



The OTP/Ipoteka Deal: The Significance of a Hungarian Bank's Expansion into Uzbekistan

Dániel Farkas

Table of Contents

All rights reserved. Printed in Hungary. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Authors:
Dániel Farkas

Danube Institute Leadership

President: John O’Sullivan
Executive Director: István Kiss
Director of Research: Calum T.M. Nicholson

Original Design by: Carlos Roa
Designed by: Hubert Kucharski

© 2026 by the Danube Institute
July 2026

Covers: Designed by Hubert Kucharski

Image: OTP Branch in Budapest, Hungary

About the Danube Institute	iv
About the Author	v
Abstract	vi
Introduction	1
Cross Border Expansion	3
Uzbekistan's Economic Transformation	5
Three Years of OTP in Uzbekistan - In Practice	8
The Real Significance of OTP's Purchase of Ipoteka	11

About the Danube Institute

The Danube Institute, established in 2013 by the Batthyány Lajos Foundation in Budapest, serves as a hub for the exchange of ideas and individuals within Central Europe and between Central Europe, other parts of Europe, and the English-speaking world. Rooted in a commitment to respectful conservatism in cultural, religious, and social life, the Institute also upholds the broad classical liberal tradition in economics and a realistic Atlanticism in national security policy. These guiding principles are complemented by a dedication to exploring the interplay between democracy and patriotism, emphasizing the nation-state as the cornerstone of democratic governance and international cooperation.

Through research, analysis, publication, debate, and scholarly exchanges, the Danube Institute engages with center-right intellectuals, political leaders, and public-spirited citizens, while also fostering dialogue with counterparts on the democratic center-left. Its activities include establishing and supporting research groups, facilitating international conferences and fellowships, and encouraging youth participation in scholarly and political discourse. By drawing upon the expertise of leading minds across national boundaries, the Institute aims to contribute to the development of democratic societies grounded in national identity and civic engagement.

About the Author



Dániel Farkas is a historian. He received his master's degree in modern political and military history from the Károli Gáspár University of Budapest. He is now a PhD student at the university's doctoral school, focusing on the Cold War-era networks of Hungary and Latin America. Dániel's research areas at the Danube Institute concentrate on Hungary's place in globalization processes, its underlying geopolitical choices, and Central Europe's relations with Latin America.

Abstract

How is Hungary's engagement with Central Asia going? This paper looks at a single, albeit important, commercial transaction - the acquisition of Uzbekistan's Ipoteka Bank in late 2023 by Hungary's OTP Group. Hungary's diplomatic outreach through its Observer status at the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) coincided with a move by Uzbekistan's government to liberalise the economy - through promotion of trade, investment links and privatisations. However, this merely provided a favourable background for the transaction. This paper explains the results that has been achieved by Ipoteka since it came under control of OTP about three years ago. It concludes by explaining the broader significance of the OTP/ Ipoteka deal.

Introduction

A Hungarian Bank in Central Asia

On 15 May 2026, Uzbekistan's Ipoteka Bank reported stellar results for the first quarter of the the year. Profits were up 34% year-on-year. With a 29% return on equity, the bank was also the most profitable of any in the country. It also achieved the fastest increase in earnings of any operations within the larger corporate entity of which it is part - Hungary's OTP Group (OTP).^{1,2}

This is obviously good news for OTP, which purchased a 75% stake in Ipoteka Bank in mid-June 2023.³ However, the results are not particularly remarkable for a bank in a frontier market⁴ that is growing strongly and - it appears - sustainably. Uzbekistan's GDP growth rose from 6.7% in 2024 to 7.7% in 2025. The current account deficit dropped from 4.7% of GDP to 3.3%. Hard currency reserves almost tripled.⁵

An obvious question is: why does all this matter? Hungary is a relatively small member of the European Union's single market, of which it has been a component since 2004. Hungary's corporate champions have frequently expanded into emerging and frontier economies as a part of their natural development. OTP itself has subsidiaries in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Oil giant MOL has operated in South Asia and the Middle East for decades. Poultry group Master Good has a presence in Vietnam, while leading pharmaceuticals company Richter Gedeon has a substantial Joint Venture in India.⁶

Nevertheless, OTP's expansion into Uzbekistan provides a number of important insights. The first concerns geo-strategy: Hungary is building strong relationships with the countries of Central Asia - at a time that the latter are becoming more integrated with the world economy. Hungary has Observer status at the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS), which has been primarily focused on cultural issues. Support from the Hungarian government has helped OTP to become the only European bank with a presence in the Turkic states outside Türkiye.

