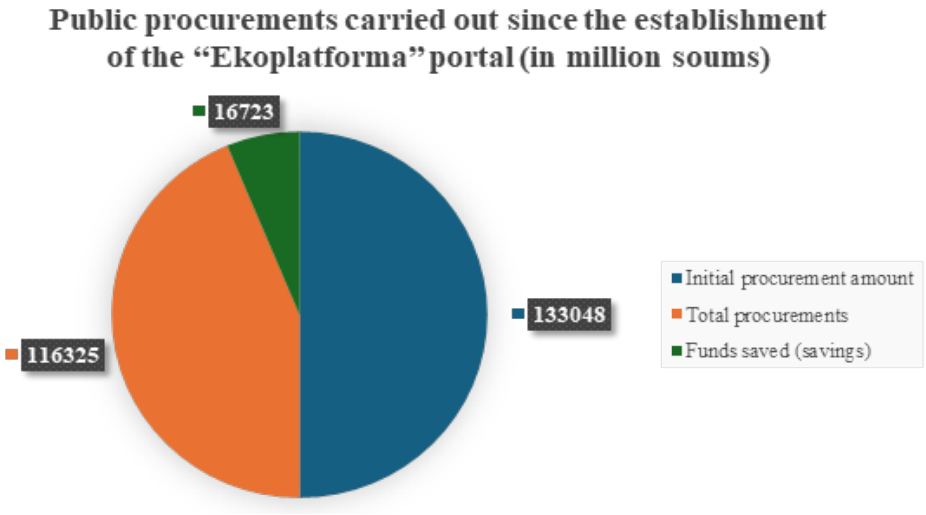
METHODOLOGY

In this article, the text of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 371 dated June 18, 2025, "On measures to improve the system of supporting 'green' public procurement," official information portals, and scholarly sources were analyzed. As the main sources of information, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan PQ-417 dated December 3, 2024, "On additional measures to support producers in public procurement and create broad opportunities for them," statistical data from the "Ekoplatforma.uz" portal on public procurement, as well as international publications on the practice of "green procurement" were utilized. The analysis examined the content of the documents, presented numerical statistical indicators in tabular form, and compared them with international experience.

RESULTS

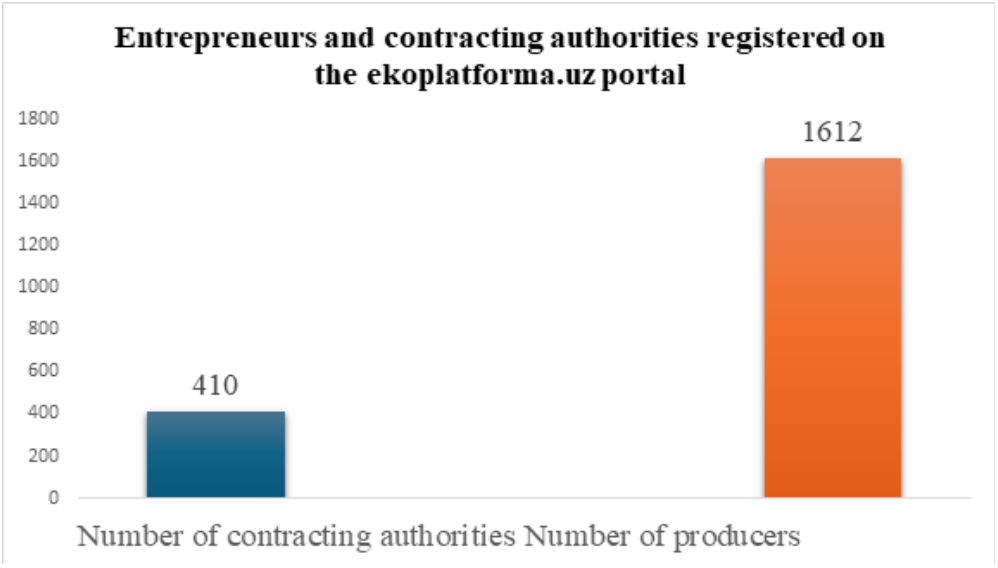
According to "Ekoplatforma.uz" and official reports, by 2025 a number of significant changes and results have been recorded in Uzbekistan's public procurement system. In particular, out of the initial procurement

value of 133.0 billion soums, actual purchases amounted to 116.3 billion soums, resulting in savings of 16.7 billion soums. This accounts for approximately 12.6 percent of the total initial sum. These figures indicate that efficiency in public procurement is steadily increasing.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the Ekoplatforma portal (as of September 2025, ekoplatforma.uz).

