

Approximately 60% of the current building stock is unregulated (i.e. did not receive planning permission or was not recorded).

The Agency for Strategic Reforms under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ASR) which plays a pivotal role in driving reforms and bringing different government entities together, reached out to the EU Delegation for support, in particular in relation to the regulatory framework and a National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The NSDI is defined as a “set of technologies, measures, standards, implementation rules, services, human resources and other factors enabling efficient integration, management and maintenance of the sharing of spatial data”. In the EU, each Member State has developed an NSDI, which is an integral part of the European Spatial Data Infrastructure defined by the INSPIRE Directive.

In line with Global Gateway, the proposed action aims to improve spatial development visioning and strategic planning, decentralise municipal governance and budgets and introduce a new generation of urban and rural plans adjusted to new sustainable and inclusive development patterns in Uzbekistan. The EU will support the Uzbek government in developing new integrated planning and management strategies and tools to leverage inter-institutional coordination, digitalisation and data-driven decision-making. Partnership with relevant ministries, international organisations and IFIs will be crucial for successful implementation. The impact will be the substantial contribution to balanced and inclusive regional urban and rural development, improved liveability, enhanced sustainability in urban and rural areas and reduced environmental hazards. The action will also address the involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in planning decisions, the need for adequate compensation in case of expropriation and forced eviction, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

The action will directly serve the development in Uzbekistan of the regional Global Gateway Flagship, the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TCTC), which will benefit from an improved regulatory framework, planning processes, and data access. In addition, improved planning can have a catalyst effect for attracting key infrastructure and logistical services needed for the TCTC network across regions.

The Action will provide technical assistance for the following main components:

1. Reforming the regulatory and institutional framework governing the territorial planning system and securing future sustainable and inclusive urbanisation through medium and long-term strategic policy planning;
2. Supporting the utilisation of spatial data in the preparation of territorial plans and ensuring accessibility to a digitalised and integrated NSDI.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The action shall be carried out in the Republic of Uzbekistan, country included in the list of ODA recipients. Specific targeted activities will take place in Namangan and Samarkand regions.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Uzbekistan is a lower-middle-income, mineral-rich, doubly landlocked Central Asian country facing significant longer-term challenges in creating high-productivity employment and reducing the urban-rural gap in living standards, which have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. With over 36 million inhabitants, Uzbekistan has the largest and fast-growing population in Central Asia. Over the past decade, the country has maintained high and stable economic growth rates (at 6.1 percent on average), but its economic achievements have largely relied on a model driven by the state’s dominance in the economy, limited economic freedoms and a restricted private sector. According to Human Rights Watch, Uzbekistan’s human rights record deteriorated in 2023, with a notable increase in the harassment and prosecutions of bloggers and journalists, a persistent lack of justice for human rights abuses and changes to Uzbekistan’s constitution that allowed President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to stand for re-election in snap presidential elections in July. Promised legislative reforms were further stalled¹.

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/uzbekistan>