

Development Trends of International Hotel Chains in Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the current state and development stages of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the process of entry and expansion of international hotel brands in the country, their regional distribution, and their concentration in areas with high tourism potential. In addition, the article provides a systematic overview of existing international hotel chains operating in Uzbekistan as well as hotels planned to open in the near future. Special attention is paid to the role of international hotel chains in modernizing the tourism infrastructure, improving service quality, and enhancing Uzbekistan's competitiveness in the global tourism market. The findings of the study may serve as a valuable reference for tourism professionals and policymakers involved in strategic development planning.

Keywords:

International hotel chains, hotel brands, regional hotel distribution, hotel market in Uzbekistan, international hotel projects

Introduction. Uzbekistan is steadily strengthening its position as the fastest-growing market for international hotel chains in Central Asia. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of hotel rooms operated by international brands in the country increased by 272%, representing the highest growth rate among all countries in the region.

These figures are presented in a study conducted by CMWP Uzbekistan. According to the research, by the end of 2025 alone, a total of 682 new branded hotel rooms had been commissioned in Uzbekistan.¹ Key hotel openings during this period included Swissôtel Tashkent, Wyndham Garden Tashkent Airport, Ramada Encore by Wyndham Zomin, and JW Marriott Hotel Tashkent. In particular, the opening of JW Marriott Hotel Tashkent is of special significance, as it became the second luxury-category hotel in the country.

By 2025, the total number of hotel rooms operated by international chains in Uzbekistan reached 4,473. With this indicator, Uzbekistan ranked second in Central Asia after Kazakhstan in terms of the number of internationally branded hotel rooms. However, in terms of growth dynamics, the country emerged as the regional leader.

As of 2025, the total number of international hotel chain rooms across Central Asia amounted to 12,743, of which 57% were located in Kazakhstan and 35% in Uzbekistan. Over the past five years, Uzbekistan's international hotel room supply has nearly quadrupled, while Kazakhstan recorded a growth of only 52% during the same period.

According to forecasts, by the end of 2026 Uzbekistan is expected to surpass Kazakhstan in terms of international hotel room capacity and take the leading position in the

¹ <https://uz.kursiv.media/en/2025-12-11/uzbekistan-hotel-sector-booms-with-272-growth/>

region. During this period, the number of internationally branded hotel rooms in Uzbekistan is projected to exceed 8,000, while Kazakhstan's figure is expected to remain at approximately 7,200 rooms.

In the long term, growth rates are projected to accelerate further. Between 2025 and 2030, Uzbekistan's international hotel room supply is expected to reach 10,311 units, implying the launch of 5,835 new rooms. This corresponds to an overall growth rate of 130%. These developments indicate that Uzbekistan is increasingly emerging as a strategically important market for international hotel operators. By 2030, the country is projected to control 47% of the international hotel room supply in Central Asia and to assume a leading role in the future development of the regional hospitality industry.

Literature review. Despite the rapid expansion of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan, this topic remains insufficiently explored in academic literature. Existing publications are limited in number and largely concentrate on general tourism development, investment trends, or market descriptions, rather than providing an in-depth scholarly analysis of international hotel chain expansion, development stages, and regional distribution patterns within the country. As a result, empirical and comparative academic studies focusing specifically on Uzbekistan as an emerging hotel market are still scarce.

Available literature is primarily composed of institutional reports, market analyses, legislative documents, and corporate communications. Statistical data published by UNWTO in cooperation with national tourism authorities highlight the positive dynamics of tourism development and foreign direct investment inflows into Uzbekistan between 2019 and 2023. These sources underline the growing attractiveness of the country for international investors but do not specifically examine hotel chain strategies or spatial concentration in detail.

Industry-oriented market reports, particularly those prepared by international consulting firms, provide a broader overview of the hospitality market, emphasizing the increase in internationally branded hotel rooms and identifying key growth drivers such as regulatory reforms, infrastructure development, and rising international demand. While these reports offer valuable quantitative insights, they are mainly descriptive and focused on market performance rather than theoretical interpretation.

Additional information regarding the entry of international hotel brands is derived from official announcements and corporate publications of global hotel operators, as well as from the official websites of operating and planned hotels. These sources supply up-to-date and factual data on hotel openings, brand presence, room capacity, and project timelines, forming the primary empirical basis for analyzing the current structure and geographic distribution of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan.

