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THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS AND CONDITIONS ON THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE URGUT FREE ECONOMIC ZONE

Abstract: *This article highlights the significant role of geographical factors —alongside socio-economic and demographic ones—in the establishment of the Urgut Free Economic Zone, emphasizing the substantial importance of geographical factors specifically. It analyzes statistical data regarding the population, retail trade turnover, import and export figures, and industrial output volume of the Urgut district, presenting the findings through various graphs and charts. Additionally, a map of the Urgut district was created using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).*

Keywords: *industry, production, trade, trade turnover, investment, imports, exports, retail trade.*

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ВЛИЯНИЕ ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ ФАКТОРОВ И УСЛОВИЙ НА ПРОСТРАНСТВЕННУЮ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЮ ПРОМЫШЛЕННЫХ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЙ В СВОБОДНОЙ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ЗОНЕ «УРГУТ»

Аннотация: *В статье освещается значимая роль географических факторов — наряду с социально-экономическими и демографическими — в создании свободной экономической зоны «Ургут», при этом особое внимание уделяется именно географическим факторам. Проведен анализ статистических данных, касающихся численности населения, оборота*

розничной торговли, показателей импорта и экспорта, а также объема промышленного производства Ургутского района; результаты представлены в виде различных графиков и диаграмм. Кроме того, с использованием геоинформационных систем (ГИС) была составлена карта Ургутского района.

Ключевые слова: промышленность, производство, торговля, товарооборот, инвестиции, импорт, экспорт, розничная торговля.

Introduction.

Urgut District was established on September 29, 1926. The total area of the district is 1,120.3 km², accounting for 6.5% of the area of the region. Its population is 585.8 thousand people, including 245.8 thousand urban residents and 340.0 thousand rural residents.

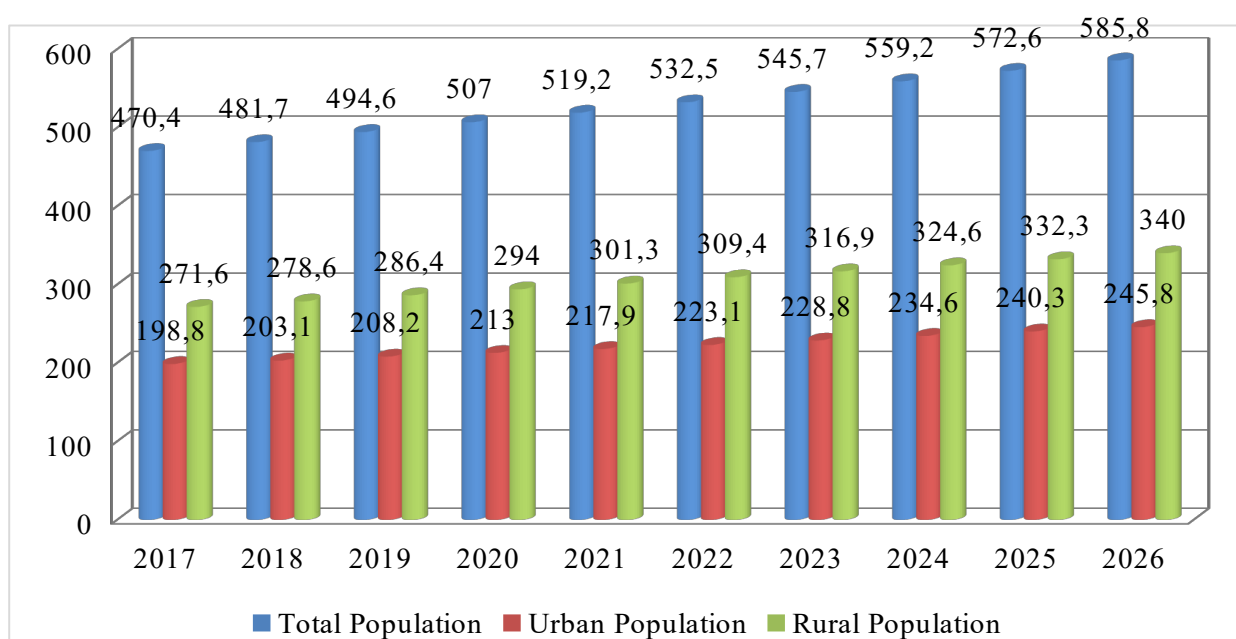


Figure 1. Population and population dynamics of Urgut District

The graphical data show that the population of the district has grown rapidly over the years. In 2017, the population of the district was 470.4 thousand people, while by 2025 this figure had reached 572.6 thousand people, an increase of 102.2 thousand compared with 2017. However, urban population growth was slower than rural population growth. In 2018, the urban population was 203.1 thousand people, while by 2025 it had reached 240.3 thousand, an increase of 37.2 thousand over the

