

Uzbekistan's Digital Leadership Forum Showcases Advances in Country's Digital Ecosystem

TASHKENT, TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN, July 31, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Digital Leadership Forum, held in Tashkent from July 7th to 9th, 2023, marked a significant milestone in Uzbekistan's journey towards digital transformation. This prestigious event aimed to foster discussions on achievements, upcoming objectives, and the new technological environment in the country. Attended by over 300 delegates, including prominent business leaders, experts from international organizations, and leading ICT corporations, the forum showcased Uzbekistan's commitment to becoming a prominent player in the global IT industry.

During the event, Uzbekistan announced its aspiration to become a new outsourcing hub. According to Sherzod Shermatov, the Minister of Digital Technologies, the country possesses all the necessary resources to achieve this ambitious goal. With a large number of literate young people





who speak foreign languages (<u>more than 5 million Uzbek people speak English</u>) and the necessary infrastructure established in every region, Uzbekistan is ready to attract foreign businesses with special tax incentives and preferences unmatched by any other country.

One of the international experts, Simon Chris, Director of Innovation at CX Innovation Institute, outlined eight compelling reasons why Uzbekistan is poised to become a popular outsourcing

destination:

- 1. Uzbekistan, as a young independent country just over 30 years old, has successfully rebuilt a digitally oriented economy.
- 2. The nation's rebirth has led to a constitution based on freedom of civil rights, freedom of religion, rule of law, audited banking systems, and other aspects expected from a modern economy.



- 3. With 60% of its 36 million population under the age of 30, Uzbekistan has a unique and large labor pool ready to work hard and progress.
- 4. Uzbek people are multilingual, speaking several languages such as Turkish, Russian, English, German, and others.
- 5. The nation's natural hospitality and friendliness are evident in respectful customer service and ethics, making it an attractive destination for outsourcing.
- 6. Uzbekistan offers terms and privileges on par with other popular offshore locations, and some are truly unique and strong.
- 7. The country effectively combines a deep respect for its history and past achievements with a keen eye for the future, driving its desire to move quickly toward a digital economy.
- 8. Tashkent, the capital city, boasts a visually appealing environment, with lush parks and trees, rivaling cities like Copenhagen, Vancouver, and Melbourne.

The development of Uzbekistan's IT sector has been remarkable since the establishment of the IT Park Uzbekistan in 2019. The country has implemented comprehensive programs for the digitalization of economic sectors, resulting in IT emerging as one of the leading industries in the "New Uzbekistan," attracting foreign companies and witnessing exponential growth.

The number of IT Park residents has grown from 369 in 2019 to an impressive 1,424 in 2023. The volume of services provided by IT Park residents showed significant growth, reaching 5.4 trillion soums by the end of June 2023, a 10.2-fold increase. Additionally, the weight of exports increased 23.4 times, totaling \$145.3 million. The establishment of IT Park branches in various regions of the country and the opening of representative offices in the United States and Germany, coupled with unprecedented tax incentives, have facilitated this growth.

Uzbekistan's success in attracting foreign companies is evident from the increase in the number of foreign companies operating in the country, rising from 15 to 213 in just four years. Exports of IT services have experienced exponential growth, reaching \$145.3 million in June 2023, surpassing the total exports of \$140.9 million in the whole of 2022. The IT industry's development has also led to the emergence of remote self-employment, with about 45,000 freelancers currently working online.

Uzbekistan has launched new programs in July 2023, such as Zero Risk, Local2Global, and Global Excellence, to attract new IT companies to the country and support existing IT Park residents in tapping into new markets. These programs offer opportunities to reduce initial risks, collaborate with global consultants, and draw in international IT outsourcing and BPO companies to the Uzbek market. For existing resident companies, the program includes export advisory reimbursement, fully funded trips to Uzbekistan for company clients, and an export mentorship program.

Uzbekistan's efforts in e-government services have been equally impressive. The <u>Single Portal of Interactive Public Services</u> has seen a remarkable increase in the number of available services, growing from 197 in 2016 to over 430 through the my.gov.uz portal. The number of registered users has increased from 400,000 to an impressive 6.3 million, showcasing the population's growing reliance on digital government services. Uzbekistan's efforts in e-government development have earned the country higher rankings, with a rise of 18 positions from 87th to 69th in the e-government development rating.

Telecommunications infrastructure has witnessed substantial improvements as well. The length of fiber-optic communication lines has increased from 20,000 km to an impressive 170,000 km, providing fast and reliable internet access across regions. The volume of ICT services per capita has grown from 198,000 soums in 2016 to 642,900 soums, reflecting a substantial increase in the adoption of digital services. Furthermore, the cost of connecting to the international internet for operators and providers has decreased by nearly 33 times, amounting to \$2.7.

Uzbekistan actively pursues international cooperation to foster the development of its digital ecosystem. Previous events like "ICT WEEK Uzbekistan - 2022," held in Samarkand, showcased 22 international events and attracted participation from over 15,000 individuals. Investment contracts worth more than \$200 million were signed during the week, underlining the country's commitment to international collaboration and its potential as an IT hub in the region. The upcoming "ICT WEEK Uzbekistan - 2023" in Tashkent is expected to be an even larger event for the international and local ICT community.

The Digital Leadership Forum in Uzbekistan was a testament to the country's commitment to digital transformation and innovation. The remarkable growth of the IT sector, youth empowerment initiatives, the development of e-government services and the improvement of telecommunications infrastructure testify to Uzbekistan's aspirations to become a leading digital

country.

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