Methodology. This study is based on secondary data analysis. The research relies on official sources, including statistical data from international and national tourism institutions, industry reports, and information published on the official websites of international hotel chains operating or planning to enter the Uzbek market. The collected data were analyzed using a comparative approach to identify development trends, growth dynamics, and regional distribution patterns of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan.

Analysis and results. Between 2019 and 2023, a significant increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) directed to Uzbekistan's tourism sector was observed. In particular, FDI inflows rose sharply in 2023, reaching levels several times higher than in previous years. This trend indicates growing investor confidence in tourism infrastructure and confirms the formation of a favorable investment environment for the entry and expansion of international hotel chains in the country.²

² United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2023). Tourism development indicators of Uzbekistan based on data from the Tourism

Committee under the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan (p. 30).



Figure 1. Dynamics of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Uzbekistan's Tourism Sector, 2019–2023

The process of entry of international hotel brands into Uzbekistan can be conditionally divided into three main stages. These stages are directly related to the evolution of tourism policy, the investment climate, and the development of hospitality infrastructure in the country.

To analyze the evolution of international hotel brands in Uzbekistan, their market entry can be examined through a staged approach. These stages reflect changes in tourism policy, investment conditions, and the overall development of the hospitality infrastructure. Based on the intensity of brand entry and institutional transformations, the process can be conditionally divided into three main stages.

Initial Stage (1997–2016). This period is characterized by the limited entry of international hotel brands into the Uzbek market. During this stage, the number of international brands was relatively small, and their operations were largely concentrated in Tashkent. Most hotel projects were

implemented with state participation or under government support. At this stage, the primary role of international hotel brands was to explore the market, introduce international service standards, and contribute to the development of local human capital. While some brands managed to sustain their presence, others discontinued operations due to various economic and institutional constraints. The investment environment during this period remained relatively closed, with limited involvement of private and foreign investors.

Reform Stage (2017–2021). Beginning in 2017, large-scale economic and institutional reforms implemented under the new presidential administration and revised legislative framework marked a new phase of opportunities for international hotel chains in Uzbekistan. In particular, the adoption of a national tourism development strategy, liberalization of the visa regime, and the introduction of subsidies, preferential loans, and tax incentives for hotel construction and

renovation significantly increased the attractiveness of the market for international investors.³

During this period, the entry of major global hotel brands into the market accelerated significantly. The openings of prestigious hotels such as Hyatt Regency Tashkent (2016)⁴ and Hilton Tashkent City (2019)⁵ contributed to the international recognition of Uzbekistan’s hospitality market. This stage demonstrates that international brands began operating not merely on a trial basis, but within the framework of long-term strategic plans.

New Expansion Stage (from 2022 to the present). The most recent stage is characterized by active expansion and regional diversification of international hotel brands. During this period, international

brands are no longer concentrated solely in Tashkent but have increasingly established operations in major historical and tourism-oriented cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva.

In particular, the Silk Road Samarkand complex developed in the city of Samarkand represents a vivid example of this stage as a large-scale international tourism and hospitality project. The opening of several internationally branded hotels within this complex reflects a strategic approach aimed at transforming Uzbekistan into a regional tourism hub. At this stage, increased competition, improved service quality, and the wider adoption of international management standards across regions can be observed.⁶