seven-year period. The rural population grew considerably. For example, by 2025, the rural population of the district had increased by 60.7 thousand compared with 2017. The rapid population growth in the district has been influenced by several important factors, including its relatively large population compared with other districts, as well as social, economic, natural, and religious factors.

The district is located on the slopes of the Chaqilkalon and Qoratepa mountains, which are continuations of the Zarafshan mountain ranges. Most of Urgut District consists of undulating plains, with several valleys and small streams. Urgut is one of the areas with strong seismic activity and belongs to the 7-point seismic zone. Deposits of marble, limestone, manganese, copper, tungsten, and other mineral resources are found near Omonqoton and in Chaqilkalon. The climate of the district is sharply continental. However, because much of the district consists of mountainous areas, its climate differs somewhat from that of the plains. In the plains, the average temperature in January is -1.5°C , the minimum temperature is -25°C , the average temperature in July is 24.4°C , and the maximum temperature is 49°C . Annual precipitation amounts to 459–500 mm.

Urgut District is one of the largest districts of Samarkand Region in terms of area. There is one city subordinate to the district, 120 citizens' assemblies of mahallas, 7 urban settlements, and 115 rural settlements. The distance from Urgut District to the city of Samarkand is 35 km. According to data from the Samarkand Regional Statistics Department, an analysis of the main socio-economic indicators of Urgut District shows that, unlike other districts of the region, the district has high volumes of production in almost all sectors of the economy. Retail trade turnover occupies the leading position, reaching UZS 4,393.6 billion in 2025.

In other words, retail trade turnover is growing faster than in other sectors. Based on the results obtained, it can be stated that positive changes are evident in this sector. The statistical data also show that the dynamics of this indicator have increased at a very high rate compared with previous years.

