

# DEVELOPING PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING UZBEKISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS: GAP DECOMPOSITION, INSTRUMENT COVERAGE, AND THE RANKING OF INTERVENTIONS BY IMPLEMENTATION DISTANCE

**Gofurjonova Musharrafkhon Shekhratjon kizi**

Researcher

Tashkent State University of Economics

ORCID: 0009-0001-7787-4596

E-mail: [musharraff0555@gmail.com](mailto:musharraff0555@gmail.com)

## **Annotatsiya**

Amaliy tavsiyalar ishlab chiqiladigan maqolalarda ular odatda ro'yxat ko'rinishida beriladi. Ushbu maqolada esa tavsiyalar xuddi shu panellar bo'yicha to'rtta hamroh tadqiqotda baholangan koeffitsiyentlar asosida tartiblanadi. Ish uchta tushunchaga tayanadi: tafovut dekompozitsiyasi, instrument qamrovi va amalga oshirish masofasi. Dekompozitsiya natijalariga ko'ra, O'zbekiston turistlarning moddiy merosni baholashi bo'yicha benchmark medianasining 99,6 foiziga, har bir yirik tadbirga to'g'ri keladigan tashriflar bo'yicha esa 100,0 foiziga teng, biroq onlayn faollik bo'yicha 47,2 foiz, bir tashrifdan olinadigan tushum bo'yicha 39,0 foiz darajasida turibdi. Demak, raqobatbardoshlik muammosi mahsulot sifatida emas. Zanjirning yetti bo'g'inidan oltitasi baholangan koeffitsiyentga ega, faqat tashriflardan tushumga o'tish bo'g'ini instrumentsiz qolgan, holbuki aynan shu bo'g'inda yillik tafovut 2,615 mlrd AQSh dollarini tashkil etadi. Tartiblash natijasida birinchi qadam aniq bo'ladi: barcha kelishuv zanjirlarini ikki bosqichga qisqartirish xalqaro e'tiborni taxminan 30,5 foizga oshiradi va doimiy xarajat talab qilmaydi. Miqdoriy baholangan uchta chora birgalikda yiliga taxminan 251 mln AQSh dollari beradi, bu esa instrumentsiz qolgan tafovutning o'ndan biriga teng. Maqolaning asosiy tavsiyasi aynan shu nisbatdan kelib chiqadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** turizm raqobatbardoshligi, milliy imij, siyosat ustuvorliklari, instrument qamrovi, amalga oshirish masofasi, choralarni tartiblash, O'zbekiston

## **Аннотация**

В статьях, посвящённых практическим рекомендациям, рекомендации обычно приводятся списком. В данной статье они ранжируются на основе коэффициентов, оценённых в четырёх сопутствующих исследованиях на тех же панелях. Работа опирается на три понятия: декомпозицию разрыва, охват инструментами и дистанцию реализации. Декомпозиция показывает, что Узбекистан находится на уровне 99,6% медианы эталонной группы по оценке туристами объектов наследия и на уровне 100,0% по числу прибытий на одно крупное событие, но лишь на уровне 47,2% по вовлечённости и 39,0% по поступлениям на одно прибытие. Следовательно, проблема конкурентоспособности не связана с качеством продукта. Из семи звеньев цепочки шесть имеют оценённые коэффициенты, и лишь звено от прибытий к

поступлениям не имеет инструмента, хотя именно здесь годовой разрыв составляет 2,615 млрд долл. США. Ранжирование выделяет явный первый шаг: сокращение всех цепочек согласования до двух этапов повышает международное внимание примерно на 30,5% без постоянных затрат. Три количественно оценённые меры в совокупности дают около 251 млн долл. США в год, что составляет одну десятую разрыва, не охваченного инструментами. Главная рекомендация статьи вытекает именно из этого соотношения.