The second insight is that economic deregulation and growth in Central Asia is not confined to famously energy-rich Kazakhstan. The story of the recent expansion of Uzbekistan is one that includes market reforms, privatisation and development of the financial sector.

The third insight is that OTP's experience in Uzbekistan, on the basis of its latest results (as noted above) and other open-source materials, has - so far - been successful.

This paper examines these insights in detail in order to identify conclusions that may be relevant in the future for Hungarian companies - and other interested parties that are looking to do business in Central Asia.

Box 1:

Exactly what is a frontier market and what is an emerging market is open to subjective opinion. MSCI, the company that (among other things) creates widely used stockmarket indices, uses three broad criteria to assess whether a country is developed, emerging or frontier in nature. One criterion is economic development: a developed country must have GNI per capita that is 25% above the World Bank high income threshold for three consecutive years. The second criterion is size and liquidity requirements (including full market capitalisation of companies, free float market capitalisation companies and liquidity of companies' securities in terms of the Annualized Traded Value Ratio). The third criterion is market accessibility (including factors such as openness to foreign ownership, efficiency of operational instrument and stability of the institutional framework). The economic development criterion applies to developed markets only. The thresholds for the other two criteria are (a lot) higher for developed markets relative to emerging markets and (a lot) higher for emerging markets than for frontier markets. As of June 2026, Hungary is an element of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index and Uzbekistan is yet to be included in the MSCI Frontier Markets Index. See MSCI Market Classification Framework, June 2026 and MSCI Index Factsheets, June 2026

Cross Border Expansion

The Challenge of Starting Out From Central Europe

In theory, the economic development from low or middle levels of income is fairly straightforward. One possibility is to take advantage of natural resource endowments, or cost advantages in (skilled) labour or land and to encourage exports. A second possibility (while the two are not mutually exclusive) is to encourage the international expansion of the country's leading companies. Provided that either or both are managed well, foreign exchange earnings should rise, the balance of payments should improve, the availability of funds should increase and perceptions of risk should improve.

The reality is more complicated. Companies - even large ones - that are based in emerging markets such as the Visegrad Four countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are usually characterised by higher costs of capital than their counterparts that are based in developed countries.⁷ The Visegrad Four have advantages in terms of access to the European Union's single market and (unlike Slovakia) benefits that come from their respective central banks having the ability to set policy independently of the European Central Bank. However, even their largest and strongest companies have to operate with a higher cost of capital relative to (near-) peers in developed EU countries, the United Kingdom or the United States.

This problem may compound itself. Suppose that two multi-national companies - one from the United States and the other from Hungary - are seeking to exploit an opportunity in, say, Nigeria. The former will have a lower cost of funding. This will automatically give it a greater opportunity to achieve scale in its Nigerian venture. With scale, likely comes greater access to letters of credit, payment guarantees from major international banks and other financial products that facilitate cross-border trade and investment.⁸

Hungary's government understands the problem well. The Eastern/Southern Opening policy that was announced in 2011 aimed to help Hungarian companies to expand their global footprints and to break into frontier markets.⁹ To a certain extent, this involved government officials 'picking winners': sometimes, these companies did not live up to expectations. On a few occasions, the government backed reputable companies whose ventures into distant markets ended disastrously. A case in point was when the government supported a Hungarian company that sold reliably proven toll payment software systems and infrastructure to the government of Indonesia. The Indonesian government reneged on the deal and refused to pay for products that had already been delivered. As of 2026, there is no mechanism whereby the dispute can be arbitrated. The losses to the Hungarian parties have been enormous.¹⁰

What happens, though, if the state-backed partner in the frontier market is reliable and the Hungarian company in question plays a central role in Hungary's economy and already has plenty of experience of expansion into new and challenging markets?

A case in point is OTP. Prior to 1989, when Hungary was a Socialist-run state with (to a significant extent) a command economy, OTP had been a state-owned giant of retail banking. By the 2010s it had emerged as a national champion that was widely recognised as a leading bank in the context of Central Europe, and not just Hungary.¹¹ By 2023, OTP had subsidiaries in 10 countries, not - at that point - including Uzbekistan.¹² Thanks to its absolute size, competitive position and geographic footprint, OTP was rated by the prestigious publication *The Banker* as the leading bank in Central & Eastern Europe for several years running.¹³ In short, OTP has been and remains a national champion with proven ability to execute expansions into challenging frontier markets.



