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Regulatory Framework for Digital Platforms in Uzbekistan & Global Challenges

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**COMPETITION PROMOTION
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN & GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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Chairman

Geneva, Switzerland
July 9, 2025



UZBEKISTAN: BRIEF ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

POPULATION



37.5
MILLION

GDP



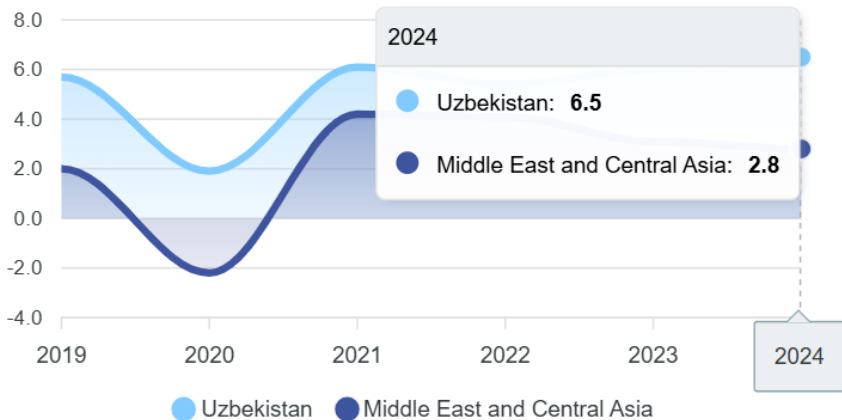
115
BILLION

DIGITAL ECONOMY



9%
of GDP

GDP growth



MOBILE & INTERNET USE IN UZBEKISTAN

(as of January 1, 2025)