**Ключевые слова:** конкурентоспособность туризма, имидж страны, приоритизация политики, охват инструментами, дистанция реализации, ранжирование мер, Узбекистан

### **Abstract**

Articles that develop practical recommendations normally list them. This one ranks them, using coefficients estimated in four companion studies on the same panels, and reports what the ranking exposes. Three constructs organise the work: gap decomposition, which locates the competitiveness shortfall along the chain from governance to revenue; instrument coverage, introduced here to record which links of that chain carry an estimated coefficient and which do not; and implementation distance, which scores how far each candidate intervention is from being executable. The decomposition finds that Uzbekistan is at the benchmark median on how tourists rate its heritage, at 99.6 per cent, and exactly at it on arrivals per signature event, at 100.0 per cent, while standing at 47.2 per cent of the median on articulated engagement and 39.0 per cent on receipts per arrival. The competitiveness problem is therefore not one of product quality. Of the seven links in the chain, six carry estimated coefficients and one does not, and the one that does not is the link from arrivals to receipts, where the measured gap is 2.615 billion USD per year. Ranking the quantifiable interventions gives a clear first choice: shortening every approval chain to two steps raises international attention by an estimated 30.5 per cent with no recurring cost, which is 51 per cent of the effect of doubling every site operating budget at none of its 2.02 million USD annual expense. The three interventions that can be quantified, taken together, are worth an estimated 251 million USD a year. That is one tenth of the gap for which no instrument exists. The article's principal recommendation follows from that ratio rather than from any of the individual estimates.

**Keywords:** tourism competitiveness, nation image, policy prioritisation, instrument coverage, implementation distance, intervention ranking, Uzbekistan

### **INTRODUCTION**

The literature that ends in practical recommendations usually produces them the same way. An analysis identifies weaknesses, and each weakness generates a recommendation to address it. The result is a list, the items on the list are not comparable, and a ministry holding the list has no basis for deciding which to do first. Since budgets and legislative attention are finite, the list is not actually actionable, whatever it says about itself.

This article treats prioritisation as the analytical problem rather than as an afterthought. It draws on four companion studies that estimated coefficients along a

single causal chain for Uzbekistan's heritage and event tourism system, and it uses those coefficients to put candidate interventions into common units so that they can be ranked. The exercise turns out to expose something that none of the four individual studies could see, and that finding is the article's principal contribution.

The chain runs from governance through promotional capability to international attention, from attention to arrivals, and from arrivals to receipts. Three constructs are used to analyse it. Gap decomposition measures how far Uzbekistan stands from the benchmark median at each stage, which locates the shortfall rather than assuming it is everywhere. Instrument coverage, introduced here, records for each link whether an estimated coefficient exists that would allow the effect of an intervention on that link to be computed; it is a map of what the evidence base can and cannot support. Implementation distance scores how far each intervention is from execution, combining the level of authority required, the capital needed and the time to a measurable effect.

The results divide into three findings of increasing importance. First, the decomposition shows the competitiveness problem is not one of product quality: Uzbekistan sits at 99.6 per cent of the benchmark median on how visitors rate its heritage and at 100.0 per cent on arrivals produced per signature event, while standing at 47.2 and 39.0 per cent on engagement volume and revenue yield. Second, the ranking identifies a dominant first move: shortening approval chains delivers 30.5 per cent more international attention at no recurring cost, which is half the effect of doubling every site budget at none of the expense. Third, and this is the finding the prioritisation exercise produced and the individual studies did not, six of the seven links in the chain carry estimated coefficients and the seventh does not, and the seventh is where almost all of the money is.

Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 sets out the sources, the three constructs and the computation. Section 4 reports the decomposition, the ranking and the coverage analysis. Section 5 states the recommendations that follow.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ritchie and Crouch's model remains the reference framework for destination competitiveness, organising determinants into core resources, supporting factors, destination management and qualifying determinants [12]. Dwyer and Kim's integrated model covers similar ground with demand conditions added [5], and Crouch ranked the attributes by expert judgement [4]. These frameworks are comprehensive, and their comprehensiveness is exactly what prevents them from ranking interventions: an attribute list without estimated relations among the attributes cannot say which attribute to move first.

Kotler and Gertner treated the country as a brand [8]; Anholt's competitive identity position holds that communication is a minor component and that policy, people and product dominate [1]; Fan clarified that nation branding cannot be reduced to promotion [6]. Anholt's position is directly relevant here, because the ranking below finds the largest available lever to be an administrative rule rather than a communication campaign, which is what competitive identity would predict.

The methodological difficulty at the centre of this article is that coefficients estimated on observational data are being used to compute the effects of interventions. Manski's treatment of policy analysis under partial identification is the appropriate frame [9]. His argument is not that such analysis should be avoided but that the credibility of the conclusion is bounded by the credibility of the weakest assumption, and that analysts should state the assumption rather than presenting a point estimate as if it were secure. This article follows that instruction: every computed effect below rests on the assumption that a cross-sectional association would survive as an intervention effect, and that assumption is not established by any of the companion studies.