The Hungarian government has been an important and willing supporter of OTP's activities in Uzbekistan. The key development was Hungary's gaining Observer status at the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) in 2018.¹⁴ This was consistent with two official aims. One, through the aforementioned Eastern/ Southern Opening policy, was to further integrate Hungary into the global economy. The other was to achieve this integration directly and without partnering with large multi-nationals from Western Europe, the UK or North America - as had been the norm for companies of such small countries as the V4.¹⁵ The government was keen to focus on high-growth frontier and emerging market economies, while bearing in mind the limitations from using the forint as the national currency.¹⁶

Both parties saw the relationship as beneficial. The Turkic Council (TC - which became the OTS in 2021) opened a Representative Office in Budapest in September 2019.¹⁷ Hungary has deep cultural and historic ties to the Turkic world.

Hungary's government saw the TC (later the OTS) as a bridge to the dynamic economies of East Asia. The TC/OTS saw Hungary as a bridge to the European Union and the single market (although, from around 2021, this benefit was less clear given the level of tensions between the Hungarian government and the European Commission).

In short, the aim on both sides was to convert diplomatic and cultural ties into real economic benefits. In OTP, Hungary had (and has) a national champion with proven ability to expand into the banking sectors of frontier markets. Among the full members of the OTS, Uzbekistan's government was looking to privatise one of its banks and to strengthen its financial sector through the engagement of a substantial foreign bank that, in its home country, could compete with the subsidiaries of major EU financial institutions.

Uzbekistan's Economic Transformation

To Uzbekistan's first president, from its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 to 2016, was Islam Karimov. The central economic policy of his administration was to protect the economy from the adverse effects of the break-up of the Soviet Union. State subsidies, officially imposed price caps and the ownership structures of most state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were kept in some form. Hard currency to underwrite this was generated by the sale of cotton and gold exports.¹⁸ Exports were boosted by the maintenance of the currency, the som, at an artificially low rate.¹⁹ This policy mix was effective in that Uzbekistan's loss of GDP from 1991 was less than that of any other former Soviet Socialist Republic.²⁰

Nevertheless, the structural problems were serious. In 1996, a planned liberalisation of the exchange rate did not happen. This was bad news for many foreign companies that had had any interest in doing business with Uzbekistan. The maintenance of an artificially weak som discouraged imports of capital goods. The lack of convertibility of the currency meant that any foreign companies that did invest in Uzbekistan were unable to repatriate profits.²¹ The ease of doing business was abysmally low. By 2017, for instance, the country was ranked 175 out of the 190 surveyed in terms of the availability of trade documentation.²² Further, official reluctance to conform to the demands of western financial institutions meant that Uzbekistan was isolated from global financial markets: this compounded the challenges of gross underinvestment in infrastructure.

Some aspects of the economy, however, provided solid foundations for economic transformation. Uzbekistan's government demonstrated a strong ability to direct industrial policy. A case in point was the development of UzAvtoMas as a flagship manufacturer of cars (albeit through protection from imports through massive tariffs). This provided the current president Shavkat Mirziyoyev with a huge opportunity when he took office following the sudden death of Karimov on 2 September 2016.

President Mirziyoyev declared that he wanted Uzbekistan to be transformed from “being a strong state to a robust civil society.”²³ This involved building a strong middle class with the skills to navigate a vibrant market economy. Uzbekistan's government saw that this outcome needed - among other things - a massive financial liberalisation.

In a complete break from the policies of the Karimov administration, the government announced the full convertibility of the som in September 2017. This eliminated price distortions and facilitated international trade. A campaign to promote the country as being open for business achieved positive results. Deutsche Bank, Gazprombank and Türkiye's Eximbank all promised major investments and the provision of credit lines by the end of that year.²⁴ The country was no longer isolated from global financial markets.

As Uzbekistan's economy became more integrated with the rest of the world, investment rates were high and growth was rapid. However, the financial system's *modus operandi* was far from optimal. In 2022, in its Second Country Diagnostic, the World Bank warned that the banking system would need to be overhauled - and privatised - in order to promote sound lending practices.²⁵ Problems included a mispricing of interest. In some cases, interest rates were uncommercially low, encouraging misinvestment. In others, rates were too high, crippling otherwise viable projects. Bad loans became a serious problem.