In addition, by the beginning of 2025, the number of contracting authorities participating in public procurement amounted to 410 organizations, while the number of producers and suppliers reached 1,612 entities. This indicates that, on average, there are 3.9 producers per contracting authority. Moreover, on average, each producer has procurement contracts worth approximately 72 million soums.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the Ekoplatforma portal (as of September 2025, ekoplatforma.uz).

Uzbekistan's public procurement system has been recording increasing savings year by year. The strengthening of competition (with more participants involved), the introduction of electronic tender systems, and the improvement of transparency and monitoring mechanisms play a key role in this process. For example, the average savings rate (12.6%) is considered a positive indicator when compared to international standards. According to World Bank analyses, well-organized public procurement generally allows savings of about 10–15 percent of the total value. Therefore, Uzbekistan has achieved results close to international experience in this regard. With the implementation of this system, it will also become possible to monitor more specific outcomes, such as which regions achieve the highest savings and which sectors' procurement activities contribute most to reducing imports.

In the European Union countries, the share of "green procurement" averages around 14–20 percent, while Uzbekistan has set the goal of raising this indicator to 30 percent by 2030. In South Korea, up to 40 percent of public procurement is directed toward environmentally friendly products. In this context, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan PQ-417 dated December 3, 2024, "On additional measures to support producers in public procurement and create broad opportunities for them," grants domestic producers significant incentives (such as a 50 percent discount on intermediary fees and exemption from additional collateral requirements), thereby enabling them to be more competitive on international markets.

DISCUSSION

International cooperation and domestic reforms play a vital role in applying a "green" approach to public procurement. As highlighted at the roundtable discussion on "Supporting Green Public Procurement" held in June 2025 by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan in cooperation with the World Bank, promoting environmentally friendly products in procurement and popularizing goods made from recycled materials are urgent requirements of our time. According to representatives of the Ministry of Economy, measures are currently being taken to select products with ecological criteria and to introduce "green" technologies in production. Moreover, "green" programs in agriculture, industry, and transport are increasing resource efficiency, with hybrid transport and water-saving technologies being actively developed.

The Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan PQ-417 of December 3, 2024, also outlines a series of new measures to support domestic producers. According to this decree, local producers who achieve high scores in sustainability ratings are entitled to a 50 percent discount on participation fees. Products registered on public procurement portals are automatically published across all electronic systems without additional mandatory requirements. Violations and unexpected charges are publicly disclosed through a special portal. All of these measures clarify the tender process for local suppliers and help reduce import dependence. For instance, Clause 4 of the PQ-417 decree stipulates that, starting from 2025, reducing the share of imports will be included as a key performance criterion for managers' activities. Thus, this decision not only strengthens Uzbekistan's economic security but also drives the development of domestic industry.

In international practice, ecological and social criteria are widely applied in public procurement. For example, in the European Union, the concept of "Green Public Procurement" is defined as purchasing products in a way that minimizes their negative environmental impact throughout their life cycle. In many countries, mandatory ecological requirements are included in tender documents, with practices such as requiring special eco-certificates or evaluating the carbon footprint of products. Such measures encourage local producers entering export markets to supply products that meet international standards. In addition, enterprises that have adopted environmentally friendly technologies are introduced to broader public procurement opportunities. The United Nations and international financial institutions also recommend expanding the scope of sustainable procurement.

CONCLUSION

In Uzbekistan, the integration of environmental requirements and support for domestic producers into the public procurement system has become a new strategic direction. Recent reforms, namely the adoption of new decisions and legislative updates, have introduced mechanisms to promote sustainable offers. This can both protect national industry and contribute to environmental preservation.

Among the recommended measures are: continuing the development and implementation of "green procurement" criteria in public procurement; regularly updating and analyzing data on portals such as Ekoplatforma and presenting it to the wider public; training tender participants and public officials in green economy standards; and providing assistance to domestic producers in the field of certification. Based on international practices, it is necessary to introduce an eco-certification system and gradually increase the share of low-carbon and recycled products in budgetary procurement.

Thus, Uzbekistan's public procurement market is developing not only in line with economic efficiency but also in accordance with the principles of environmental sustainability.

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