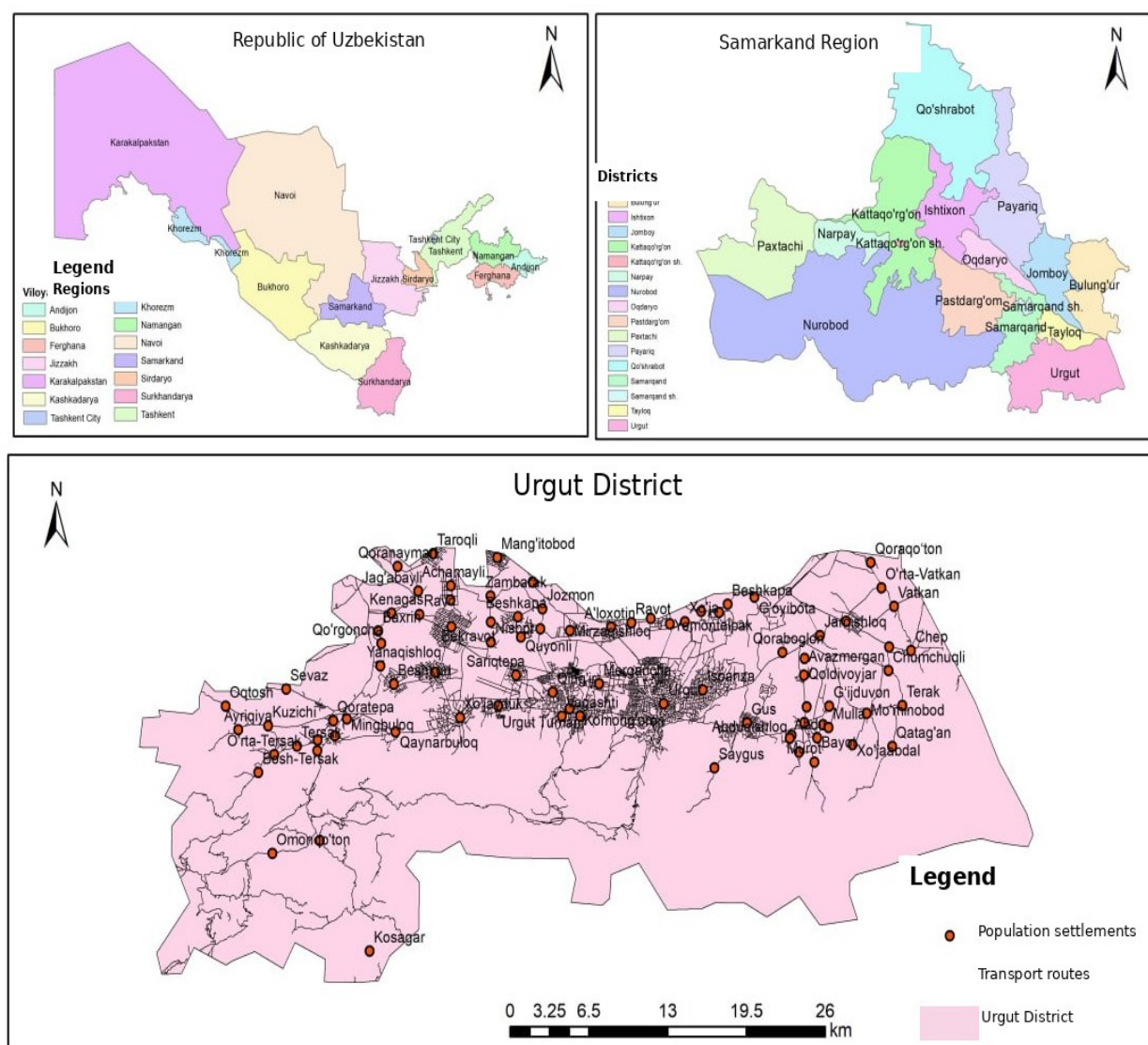


Figure 2. Location and administrative-territorial division of Urgut District

As can be seen from Figure 2.2 above, after the free economic zone was established in 2017, the volume of retail trade turnover in Urgut District increased. For example, retail trade turnover in the district amounted to UZS 1,256.5 billion in 2017, UZS 2,238.6 billion in 2021, and UZS 4,393.6 billion in 2025, which indicates an increase of UZS 3,137.1 billion compared with 2017. The main reason for this increase is the growing share of small businesses and the private sector in the district's economy.