The government's acceptance of the views of the World Bank meant that whichever foreign bank entered the market would play a strategic role in the transformation of the financial sector. The bank - OTP, in this case - would be a crucial partner in the execution of policy. For this reason, Uzbekistan is a substantially less risky market for OTP than Indonesia was for the Hungarian software company discussed above.

At this point, it is necessary to introduce Ipoteka Bank (whose name means 'Mortgage' in Russian). In a very broadly similar fashion to OTP, Ipoteka's main activity in Socialist times (i.e. prior to 1991) had been to dispense home mortgages. Terms for the privatisation of Ipoteka through the sale by Uzbekistan's government to OTP were finalised in December 2022. The actual transaction took place just over three years ago, in June 2023. At the time, OTP explained the investment in terms of the healthy growth of Uzbekistan's economy and the fall in inflation.²⁶

In mid-2026, an OTP spokesman offered a more detailed explanation of why Uzbekistan is an attractive opportunity for the bank.

"Uzbekistan is a quickly growing, underbanked market marked with a high share of youth population, where the recently launched economic liberalisation, the privatisation of the banking system and the rising demand for banking and digital services all provided a favourable growth environment and a real entry opportunity for a strategic investor."²⁷

In short, OTP's acquisition of Ipoteka was the result of a number of fortunate coincidences. OTP was taking a long-term view of the opportunities in Uzbekistan. OTP was risk tolerant, in that 10.2% of Ipoteka's loans were non-performing at the time of the acquisition - a number that was significantly higher than the average across the entire banking sector.²⁸ In mid-2023, Ipoteka was the fifth largest bank in Uzbekistan, with 1.6 million clients and high single digit market shares by most metrics.²⁹



Three Years of OTP in Uzbekistan - In Practice

OTP's purchase of Ipoteka immediately brought advantages to the Uzbek bank in the form of lower cost of capital. Following the acquisition, ratings agency Standard & Poor's confirmed its BB-/B rating for Ipoteka.³⁰ Almost immediately, Ipoteka faced challenges.

The winter of 2022/23 had been very hard, which meant that many loans to businesses in the agricultural sector went bad. A 2024 report of OTP noted that the cotton and fishing sectors had been particularly hard hit: "OTP encountered most of the negative surprises there [with the result that] all corporate loans needed to be restructured."³¹

In December 2023, OTP responded to a surge in the non-performing loan ratio to 19% by injecting \$70 million in new capital into Ipoteka.³² The periods 3Q23 and 4Q23 - the first two in which OTP had full control of Ipoteka - amounted to HUF22 billion (\$62 million).³³ Ipoteka stressed that this outcome had been "priced into the bank acquisition".³⁴

Ipoteka's fortunes improved dramatically from the beginning of 2024. Profits in 1Q24 and 2Q24 amounted to HUF23 billion, offsetting the losses of the preceding six months.³⁵ Profits in 3Q24 amounted to HUF in spite of "household spending [in Uzbekistan] having remained weak."³⁶ This outcome was in part to the still strong growth in Uzbekistan's economy overall. Corporate clients whose loans had previously been written off made payments of around HUF7 billion in 3Q24.³⁷ By mid-2024, the credit rating remained unchanged,³⁸ [37] and the non-performing loan ratio stood at nearly 14%: nevertheless, Ipoteka's profitability was a strong indication that it was benefiting from OTP's management.

This was recognised by Standard & Poor's in May 2025, when the agency changed the outlook for the BB-/B rating to Positive - and in spite of a further increase in non-performing loans.³⁹

A highlight in October 2025 was a successful bond issue by Ipoteka at one of the lowest yields of any private bank in Central Asia, and at yields marginally higher than those of bonds issued by Uzbekistan's government.⁴⁰

Standard & Poor's subsequently increased its rating of Ipoteka to BB (with Stable outlook)⁴¹: this was in line with the agency's ratings for state-owned banks and, therefore, effectively a ceiling for Ipoteka.⁴²

In short, several positive factors were at work simultaneously. The economy was growing. Uzbekistan's sovereign rating was increased. OTP provided access to capital from global markets (if at rates slightly higher than those available to euro area banks). OTP's management disciplines were boosting profitability. As noted, Ipoteka achieved a return on equity of 29% in 1Q26 - and not for the first time since the acquisition of the Uzbek bank by OTP.

