

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RATIONAL USE AND PROTECTION OF LAND
RESOURCES IN UZBEKISTAN**

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Abstract: This article discusses the issues of rational use and protection of land resources in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Land is state property, and its effective use and environmental protection play an important role in the sustainable development of the country. The article analyzes legal norms related to land, priority areas of state policy, environmental problems such as land degradation and salinization. It also provides information on the legislative framework, state control and practical measures for the protection of land resources. This study is aimed at improving the agrarian policy of Uzbekistan and ensuring environmental sustainability.

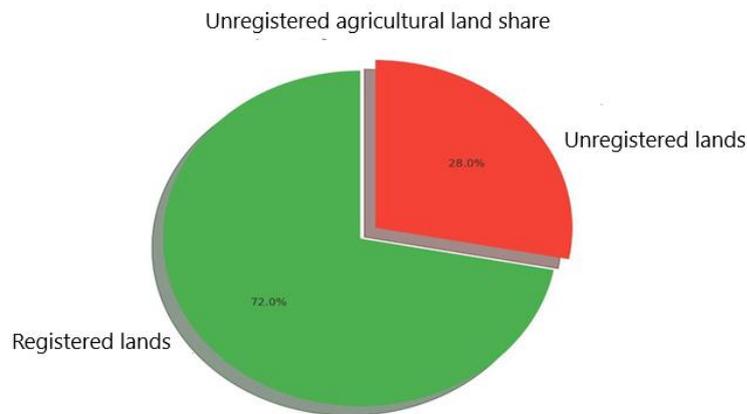
Keywords: land law, land resources, environmental protection, efficient use, land code, state control, salinity, legal framework, Uzbek legislation, sustainable development.

Introduction. “The earth satisfies all man's needs, but not his greed.” Mahatma Gandhi Land is one of the oldest and most important natural resources of mankind. The economic stability, environmental security and food security of any state directly depend on the level of rational use of land resources and their protection. A large part of the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of agricultural land, which is of decisive importance in the country's economy. Therefore, the issues of land condition, efficiency of its use and environmental protection are one of the priority areas of state policy. In recent years, problems such as improper use of land resources, salinization, water shortage and disruption of the ecological balance have had a negative impact on land fertility. To eliminate these problems, a solid legal framework has been created in the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding land. In particular, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the “Land Code” and a number of laws and resolutions constitute the main legal foundation for the management, rational use and protection of land resources.

Results and Discussions. Land resources play a special role in the economic, ecological and social development of society. Land is not only the main means of production, but also an important natural resource in maintaining ecological balance. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, land is considered state property and is strictly protected by the Constitution and relevant laws. Article 68 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that “Land, subsoil resources, water, forests, flora and fauna, and other natural resources are the property of the people, are protected by the state and their rational use is guaranteed.” This norm is the basis of the legal approach to land resources in our country.¹The main document regulating land relations is the Land Code of April 30, 1998. According to this code, land plots are allocated only in accordance with the procedure established by law and must be used for their intended purpose. The Land

¹ [30.04.2023. Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

Code defines the categories of land funds, legally strengthens the procedure for ownership, use and lease of land. Also, according to the amendments introduced in 2020, it was determined that land plots for new use will be allocated through an electronic auction. This will serve to enhance transparency and a competitive environment, and prevent corruption.²Another key legal document for the environmental protection of land resources is the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Nature Protection” of December 9, 1992. According to this law, the protection of land resources, preservation of soil fertility, prevention of pollution and ensuring environmental safety are among the priority tasks of the state. The law also establishes that individuals and organizations that cause damage to land will be held administratively or materially liable.³The Law “On the State Land Cadastre” of August 28, 1998 is of great importance in clearly defining and controlling land rights. According to it, information about land plots should be registered in a unified cadastral system, their boundaries, area and purpose of use should be clearly defined. This will create opportunities for the effective use of land resources, reduce legal disputes and strengthen state control.⁴The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has adopted a number of strategic documents to maintain ecological balance and prevent land degradation. In particular, within the framework of the “National Environmental Protection Strategy (2019–2030)”, large-scale work is being carried out to recultivate irrigated lands, combat desertification, and increase soil fertility. In addition, Uzbekistan is fulfilling its international obligations within the framework of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).⁵