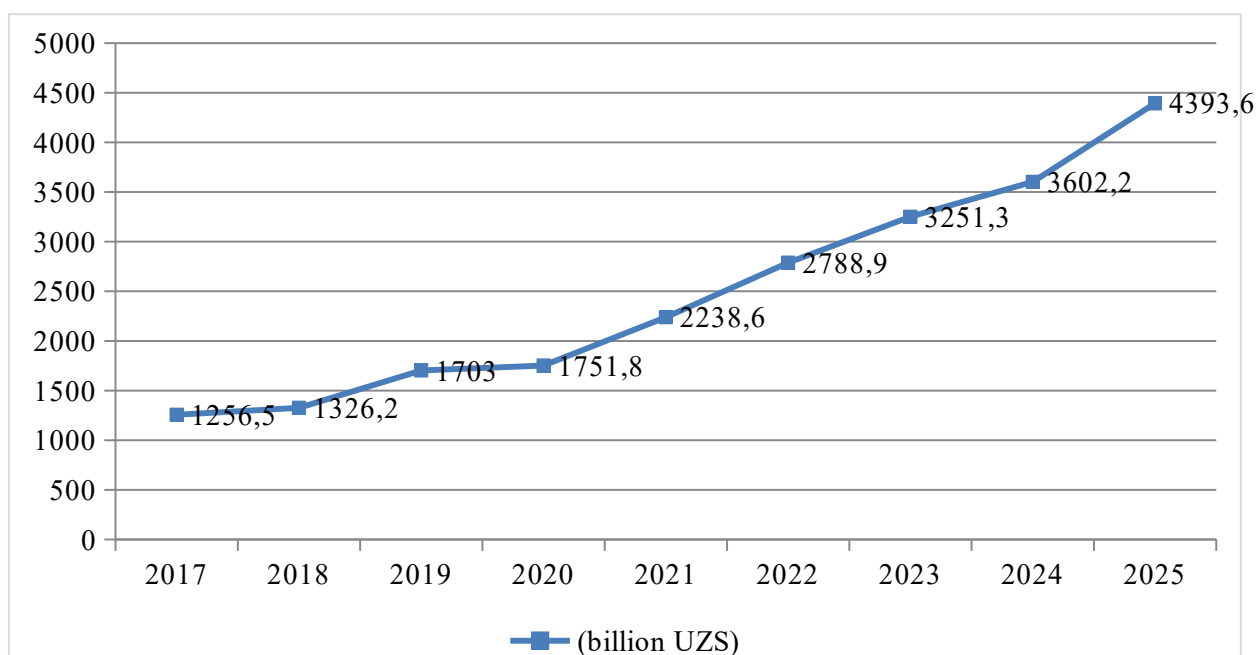


Figure 3. Retail trade turnover in Urgut District

As can be seen from the figure above, the volume of industrial production in Urgut District followed an upward trend over the years. In 2017, when the free economic zone was established, the volume of industrial production in the district amounted to UZS 686.6 billion. By 2020, it had reached UZS 1,558.1 billion, and by 2025 it had reached UZS 4,242.1 billion, more than six times the 2017 level.

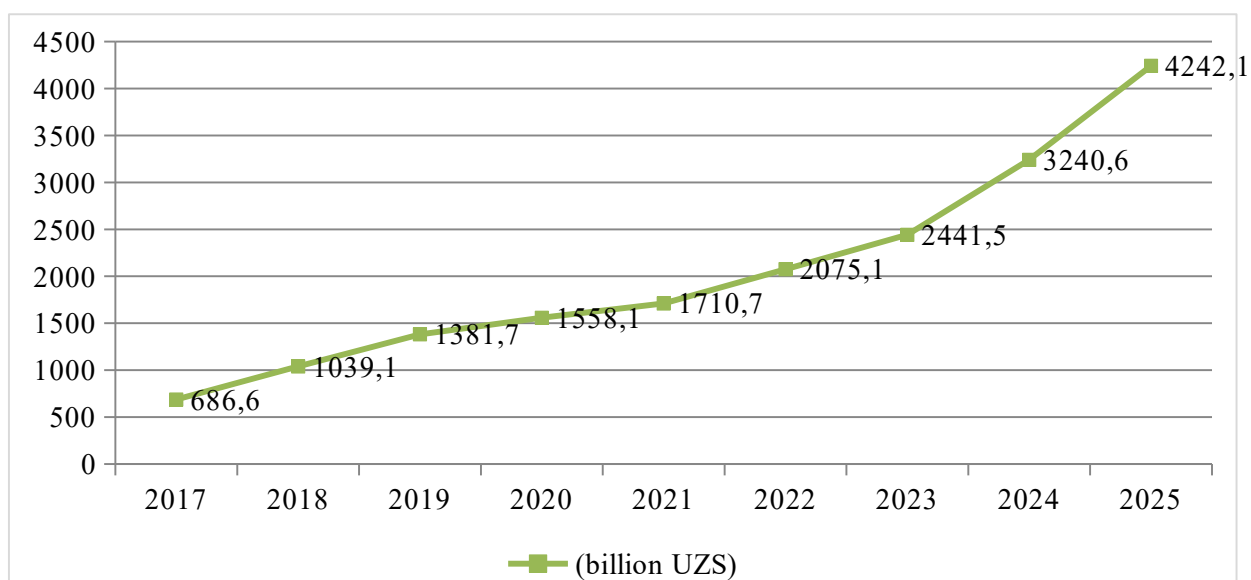


Figure 4. Volume of industrial production in Urgut District

The rapid growth in the volume of manufactured products was driven by the increasing number of enterprises operating within the free economic zone, as well as various customs and tax incentives. Foreign trade turnover has also developed in

the district. In 2025, exports amounted to USD 1,150.9 million and imports to USD 2,915.4 million. Although the district's export volume is higher than that of other districts, the foreign trade balance is negative because imports exceed exports.