Crucially, OTP provides Uzbekistan in general and Uzbek private companies in particular with access to trade finance. OTP's letters of credit are recognised internationally. The impact on Ipoteka has been spectacular. The cash collateral pledged to letters of credit issued by the Uzbek bank surged by 50% over the course of 2025.⁴³

Other publicly available information highlight how OTP has brought discipline to the management of Ipoteka. Shortly after the acquisition, Ipoteka was comprehensively reorganised. The bank sought profitability at the expense of growth, with the result that it expanded less quickly than its competitors. Market share, by several metrics, fell from the original level of around 9%.⁴⁴ After 2H25, Ipoteka's management declared that the restructuring of the bank was complete: the volume of disbursed loans rose again.⁴⁵ In the recent past, Ipoteka has won no fewer than 15 international and regional awards from leading trade publications for the quality of its services.⁴⁶

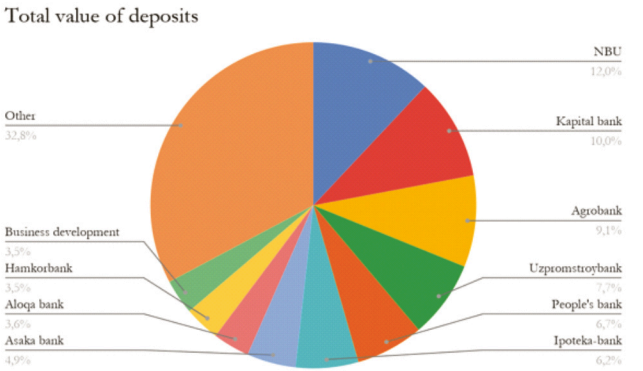
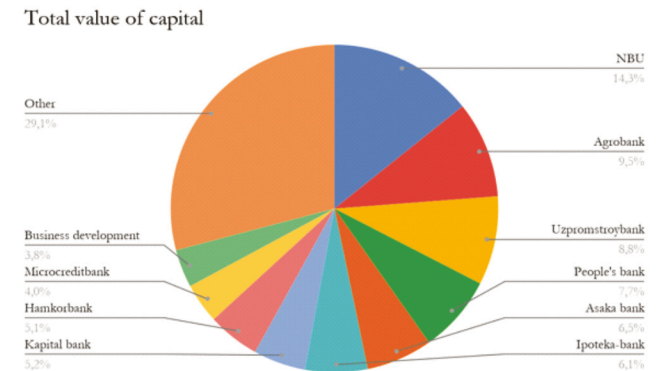
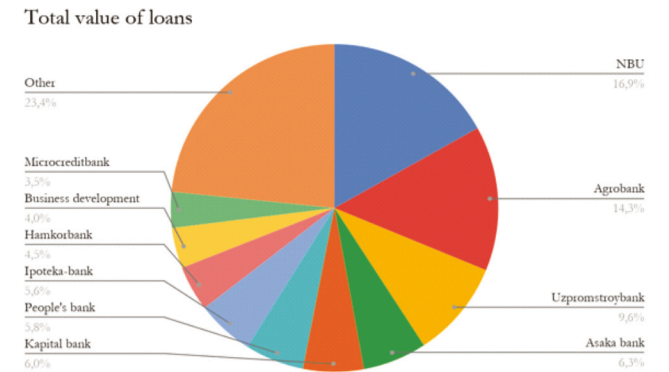
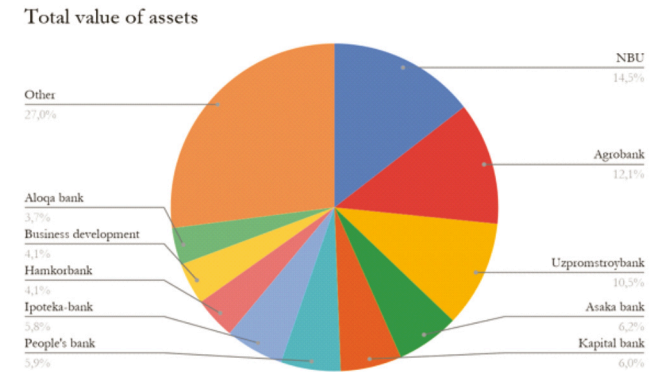
Ipoteka has increased lending to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to consumers (and car loans in particular). Both of these client groups have particular importance in Uzbekistan. The government is keen to promote properly financed and regulated SMEs given its desire to reduce the importance of the informal economy.⁴⁷ The government is also keen to promote local ownership of cars. Uzbekistan is a substantial car manufacturer: the government hopes that production will rise from 457,000 units in 2025 to 1 million units in 2030.^{48,49}