According to official statistics, the republic has a total land area of 44.9 million hectares, of which more than 20 million hectares are intended for agriculture. However, a certain part of this land faces environmental problems such as salinization, erosion, and degradation.⁶Therefore, the

² [30.04.1998. Land Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

³ [No. 754-XII dated 09.12.1992. On nature protection](#)

⁴ [No. 666-I dated 28.08.1998. On the State Land Cadastre](#)

⁵ [PF-5863-no. 30.10.2019. On approval of the Environmental Protection Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period until 2030](#)

⁶ [Cadastral Agency under the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

rational use of land resources, their restoration and protection are one of the most important areas of state policy. In practice, there are also some problems, such as the incomplete implementation of official registration of existing land rights, insufficient transparency in land allocation in some regions, and the incomplete functioning of the monitoring system. To eliminate these problems, experts propose digitizing the land cadastre system, expanding electronic auctions, tightening the rental procedure, and strengthening environmental requirements. The rational use of land resources is not only a legal obligation, but also a responsibility to future generations. Effective functioning of legislation, increasing environmental culture, and the introduction of international experience are important factors on this path.

Also, the issue of rational use of land resources is one of the pressing issues not only in Uzbekistan, but also in many foreign countries. In recent years, fundamental reforms have been carried out in many countries in terms of land ownership, use, and the formation of the land market. One of the best practices in this regard is the projects and scientific research conducted by the International Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For example, the FAO report “Integrated land use management systems in Uzbekistan – Part 1” for 2023 presents experiences in the integrated use of land and forest resources in the Bukhara and Navoi regions. These projects provide for the use of land not only for agriculture, but also for livestock breeding, agroforestry (combining forestry and agriculture), and in a way that harmonizes the interests of local communities. As a result, land productivity has increased, ecological balance in resource use has been maintained, and sources of income for local residents have expanded. The FAO technical report “Decision support for mainstreaming and scaling up of sustainable land management – Uzbekistan”, published in 2024, outlines measures to reduce land degradation, strengthen monitoring systems and reduce environmental risks based on sustainable land management practices. This approach draws on the experience of foreign countries, including land market regulation mechanisms in Brazil, Germany and India. In particular, in Brazil, illegal land acquisitions have been reduced by 40 percent through the registration and digitization of agricultural land, while in India, the electronic cadastre system has created long-term legal guarantees for farmers (FAO, 2024). In addition, the 2016 article “State Ownership of Land in Uzbekistan – an Impediment to Further Agricultural Growth?” published in the scientific journal “Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica” emphasizes that strengthening land rights, long-term leases and strengthening legal guarantees for farmers in countries where land is state-owned, in particular in Uzbekistan, is an important factor for the effective functioning of market mechanisms. This article analyzes the experience of Germany and Poland, which notes that agricultural efficiency has increased sharply in these countries due to strong land tenure. Foreign experience shows that rational use of land resources ensures not only environmental sustainability, but also economic development. The most important factors in this are guaranteeing land tenure rights, introducing digital cadastral systems, and ensuring direct participation of the population.

In conclusion, land is not only an economic resource, but also a national asset and an invaluable legacy for future generations. In the conditions of Uzbekistan, the fact that land is state property, on the one hand, ensures its strategic protection, but on the other hand, it can limit private initiative and efficiency in the land market. Therefore, it is important for state policy to find the right balance between maintaining environmental safety and strengthening market mechanisms. It is encouraging that there are many innovations in land ownership and use in the current period. However, in some regions, the fact that land is still not fully registered, the delay in the issuance of documents clearly defining land rights, or the lack of sufficient transparency, reduces the confidence of farmers and the population in land. This also negatively affects economic efficiency. If land resources are responsibly managed, it will become the foundation of economic

stability, food security, and ecological balance. Uzbekistan is taking important steps on this path today. By rationally adapting foreign experiences and strengthening local legislation, it is possible to achieve even higher results in the field of land management.

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