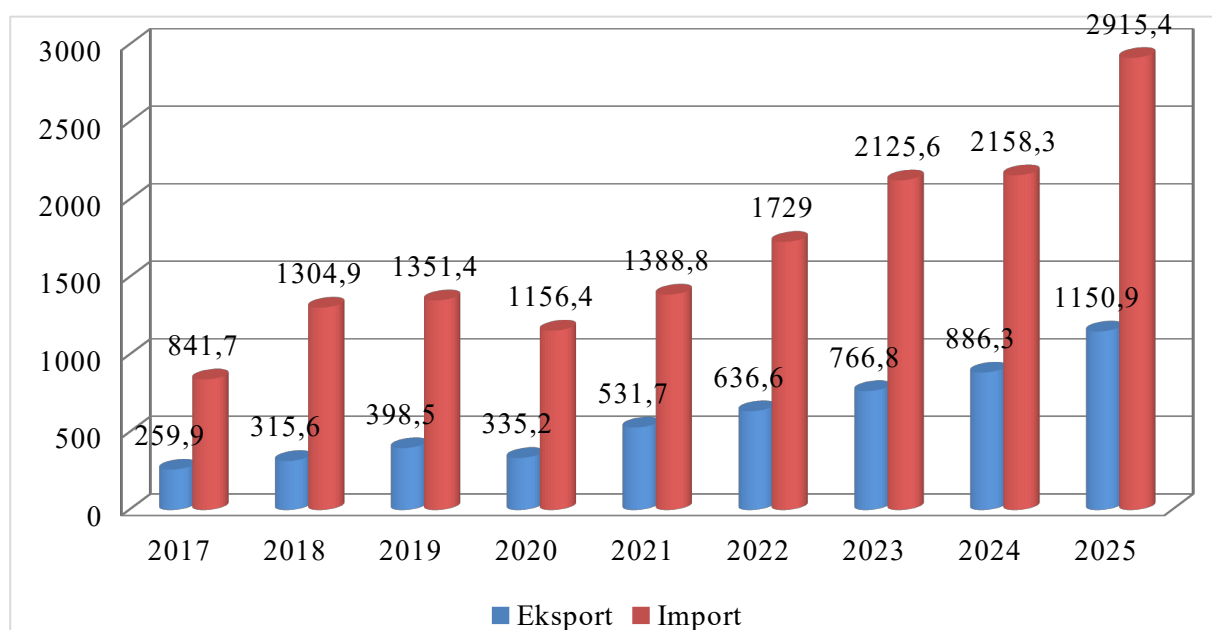


Figure 5. Foreign trade turnover of Urgut District (USD million)

The data in Figure 2.4 above show that, despite the higher volume of industrial production in Urgut District compared with other districts, its foreign trade balance is negative, meaning that the district's export volume is considerably lower than its import volume. In 2017, exports amounted to USD 259.9 million and imports to USD 841.7 million. In 2020, exports amounted to USD 335.2 million and imports to USD 1,156.4 million, while by 2025 exports had reached USD 1,150.9 million and imports USD 2,915.4 million. Nevertheless, the export potential of Urgut District increased more than elevenfold compared with 2017. The export potential of existing industrial enterprises and the growing number of exporting enterprises are among the main factors behind the increase in the district's export potential.

According to the Samarkand Regional Statistics Department, the population of Urgut District is 585.8 thousand people, including 245.8 thousand urban residents and 340.0 thousand rural residents. The district's population accounts for 13.1% of the region's total population. The majority of the district's population is

Uzbek. Representatives of other ethnic groups also live in the district. As of 2023, the average population density of the district was 499 people per km². In 2025, women accounted for 52.9% and men for 47.1% of the population by sex.

The large population and high natural increase in Urgut District are mainly associated with a high birth rate. According to data for 2025, 16,212 people were born in the district, including 7,811 girls and 8,401 boys. Statistical analysis shows that 2,275 people died in the district in 2025, including 1,040 women and 1,235 men. Birth rates and natural population growth in the district have consistently been high, mainly due to the large rural population, national traditions, and the relatively low participation of women in social employment.