Saisana, Saltelli and Tarantola's demonstration that composite and derived indicators are frequently unstable under alternative construction choices applies with equal force to derived policy estimates [13], and the OECD handbook sets out the disclosure such derivations require [11].

Four bodies of work supply the coefficients used here, each through a companion study on the same panels. Chalip's leveraging argument holds that event impacts do not flow automatically and require complementary activity [3]. Tilden and Moscardo establish interpretation as the operation that makes a heritage object legible to a visitor [10]; [15]. Tsebelis's veto player theory, and Scharpf's joint-decision trap, supply the account of why coordination structures impose cost [14]; [16]. Hjalager's review of tourism innovation observes that adoption is governed by institutional capacity rather than by the availability of the innovation [7], which is why the highest-ranked intervention below is regulatory.

## METHODOLOGY

Every effect computed in Section 4 uses a coefficient estimated in one of four companion studies on the same site and regional panels. Table 1 lists them.

**Table 1**

**Coefficients drawn from the companion studies<sup>1</sup>**

| Link                                          | Coefficient             | Significance | Source  |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Coordination step to promotional capability   | -0.932 per step         | $t = -7.15$  | Study 1 |
| Promotional capability to international reach | 0.350 per point         | $t = 10.48$  | Study 1 |
| Operating budget to international reach       | 0.681 elasticity        | $t = 6.13$   | Study 1 |
| Interpretive provision to endorsement         | 0.527 log odds per step | $t = 7.26$   | Study 2 |
| Interpretive provision to engagement          | 0.170 per step          | $t = 2.98$   | Study 2 |
| HE-TEM composite to attention                 | 1.099 elasticity        | $t = 6.62$   | Study 3 |
| Attention to foreign visits                   | 0.437 elasticity        | $t = 10.13$  | Study 3 |
| Accommodation rooms to foreign visits         | 0.592 elasticity        | $t = 14.30$  | Study 3 |
| Signature events to receipts, net of arrivals | -0.257, not significant | $t = -0.90$  | Study 4 |

*Note: Studies 1-4 are the author's companion studies on the same site and regional panels.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: compiled by the author based on the four companion studies.

The benchmark panel of thirteen countries used for the gap decomposition is the one described in companion study 4 (Table 1).

Two consequences of this sourcing are stated here rather than in the limitations, because they govern how the whole article should be read. All the coefficients are cross-sectional associations on panels of between thirteen and twenty units [2], and none of the companion studies claimed causal identification. Applying them as intervention effects therefore assumes that the association would survive as an effect, which is an assumption and not a result. Two of the underlying measures, the coordination distance score and the interpretive provision score, were constructed by the authors and have not been independently audited.

The decomposition expresses Uzbekistan's position at each stage of the chain as a percentage of the median of the thirteen-country benchmark panel. Four stages are measured: endorsement level, as the mean rating of heritage attractions; volume conversion, as arrivals per signature event; engagement volume, as reviews per inscribed property; and yield conversion, as receipts per arrival.

Expressing all four against the same benchmark and in the same unit is what makes them comparable. A stage at 100 per cent of the median is not a weakness whatever its absolute level, and a stage at 39 per cent is a weakness whatever the absolute level looks like in isolation.

Instrument coverage records, for each link of the chain, whether a coefficient exists that would permit the effect of an intervention on that link to be computed. A link is covered if such a coefficient has been estimated on the relevant panel and reported with a standard error. A link is uncovered otherwise.

The construct is deliberately about the evidence base rather than about the system. An uncovered link is not necessarily a link where nothing can be done; it is a link where nothing can be quantified, and therefore a link that any ranking exercise will silently omit. Recording coverage makes the omission visible, and Section 4.4 shows that on this chain the omission is larger than everything the ranking contains.

Each intervention is scored from 1 to 5 on implementation distance, combining three elements: the level of authority whose decision is required, from site management at the low end to an interministerial or cabinet decision at the high end; the capital requirement, from none to major construction; and the time from decision to a measurable effect, from within a year to several years.

A score of 1 denotes a measure executable immediately at low cost by the responsible body. A score of 5 denotes an intervention requiring substantial capital, multiple parties and several years.