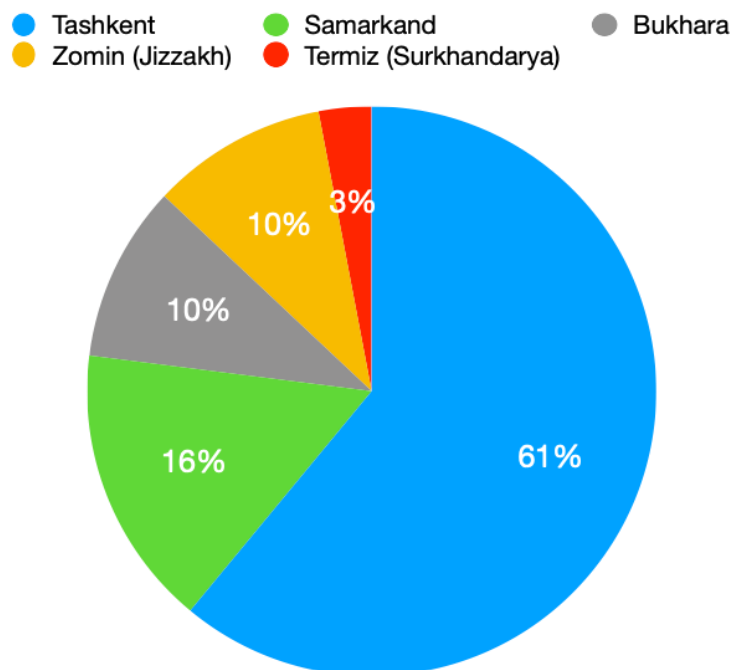


Figure 2. Regional Distribution of International Hotel Chains in Uzbekistan

Out of Uzbekistan’s twelve regions, international hotel chains operate in only five. The regional distribution of international hotel chains is uneven, with the largest share

concentrated in Tashkent, which accounts for 61% of all international hotel chains in the country. This concentration reflects the capital’s

³ <https://lex.uz/acts/-4143188?>

⁴ <https://newsroom.hyatt.com/101116-Hyatt-Regency-Brand-Debuts-in-Uzbekistan-s-Capital>

⁵ <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/tastchi-hilton-tashkent-city/>

⁶ <https://www.silkroad-samarkand.com/>

dominant position as Uzbekistan's primary business, investment, and transportation hub.

Samarkand region ranks second with a 16% share, which can be attributed to its high tourism potential and significant historical and cultural importance. Bukhara region and the Zomin tourism zone in Jizzakh region each account for 10%, indicating the presence of international hotel chains in these areas, albeit on a relatively limited scale. Termiz accounts for only 3%, highlighting the still underdeveloped presence of international hotel chains in the Surkhandarya region.

Overall, the diagram clearly illustrates that international hotel chains are predominantly concentrated in the capital and a small number of major tourist centers, while significant regional disparities in hospitality development remain evident.

Market Entry Models of International Hotel Chains in Uzbekistan. The process of market entry of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan is implemented through various organizational and contractual models. In practice, this process is primarily carried out through management contract and franchising models; however, there is no publicly available, systematized official statistical data on their precise distribution. Therefore, the analysis of market entry models is largely based on existing project cases, international reports, and corporate press releases.⁷

The management contract model dominates the market, whereby hotel ownership remains with local investors or state-affiliated entities, while international

operators are responsible for daily operations and service standards. This model allows international brands to minimize investment risks while addressing managerial capacity gaps on the local side. Franchising, although less prevalent, is increasingly applied, particularly in the midscale and economy segments, enabling local operators to benefit from international branding and marketing systems under strict brand control.

Other models, such as lease and owner-operator arrangements, remain limited due to higher investment risks and market uncertainty. In recent years, the conversion (rebranding) model has also gained relevance, allowing existing hotels to be rapidly aligned with international brand standards.

Overall, management contracts and franchising models prevail in Uzbekistan's hospitality sector, while the lack of official statistics necessitates a qualitative and comparative research approach.

Segment Strategy and Spatial Location Logic of International Hotel Chains in Uzbekistan. The market entry strategy of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan is based on the interaction between market segmentation and regional location factors. As illustrated on the map, the spatial distribution of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan is limited and highly selective in nature. The results of the analysis indicate that international hotel chains are not present across all regions of the country, but operate only in selected provinces with higher economic and tourism potential.

⁷ https://horwathhtl.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Market-Report_Uzbekistan.pdf



Figure 3. Spatial Location of International Hotel Chains in Uzbekistan

Specifically, these hotels are located in Tashkent city and in the Samarkand, Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Surkhandarya regions. These areas are characterized by relatively well-developed economic, transport, and tourism infrastructure, which makes them attractive locations for international hotel chains.

Tashkent stands out as the country’s primary business and investment hub, while the Samarkand and Bukhara regions are particularly appealing to international hotel brands due to their rich historical and cultural heritage and high tourism potential. In Jizzakh region, the presence of international hotel chains is largely associated with the development of the Zomin tourism zone, whereas in Surkhandarya region the city of

Termez plays an important role due to its border location and cultural-tourism significance.