The migration balance in Urgut District is negative because the number of people leaving the district is higher than the number of people moving into it. For example, in 2025, 1,149 people left the district, while 351 people moved into it. Thus, the population migration balance was negative. According to data from the Samarkand Regional Statistics Department, the total number of marriages registered in Urgut District in 2025 was 4,771, including 1,882 in urban areas and 2,889 in rural areas. As of 2025, the number of divorces in the district was 442, of which 195 occurred in urban areas and the remaining 247 in rural areas.

According to the Samarkand Regional Statistics Department, in 2017 the population of the district was 470.4 thousand people, of whom 177.9 thousand were economically active, 164.7 thousand were employed in the economy, and 13.2 thousand were unemployed; the official unemployment rate was 7.4%. As of 2024, the district's population was 559.2 thousand people, of whom 200.4 thousand were economically active and 187.1 thousand were employed. Despite the construction of many manufacturing enterprises in Urgut District in recent years and the location of one of the largest markets in the country in Urgut city, the number of unemployed people was 13.2 thousand, and the unemployment rate was 6.6%. Today, 1,318 industrial enterprises operate in Urgut District. Of these, 70 operate in the leather and footwear industry, 194 in the electrical engineering

industry, 407 in the textile industry, 26 in the construction materials industry, 192 in the food industry, and 424 in other industrial sectors.

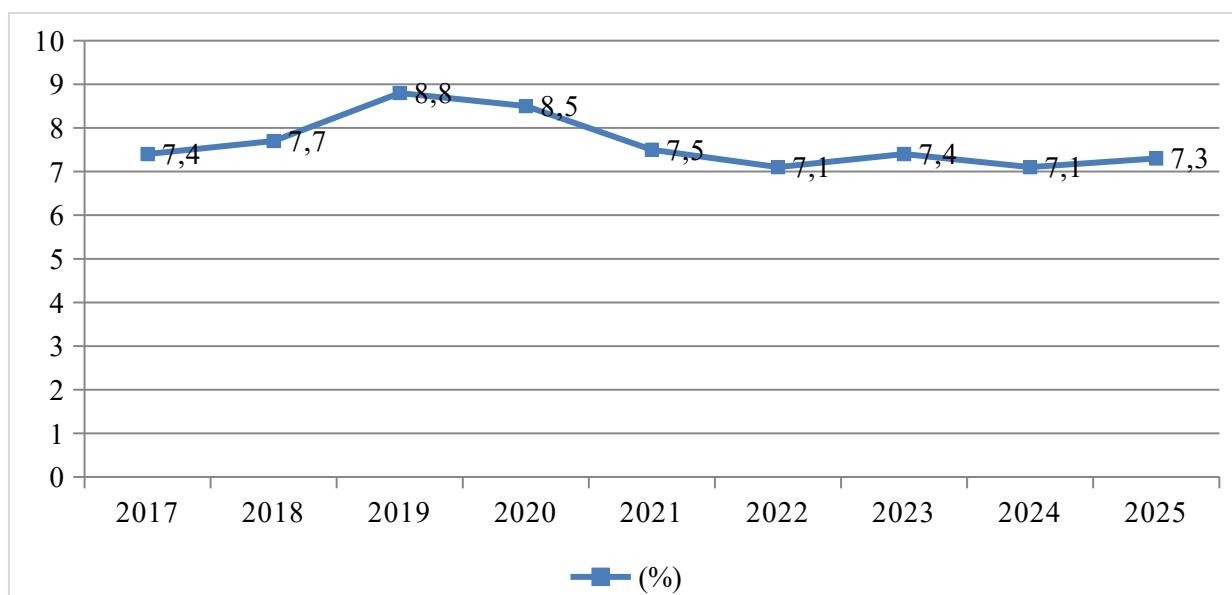


Figure 6. Share of Urgut District in total industrial production in Samarkand Region

The graph above shows the share of Urgut District in the total volume of industrial production in the region. The district's share was 7.4% in 2017 and 8.5% in 2020. By 2025, this figure had reached 7.3%, representing a decrease of 0.1 percentage points compared with 2017.