Effects are computed by applying the relevant coefficient to the stated change and aggregating to the national level using the relevant weights. Log-linear coefficients are applied as elasticities and logistic coefficients as odds multipliers.

Where an intervention operates at site or regional level, the national effect is computed by summing the site or regional outcomes after applying the change, not by applying the coefficient to a national mean. This matters materially for one intervention, as Section 4.3 shows.

Combined effects are computed multiplicatively, which assumes the interventions are independent. That assumption is discussed in 4.6 and is one of the weaker parts of the exercise.

Costs are indicative planning figures, not costed estimates, and are stated as such wherever they appear.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2 reports the decomposition.

**Table 2**

### Uzbekistan against the benchmark median, by stage of the chain<sup>1</sup>

| Stage             | Measure                                   | Uzbekistan | Median | Ratio, % |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------|--------|----------|
| Endorsement level | Mean rating of heritage attractions       | 4.48       | 4.50   | 99.6     |
| Volume conversion | Arrivals per signature event, thousands   | 575.0      | 575.0  | 100.0    |
| Engagement volume | Reviews per inscribed property, thousands | 6.0        | 12.7   | 47.2     |
| Yield conversion  | Receipts per arrival, USD                 | 242        | 621    | 39.0     |

Table 2 shows that two stages are at or near the benchmark median (99.6 and 100.0 per cent), while engagement volume and yield conversion stand at 47.2 and 39.0 per cent of it. Figure 1 presents the same ratios graphically.

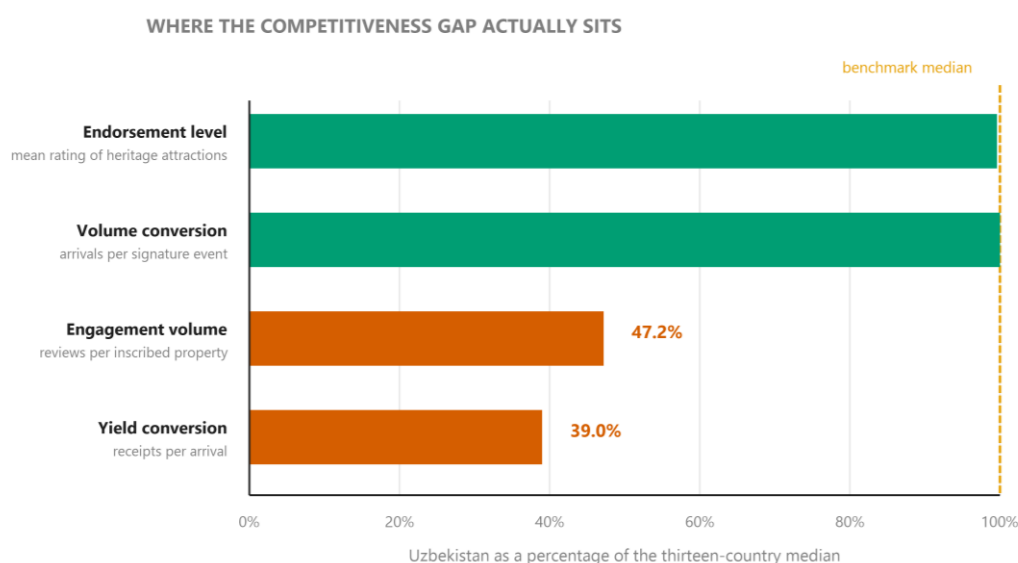


**Figure 1. Uzbekistan's position at each stage of the chain<sup>2</sup>**

*Note: As a percentage of the thirteen-country benchmark median.*

The result is a clean separation. On the two stages that measure the quality of what is offered and its capacity to generate visits, Uzbekistan is at the benchmark: visitors rate its heritage at 4.48 against a median of 4.50, and its event calendar produces

<sup>1</sup> Source: author's calculations based on the thirteen-country benchmark panel (companion study 4).

<sup>2</sup> Source: author's calculations.

arrivals at exactly the median rate. On the two stages that measure how much is said about it and how much is earned from it, Uzbekistan is at roughly two fifths of the benchmark.

This has an immediate consequence for what recommendations are worth making. Interventions aimed at improving the product address a stage that is not deficient. The deficient stages are visibility and revenue, and they are of very unequal size: applied to the current base of 6.9 million arrivals, the yield gap of 379 USD per arrival is worth 2.615 billion USD a year.