Global hotel operators allocate brands across different market segments by taking into account regional economic activity, the structure of tourism demand, and infrastructural capacity. In particular, hotels belonging to the luxury and upper-upscale segments are predominantly concentrated in Tashkent. The presence of brands such as Hilton Tashkent City, Hyatt Regency Tashkent, InterContinental Tashkent, and JW Marriott Tashkent confirms the capital’s role as the country’s primary business, diplomatic, and MICE hub.

Table 1. International hotel chains in Tashkent (2025)

No	International Hotel chains	Hotels	Rooms	Share of hotel rooms (%)
1	InterContinental Hotel Group	3	588	18.06%
	InterContinental Tashkent	1	216	
	Crowne Plaza Tashkent	1	100	
	Holiday Inn Tashkent City (IHG)	1	272	
2	Wyndham Hotel & Resorts	4	534	16.41%

	Wyndham Tashkent	1	206	
	Hotel Ramada	1	120	
	Ramada Encore by Wyndham Tashkent	1	105	
	Wyndham Garden Tashkent	1	103	
3	Hilton Worldwide	2	433	13.30%
	Hilton Tashkent City	1	258	
	Hampton by Hilton Tashkent	1	175	
4	Marriott International	2	418	12.84%
	Courtyard by Marriott Tashkent	1	131	
	JW Marriott Hotel Tashkent	1	287	
5	Accor Group	2	310	9.52%
	Mercure Tashkent South	1	126	
	Swissôtel Tashkent	1	184	
6	Hyatt Hotels Corporation	1	300	9.22%
	Hyatt Regency Tashkent	1	300	
7	Lotte Hotels & Resorts	1	232	7.13%
	Lotte City Hotel Tashkent Palace	1	232	
8	Azimut Hotels	2	224	6.88%
	AZIMUT Hotel Moderno Tashkent	1	50	
	AZIMUT Grand Hotel Tashkent	1	174	
9	Radisson Group	2	216	6.64%
	Radisson BLU Tashkent	1	111	
	Panarams Tashkent Hotel	1	105	
	Total	19	3,255	100%

In Samarkand, which is regarded as a major historical and cultural tourism center, the segment strategy is more diversified. International hotel chains in this city tend to focus on the upscale and upper-midscale segments. The presence of several

internationally branded hotels within the Silk Road Samarkand complex, along with projects affiliated with Hilton Samarkand Regency and the Radisson Group, indicates that regional demand is oriented toward cultural tourism and visitors with relatively high purchasing power.

№	International Hotel chains	Hotels	Rooms	Share of hotel rooms (%)
1	Accor	1	162	78.1 %
	Mövenpick Samarkand	1	162	
2	Hilton Worldwide	4	577	21.9 %
	Hilton Samarkand Regency	1	232	
	Hilton Garden Inn Samarkand	1	162	
	Hilton Garden Inn Samarkand Afrosiyob	1	91	
	Hilton Garden Inn Samarkand Sogd	1	92	
	Total	5	739	100%

International hotel chains in Samarkand (2025)

In Bukhara, international hotel chains tend to enter the market primarily through midscale and economy segment brands. For instance, the presence of relatively lower-segment brands operated by major international groups such as Accor (2022) and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts (2023/2025) reflects demand seasonality and price sensitivity in the local market. This approach helps reduce investment risks while allowing operators to target a broader mass tourism segment.

Table 3. International hotel chains in Bukhara (2025)

№	International Hotel chains	Hotels	Rooms	Share of hotel rooms (%)
1	Hilton Worldwide	1		
	Hilton Garden Inn Termez Airitom	1	97	100%
	Total	1	97	100%

Hilton Garden Inn Termez Airitom is an international hotel located in Termez, the administrative center of Surkhandarya region in southern Uzbekistan. It operates under the Hilton Worldwide hotel chain and belongs to the upper-midscale segment. The hotel is distinguished by its location within the Airitom Free Economic Zone, which gives it strategic importance from the perspectives of logistics, business activity, and cross-border trade.

The establishment of the hotel represents an important step toward developing international-standard hospitality

infrastructure in the Surkhandarya region and enhancing the area's investment and tourism potential. The entry of the Hilton Garden Inn brand has contributed to increasing the number of hotels in Termez operating in accordance with international service standards.