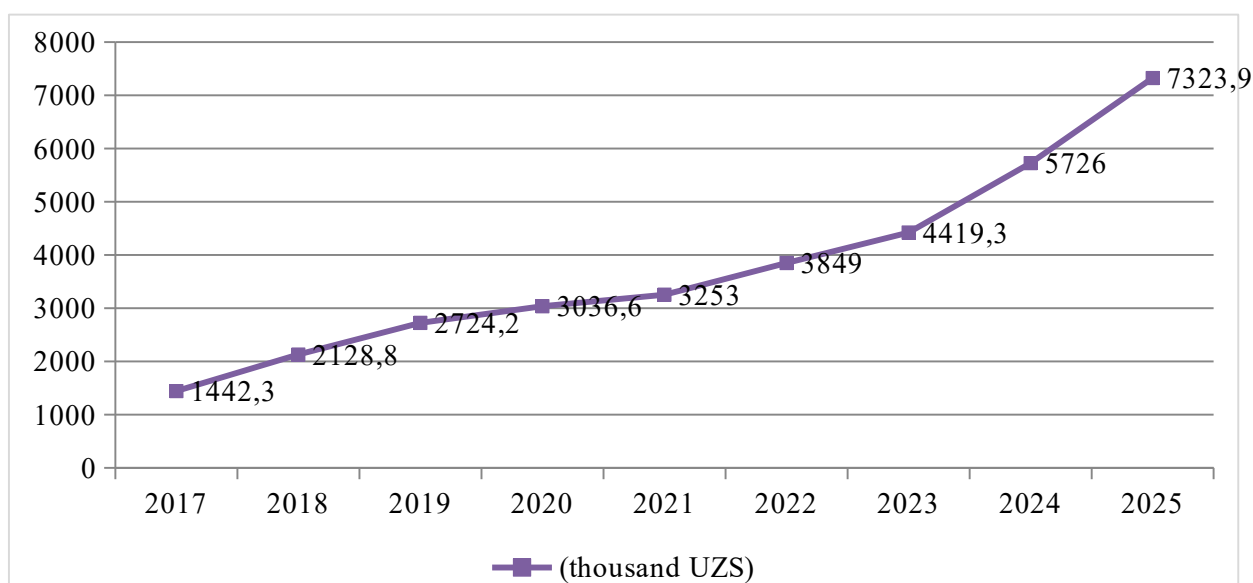


Figure 7. Industrial products produced per capita in Urgut District

This is due to the increase in the district's population and the decrease in the volume of industrial products per capita. As can be seen from the figure above,

after the establishment of the free economic zone in Urgut District, the volume of industrial products produced per capita increased sharply. In 2017, the volume of industrial products per capita in the district was UZS 1,442.3 thousand, while in 2021 it was UZS 3,253.0 thousand. By 2025, this indicator had reached UZS 7,323.9 thousand, demonstrating a growth of more than five times compared with 2017. The main reason for this increase is the numerous incentives provided for industrial production in the district.

The following conclusions were drawn based on the data studied:

1. The first and most important factor influencing the establishment of a free economic zone in Urgut District is that it is one of the largest districts of Samarkand Region. The district borders the Republic of Tajikistan to the east, and its location in a border area is one of the most important factors in establishing a free economic zone. The district's location in a border area is also a key factor in reducing logistics costs.
2. The second most important factor is the high volume of production in almost all sectors of the economy in Urgut District. One of the most important factors influencing the establishment of free economic zones is the availability of inexpensive and skilled labor. The district is one of the largest districts in the region in terms of population. The natural population growth rate is relatively high: in 2025, 16,212 babies were born in the district, influenced by various national and religious factors. Young people, that is, economically active working-age residents, make up the main part of the district's population. This provides free economic zone industrial enterprises with an inexpensive labor force.
3. The third major factor is the availability of deposits of marble, limestone, manganese, copper, tungsten, and other mineral resources near Omonqoton and in Chaqilkalon in Urgut District. This provides inexpensive raw materials for the mining industry in the district. In addition, several important geographical factors and conditions have had an impact, including the fact that transportation

costs for industrial raw materials can be several times lower than the cost of transporting them from other regions.

4. The population of Urgut District and its dynamics, retail trade turnover, import and export indicators, the volume of industrial products produced, and the corresponding per-capita values were analyzed on the basis of statistical data and presented in the form of diagrams.

5. A political-administrative map scheme of Urgut District was prepared using ArcGIS software.

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