Table 3 lists the candidate interventions with their computed effects.

**Table 3**

**Candidate interventions and estimated effects<sup>1</sup>**

| <b>Id</b> | <b>Intervention</b>                                                   | <b>Estimated effect</b>                  | <b>Unit</b>                   | <b>Indicative cost</b>      | <b>Implementation distance</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I1        | Shorten every approval chain to two steps, %                          | 30.5                                     | International attention       | No recurring cost           | 2                              |
| I2        | Full interpretive provision at five deficit sites                     | +27.5 pp endorsement;<br>+3.1% attention | Five-star share;<br>attention | 1.25 mln USD, one off       | 3                              |
| I3        | Raise the binding component to median in six regions, %               | 2.4                                      | International attention       | 0.90 mln USD                | 3                              |
| I4        | Accommodation capacity plus twenty per cent, %                        | 11.3                                     | Foreign visits                | 48 mln USD, private capital | 5                              |
| I5        | Double every site operating budget, %                                 | 60.3                                     | International attention       | 2.02 mln USD per year       | 4                              |
| I6        | Record coordination distance and interpretive provision as indicators | Enabling, no direct effect               |                               | 0.05 mln USD                | 1                              |
| I7        | Blind audit of the two constructed measures                           | Enabling, no direct effect               |                               | 0.08 mln USD                | 1                              |
| I8        | Commission the yield decomposition study                              | Enabling, no direct effect               |                               | 0.15 mln USD                | 1                              |

I1 applies the coordination coefficient of minus 0.932 to bring every site to two approval steps, raising mean promotional capability from 3.20 to 4.27, then carries that through the capability coefficient of 0.350 to reach. I2 applies the interpretation coefficients to the five sites holding a significance grade of 4 or 5 with an interpretive score of 0 or 1. I3 applies the HE-TEM elasticity of 1.099 to the six regions where the binding component sits below the panel median. I5 applies the budget elasticity of 0.681 to a doubling.

<sup>1</sup> Source: author's calculations based on the coefficients in Table 1.

Figure 2 places the quantifiable interventions from Table 3 by estimated gain in international attention and implementation distance.

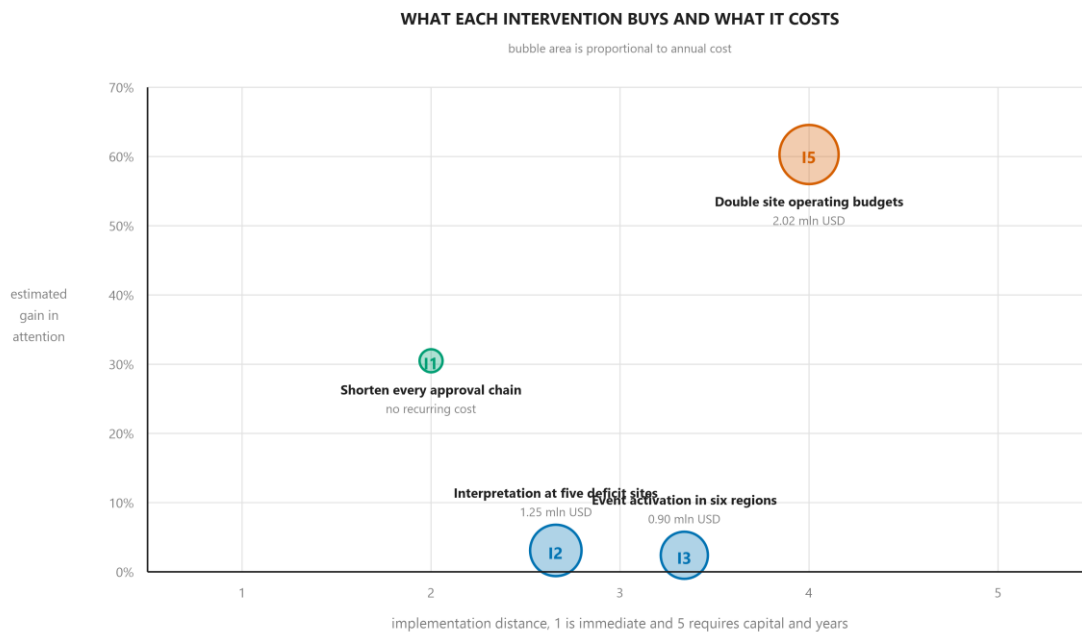


**Figure 2. Estimated gain in international attention against implementation distance<sup>1</sup>**

*Note: Bubble area is proportional to annual cost.*

The ordering is not close. I1 raises attention by 30.5 per cent, which is 51 per cent of the effect of I15, and it does so with no recurring cost and at implementation distance 2 rather than 4. Against the only other large instrument in the set, it delivers half the effect for none of the 2.02 million USD annual expense, and it requires a regulatory decision rather than a budget line.