Hilton Garden Inn Termez Airitom primarily serves foreign business representatives, professionals engaged in logistics and trade, international organizations and investors, as well as participants in regional tourism activities, offering modern facilities and standardized services.

Table 4. International hotel chains in Surkhandarya (2025)

The entry of international hotel chains into Jizzakh region is a relatively recent development and is primarily associated with the Zomin area. In particular, the establishment of the Wyndham Zomin Resort complex marked an important milestone in the formation of hotel services based on international standards within the region.

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts entered the Zomin area during 2023–2024 and is recognized as the first major international hotel chain to begin operations in Jizzakh region. This

project demonstrates the emerging presence of global brands in mountain-resort tourism destinations.

The Wyndham Zomin Resort complex includes three international brands—Wyndham Garden Zomin, TRYP by Wyndham Zomin, and Ramada Encore by Wyndham Zomin. The integration of multiple international hotel brands within a single destination reflects a coordinated development model and indicates that Zomin’s tourism potential is gaining recognition at the international level.

Table 5. International hotel chains in Jizzakh (2025)

№	International Hotel chains	Hotels	Rooms	Share of hotel rooms (%)
1	Accor	1	57	14.96%
	Mercure Bukhara Old Town	1	57	
2	Wyndham Hotels&Resorts	4	324	85.04%
	Wyndham Bukhara	1	212	
	Ramada Encore by Wyndham Bukhara	1	112	
	Total	5	381	100%

№	International Hotel chains	Hotes	Rooms	Share of hotel rooms (%)
1	Wyndham Hotel & Resorts	3		
	Ramada Encore by Wyndham Zomin	1	110	33.03%
	TRYP by Wyndham Zomin	1	116	34.83%
	Wyndham Garden Zomin	1	107	32.14%
	Total	3	333	100%

The complex comprises a total of 333 rooms, making it one of the largest accommodation facilities in the Zomin area of Jizzakh region. The substantial room capacity indicates the expanding potential of the region to accommodate both domestic and international tourist flows in the future.

Conclusion. This study examined the development of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan, focusing on their stages of market entry, regional distribution, and segment strategies. The analysis shows that the expansion of international hotel brands in Uzbekistan has accelerated particularly after 2017, when economic reforms, tourism policy liberalization, and improved investment conditions created a more favorable environment for foreign investors. As a result, the presence of global hotel operators has increased significantly, contributing to the modernization of the national hospitality sector and the introduction of international service standards.

The findings also indicate that the development of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan has progressed through several stages. The initial stage was characterized by limited market presence and a strong concentration in the capital city. The reform period marked the beginning of more active market entry by global brands, while the most recent stage demonstrates a gradual expansion toward regional tourism destinations. Nevertheless, the spatial distribution of international hotel chains remains uneven. A large proportion of internationally branded hotels are concentrated in Tashkent, while only a limited number operate in other regions such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Surkhandarya. This pattern reflects differences in economic activity, tourism demand, and infrastructure development across regions.

The study further reveals that international hotel operators tend to adopt different segment strategies depending on the characteristics of each destination. Luxury and upper-upscale hotels are primarily located in Tashkent, which functions as the country's main business and diplomatic center. In contrast,

historical tourism destinations such as Samarkand and Bukhara attract upscale and midscale brands that serve cultural tourism markets. Emerging tourism areas such as Zomin and Termez demonstrate the initial presence of international brands in resort or strategic locations. In terms of market entry mechanisms, management contracts and franchising models dominate the Uzbek hospitality market, reflecting the risk-sharing preferences typical of emerging tourism economies.

To ensure the balanced and sustainable development of international hotel chains in Uzbekistan, several measures should be considered. First, it is important to encourage a more balanced regional distribution of international hotel brands by promoting investment in regions with tourism potential but limited accommodation infrastructure. Improving transport accessibility and tourism facilities in these areas would increase their attractiveness for international hotel operators. Second, greater attention should be given to the development of midscale and economy hotel segments in regional destinations. Expanding these categories would increase accommodation capacity and allow a broader range of tourists to access hospitality services.

Finally, strengthening cooperation between international hotel operators and local investors would facilitate the transfer of managerial experience, service standards, and international hospitality practices. At the same time, improving the availability of systematic statistical data on international hotel chains would support more effective policy planning and further academic research in the sector.

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