CELLULAR MOBILE
CONNECTIONS



34
MILLION

INDIVIDUALS USING
THE INTERNET



33
MILLION

SOCIAL MEDIA
USERS

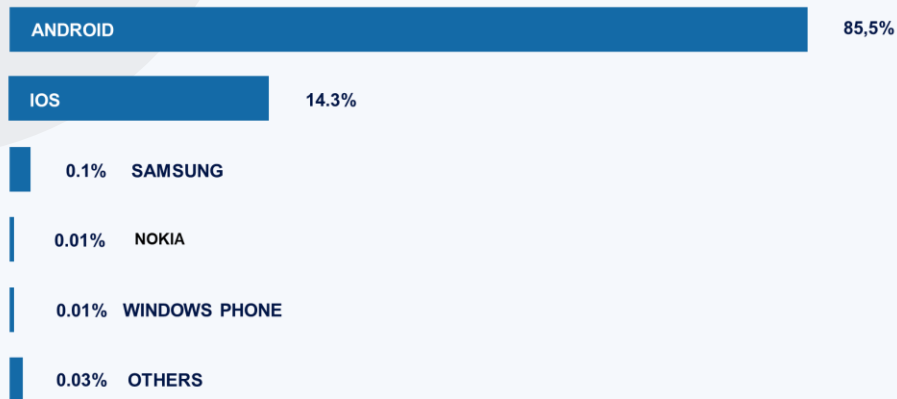


12
MILLION

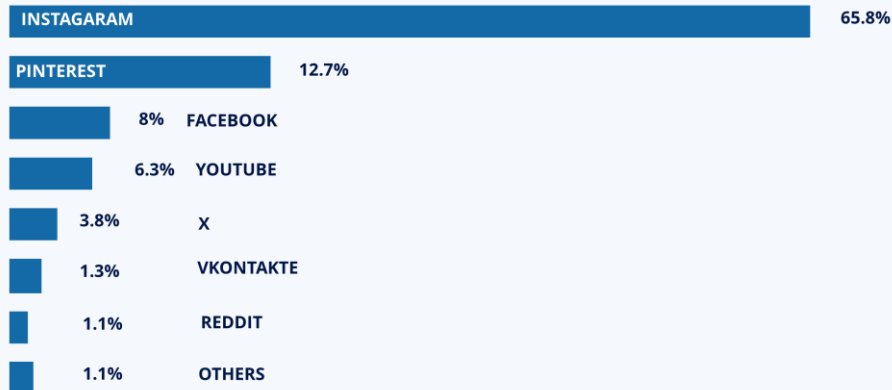


SNAPSHOT OF DIGITAL MARKETS IN UZBEKISTAN

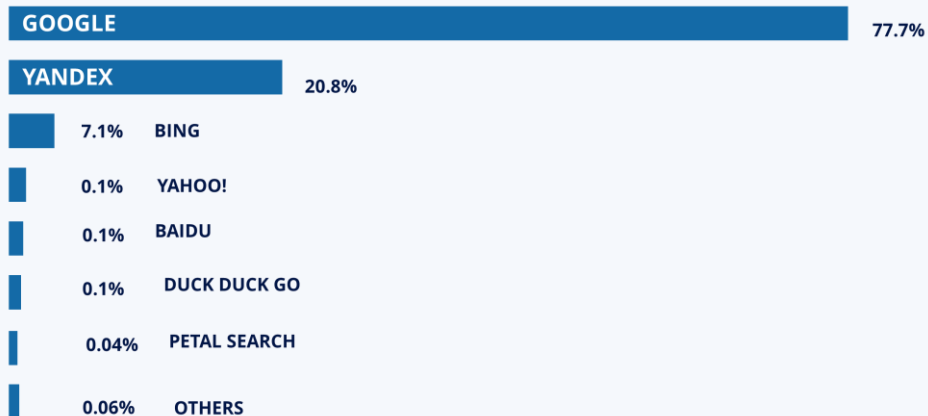
SHARE OF MOBILE OPERATING SYSTEMS



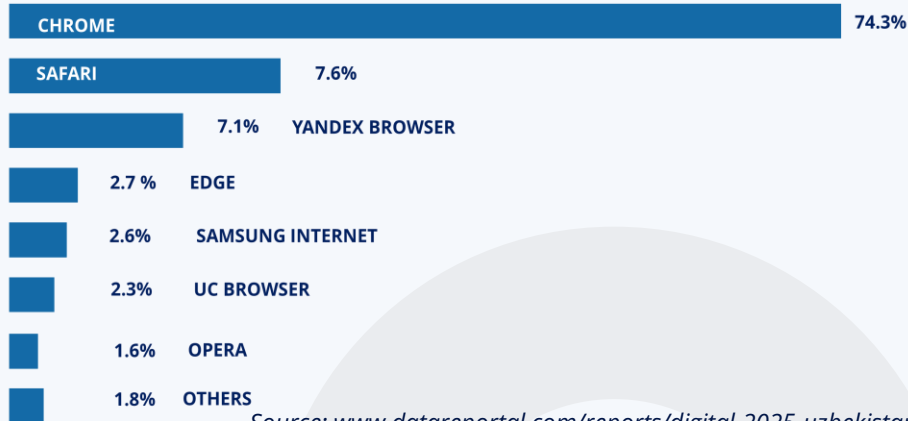
SHARE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



SHARE OF SEARCH ENGINES



SHARE OF WEB-BROWSERS



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN

“ex-ante” regulation

LAW ON COMPETITION

(adopted in 2023)

Article 18. The operator of a digital platform with a dominant position is **PROHIBITED** from taking actions that restrict competition by imposing requirements on the use of information, technologies and digital products