I2 and I3 are small in national terms and the reason differs between them. I2 produces a large effect where it is applied, raising the mean five-star share at the five sites from 42.2 to 69.7 per cent, but those sites are small and the national attention effect is 3.1 per cent. I3 is smaller still at 2.4 per cent, and the reason is arithmetic: the six regions where the binding component is below median together hold 11.2 per cent of national mentions, so even a large proportional gain in those regions moves the national total little.

This is where the aggregation rule set out in 3.5 does work. Applying the HETEM elasticity to a national mean would have produced a substantially larger and entirely spurious figure, because the regions with the most headroom are the ones with the least weight. Reporting the national effect requires summing at the regional level, and doing so converts an apparently attractive intervention into a marginal one.

I4 is reported for completeness in a different unit and is not ranked against the others. A twenty per cent increase in rooms raises foreign visits by an estimated 11.3

<sup>1</sup> Source: author's calculations.

per cent, but the capital requirement is two orders of magnitude above everything else in the set and the implementation distance is 5.

Figure 3 shows which links of the chain carry an estimated coefficient.

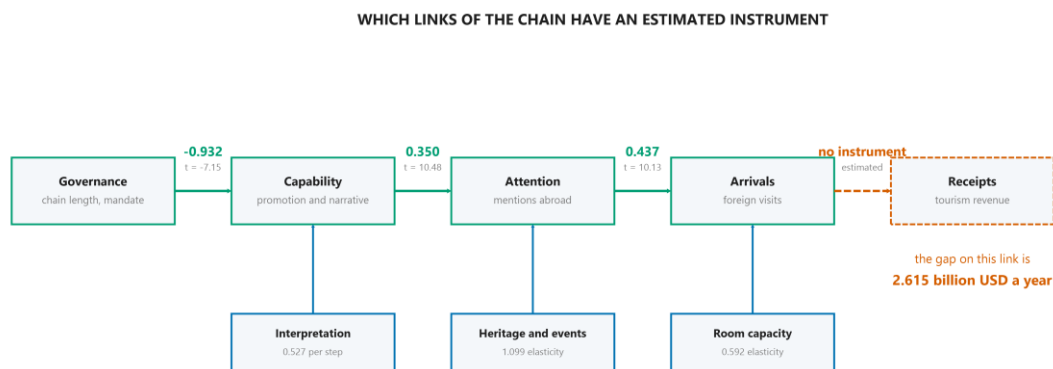


**Figure 3. Instrument coverage of the chain<sup>1</sup>**

*Note: Links carrying an estimated coefficient are shown solid; the uncovered link is dashed.*

Six of the seven links in the chain carry an estimated coefficient. Governance to capability carries minus 0.932, capability to attention 0.350, interpretation to endorsement 0.527, the heritage and event composite to attention 1.099, attention to arrivals 0.437, and accommodation capacity to arrivals 0.592. Every one of these is significant at conventional levels and several at t statistics above 10.

The link from arrivals to receipts carries nothing. The companion study that examined it found the event elasticity on receipts to be minus 0.257 with a t statistic of minus 0.90 once arrivals were controlled, which establishes that events do not act on revenue directly but supplies no instrument that does (companion study 4). That study also found the entire Central Asian bloc to carry a receipts coefficient of minus 1.394 net of arrivals, meaning the deficit is regional and unexplained rather than national and diagnosed.

**Table 4**

**Combined effect of the quantifiable interventions<sup>2</sup>**

| Quantity                                                                      | Value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| I1, I2 and I3 combined, attention, %                                          | 37.8  |
| Carried through the attention to visits elasticity of 0.437, % foreign visits | 15.0  |
| Arrivals, m                                                                   | 7.94  |
| Additional receipts at the current yield of 242 USD, mln USD per year         | 251   |
| Additional receipts if yield were at the median of 621 USD, mln USD per year  | 644   |
| Value of closing the yield gap on the existing arrival base, mln USD per year | 2,615 |

<sup>1</sup> Source: author's calculations based on Table 1.

<sup>2</sup> Source: author's calculations.

The consequence is stated plainly because it is the point of the construct. Every instrument this cycle of work has estimated acts on visibility or on volume. The single link with no instrument is the one carrying a gap of 2.615 billion USD a year.

Table 4 combines the three quantifiable interventions and carries them through to revenue.

Table 4 shows that the three quantifiable interventions together raise attention by 37.8 per cent and foreign visits by 15.0 per cent, which adds 251 million USD a year at the current yield. Figure 4 sets this against the value of closing the yield gap.

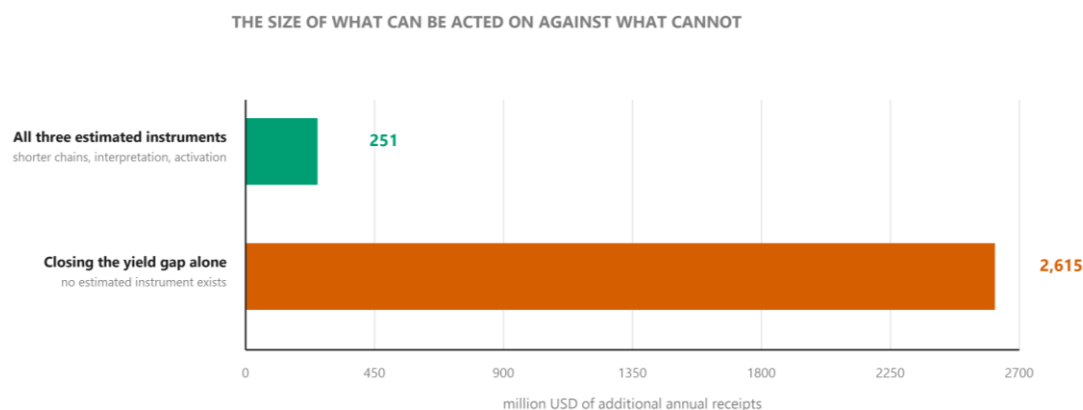


**Figure 4. The value of everything the estimated instruments can deliver, against the value of closing the yield gap alone<sup>1</sup>**

Everything this cycle can quantify is worth 251 million USD a year. Closing the yield gap on the arrival base that already exists, without attracting a single additional visitor, is worth 2,615 million. The ratio is roughly one to ten.

The comparison also shows how the two interact. If the yield gap were closed first, the same visibility interventions would be worth 644 million rather than 251 million, because each additional arrival would be worth 621 USD rather than 242. Yield is not merely the larger problem; it is the multiplier on the smaller one.

The prioritisation exercise produced three results, and they are of different kinds.

The first is a straightforward ranking result. I1 dominates on every dimension available: half the effect of the largest alternative, no recurring cost, and a shorter implementation distance. If the estimates are approximately right, and if only one thing is done, it should be this. It is also the intervention that Anholt's competitive identity position would predict, in that it changes what the system does rather than what it says [1], and the one Hjalager's account of tourism innovation would predict, in that the constraint on adopting cheap process innovations is institutional capacity rather than availability [7].

The second is a methodological result about aggregation. Two interventions that look attractive at the level where they apply become marginal at national level because they apply where the weights are small. Any prioritisation that computes national

<sup>1</sup> Source: author's calculations.

effects from national means will rank them wrongly. This is not a subtle point but it is an easy one to get wrong, and it reversed the ranking of I3 in this exercise.

The third is the coverage result, and it is the one that a list of recommendations could not have produced. The instrument coverage map was constructed as a bookkeeping device and it turned out to carry the article's main finding: the evidence base covers the stages where the gap is small and does not cover the stage where the gap is ten times larger. A recommendation set derived from the available evidence will therefore be systematically directed at the wrong problem, not through any error in the individual studies but through the structure of what has been estimated. Reporting coverage is what makes this visible, and it is the reason the construct is proposed as a general practice rather than as a device for this article.

Five limitations bear on how much weight the numbers can carry, and they are ordered by severity.

The causal assumption is the binding one. Every effect in Table 3 applies a cross-sectional association as though it were an intervention effect. None of the companion studies identified a causal effect, all of them said so, and this article cannot repair that by aggregation. Manski's instruction applies directly: the credibility of the conclusion is bounded by this assumption, and stating it is the minimum the analysis owes the reader [9]. What the ranking supports is a comparison of orders of magnitude, not a forecast of outcomes.