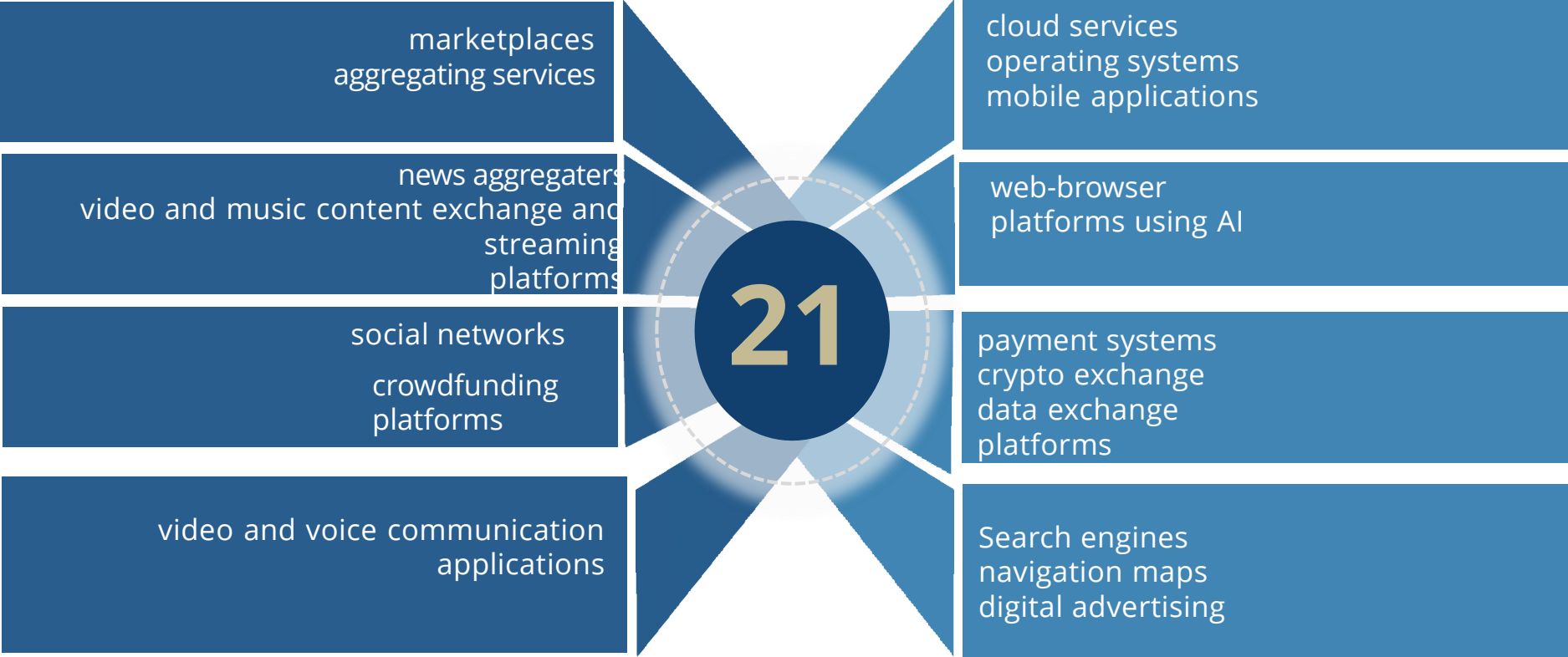
GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION No 256

(adopted in 2024)

Regulation for recognizing the dominant position and superior bargaining position of a digital platform operator & prohibitions for abuse of dominant & superior bargaining position

TYPES OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS

stated in Digital Platform Regulation (Government Resolution No 256 of 2024)



PROHIBITED ACTIONS FOR DOMINANT PLATFORMS



- not allow end users to easily remove pre-installed applications or change settings that point to the digital platform's own goods and services;
- prevent end users who use the digital platform from installing third-party apps or app stores;
- limit the ability of end users to easily unsubscribe from the main services of the digital platform;
- unreasonably reduce the quality and level of confidentiality and security of data, the ease of switching to another provider;
- limit the ability of third parties to interact with their own digital platform services;
- prevent end-user tracking for targeted advertising outside of digital platforms without permission from digital platforms;
- force users to accept conditions that are not related to the subject of the contract when using a digital platform

- do not allow the free use of tools to measure the effectiveness of the digital platform and access to information;
- restrict user options, promote offers and enter into contracts with customers outside the digital platform;
- limit the free receipt by users of information obtained as a result of their activities on the digital platform;
- classify the digital platform's own goods or services more favorably than the goods or services of its users or third parties;
- require app creators to use digital platform services to list them in digital platform app stores;
- evaluate own products in such a way as to gain an advantage over third-party products

NOTIFICATION OBLIGATION

- It is mandatory to notify the competition authority within **TWO MONTHS** of achieving the dominance criteria.
- The dominance thresholds are set according to the scale of the local economy and will be reviewed as the companies evolve.
- Currently, thresholds are much lower than in the EU or UK — meaning that **GLOBAL TECH GIANTS ALREADY FALL UNDER THE “DOMINANCE” CRITERIA BY DEFAULT.**

DOMINANT LOCAL PLATFORMS

  **CLICK** — *online payment service platforms*

 **uzum market** — *e-commerce platform*

 **EXPRESS 24**  **Yandex**  **Eats**  **uzum tezkor** — *food delivery aggregators*

Yandex Go — *ride-hailing aggregator*

MAIN CHALLENGES

The growth of digital markets strengthens the influence of large local and global tech companies — leading to high market concentration, stifling innovation, threatening fair competition, and consumer rights, especially the protection of personal data.

Unlike traditional industries, digital platforms exploit:

- **Network effects**
- **Vast user data**
- **Control over ecosystems**

...to entrench their power and suppress competition.

MAIN RISKS & CHALLENGES

● **Creating significant entry barriers**

This leads to anti-competitive behaviors like self-preferencing, algorithmic collusion, acquiring potential competitors, transferring dominance from one market to another.

● **"Killer acquisitions"**

acquiring companies at early stages to eliminate competition and stifle innovation.

● **Unrestricted access to personal data enhances platforms' power and hinders new entrants**

Consequently:

- Platforms manipulate user choices with targeted ads and interface tricks;
- Users face misleading ads, fraud, and data abuse;
- Consumer dispute mechanisms are often ineffective or absent, especially in cross-border e-commerce.

● **The dominance of Big Techs is also shifting into AI-related markets**

KILLER ACQUISITIONS

- Big Tech companies **acquired at least 191 companies** globally between 2019 and 2025: on average, **one every 11 days**.
- **184** mergers went completely unnotified, meaning that **only about 4% of Big Tech mergers were investigated by competition authorities**.
- **67%** of these acquired companies have shut down their own websites and in certain cases, they **stopped serving customers entirely** post-acquisition.

Source: Center for Multinationality Research (The Netherlands)

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL DOMINANCE OF BIG TECHS

- Dominant digital platforms may use lobbying, public pressure, and financial influence to shape favorable policies — undermining regulatory integrity.

There are cases, where Big Techs are pressuring developing countries to revise or even abolish digital platform regulations.

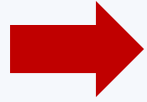
- They often show **selective compliance** — obeying antitrust laws in advanced countries but **resisting** them in smaller economies - developing countries .

*A striking example, these companies follow EU rules but continue restrictive practices in developing countries — effectively **imposing their own rules** and **maintaining ecosystem control**.*

- **This is a clear evidence of “double standards.”**

- It shows that tech giants **abuse their global dominance** and try to **influence regulatory framework**, especially in the Global South.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTIONS FOR GLOBAL RESPONSE



Launching a **GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR FAIR DIGITAL ECONOMY AND COMPETITION** focused on developing and emerging economies of **Global South**, *which includes following actions:*

- Creating a unified regulatory approach to digital platforms dominance and abusive practices (including in AI emerging sectors and markets);
- Joint investigations of cross-border M&As of digital platforms aimed to detect potential cartel behaviors
In this regard, to continue the mandate of UNCTAD Working group on cross-border
- Coordinated technical assistance for competition authorities of developing countries on digital platforms, algorithms, and AI
- Enhancing South–South cooperation in antitrust, consumer protection, and data governance.

Thank you for your attention!