Reverse causation is plausible for the highest-ranked intervention specifically. A site whose management is capable may have negotiated a shorter approval chain, in which case shortening chains administratively would not produce the estimated gain. This possibility is not testable on cross-sectional data and it would attack I1 more than any other item in the set.

Extrapolation beyond the data affects I5 most. Doubling every site operating budget moves the panel well outside the observed range, and a log-linear coefficient estimated within that range gives no warrant for the extrapolation. The 60.3 per cent figure should be read as an upper bound of what the specification implies rather than as a projection.

Independence of the combined interventions is assumed and not tested. I1 and I5 both operate on promotional capability and reach, and their effects are unlikely to be fully additive in logs. The combined figure of 37.8 per cent in Table 4 excludes I5 for this reason, but I1, I2 and I3 may also overlap to some degree, which would make even that figure optimistic.

Costs are indicative planning figures rather than costed estimates, and the implementation distance score is a judgement by the authors. Both would need proper work before any of this could enter a budget submission.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This article ranked candidate interventions for Uzbekistan's international image and tourism competitiveness, using coefficients estimated in four companion studies, and reported what the ranking exposed.

The competitiveness gap is not one of product quality. Uzbekistan stands at 99.6 per cent of the benchmark median on how tourists rate its heritage and at 100.0 per cent on arrivals produced per signature event, against 47.2 per cent on articulated engagement and 39.0 per cent on receipts per arrival.

Among quantifiable interventions the ranking has a clear first place. Shortening every approval chain to two steps raises mean promotional capability from 3.20 to 4.27 and international attention by an estimated 30.5 per cent, with no recurring cost. This is 51 per cent of the effect of doubling every site operating budget, which costs 2.02 million USD a year and sits two levels further away in implementation distance.

National effects must be aggregated at the level where interventions apply. Raising the binding component to median across six regions yields only 2.4 per cent nationally because those regions hold 11.2 per cent of national attention, and computing the same intervention from a national mean would have overstated it substantially.

Six of the seven links in the chain carry estimated coefficients. The seventh, from arrivals to receipts, carries none, and it is the link where the gap is 2.615 billion USD a year.

The three quantifiable interventions together are worth an estimated 251 million USD a year at the current yield, which is roughly one tenth of the value of closing the yield gap alone. At the benchmark median yield the same interventions would be worth 644 million, so yield is both the larger problem and the multiplier on the smaller one.

#### Recommendations:

1. Shorten the approval chains. It ranks first on effect per unit of cost, requires no capital, and can be executed by regulatory decision. Removing the six promotional capability items from multi-body approval entirely, and vesting them in site directors, would move most sites to a coordination distance of one.

2. Commission the yield study before committing to any large visibility programme. The largest measured gap in the system has no estimated instrument, and until it does, any allocation across the two is being made blind. The specific question is what the Central Asian receipts coefficient of minus 1.394 net of arrivals decomposes into: length of stay, the purpose mix of arrivals, price levels in the tradeable tourism basket, or the treatment of cross-border movement in arrival statistics. The study costs a small fraction of any of the interventions ranked above it.

3. Take the enabling measures at implementation distance 1 immediately. Recording coordination distance and interpretive provision as administrative indicators costs almost nothing, and neither variable can be managed while unmeasured. The blind audit of the two constructed measures should accompany them, because the first recommendation above rests on a score that the authors themselves assigned.

4. Fund interpretation at the five deficit sites. At 1.25 million USD one off it is inexpensive, and the local effect is large even though the national attention effect is 3.1 per cent. The case for it rests on the site-level result rather than the national one, and it should be argued that way rather than on an inflated national figure.

5. Treat budget increases as the fallback rather than the first move. Doubling site budgets is the largest single estimated effect in the set, but it is recurring, extrapolated well beyond the data, and available at any time. It is what to do if the regulatory route is blocked, not what to do first.

6. Do not use these numbers as forecasts. Every figure in this article converts a cross-sectional association into an intervention effect, which no companion study established. The ranking is defensible as a comparison of orders of magnitude and it is not defensible as a projection of outcomes. A ministry acting on it should treat the ordering as informative and the magnitudes as indicative.

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