In 2024, the number of these cars that were sold into the domestic market increased by 5.1% to 315,000 - or about 68% of the total that had been produced locally.⁵⁰ That Ipoteka's consumer loan book rose by 23% over the year to the end of March 2026⁵¹ indicates that it is an important provider of car loans. Meanwhile, loans have been rising less quickly than deposits.⁵² Under OTP's management, Ipoteka is operating in a disciplined way according to private sector norms, while still actively supporting the government's development goals.

The Real Significance of OTP's Purchase of Ipoteka

As of 31 May 2026, Ipoteka is the fifth, sixth or seventh largest bank in Uzbekistan, depending on whether one is considering total assets, total loans, total invested capital or total deposits.⁵³

Figure 1. The Ipoteka's major financial benchmarks compared to the other banks of Uzbekistan in the top 10



Source: The Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan. "Information on major indicators of commercial banks as of June 1, 2026" <https://cbu.uz/en/statistics/bankstats/4058453/>

In short, Ipoteka has focused on profitability and the maintenance of a position that can be sustained over the long term, rather than on scale or growth for their own sake. That said, Ipoteka increased the number of cards on issue to customers by 62% and the number of Ipoteka-branded Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) respectively over the year to the end of May 2026.⁵⁴ It is, and will likely for some time remain, a dynamic mid-sized player in Uzbekistan's banking sector.

The story of OTP's expansion into Uzbekistan through its acquisition of Ipoteka is instructive for several reasons. First, it shows that the greatest opportunities for Hungarian companies may oftentimes not lie in developed countries (and, in particular, those that are a part of the EU's single market). Hungarian companies there will rarely have an advantage in terms of cost of capital. In frontier markets, Hungarian companies may well have an edge in that sense.

This is partly because of a lower cost of capital than the local competitors. Those Hungarian companies that are best placed will be those that, like OTP, have strong positions at home, prior experience with entry to frontier markets and a long-term perspective. It is also crucial that the company in question would find a structural opportunity where there is real need and space for its entry.

Second, the Ipoteka acquisition shows how it is possible for Hungary to leverage its geopolitical connections with the Turkic world through being an Observer at the OTS into economic and commercial benefits. Hungary's Embassy in Tashkent is confident that OTP's presence in Uzbekistan through its ownership of Ipoteka will help Hungarian firms that are looking to do business in the country.⁵⁵

Moreover, Uzbekistan is not just another frontier market. It is a substantial and rapidly developing country that has strong and improving transport links eastwards to China and westwards through Kazakhstan towards the Caspian Sea and Europe. Foreign investors are excited about the country. In October 2023, at the time that OTP's purchase of Ipoteka Bank was being finalised, the yield spread of three-year bonds issued by the government of Uzbekistan over corresponding US Treasuries was 1146 basis points. By April 2026, the corresponding figure was 846%.⁵⁶

Uzbekistan's government understands the opportunities that come from a substantial improvement in foreigners' perceptions of risk. In late 2023, when it was finalising negotiations for the purchase of Ipoteka, OTP was a pioneer. More recently, the government has formed, and conducted a successful initial public offering (IPO) on the London Stock Exchange for the Uzbek National Investment Fund (UzNIF).

UzNIF is an investment company that holds stakes in 13 SOEs including JSCB Uzpromstroybank, a leading financial services group and export-import insurance agency Uzbekinvest.⁵⁷

UzNIF's IPO on 18 May 2026 was oversubscribed by 400% and was one of the largest IPOs on the London Stock Exchange for years.⁵⁸ As of 7 July, UzNIF's share price was 16% higher than it had been at the time of listing. At the time of the listing, the Financial Times warned that Uzbekistan remains a 'frontier economy', with all that that entails. Uzbekistan's London IPO brings frontier markets closer to home⁵⁹ However, the listing of UzNIF, like OTP's involvement in the banking sector, means that Uzbekistan is becoming a more transparent economy.

Finally, the deal is important in geopolitical terms. Interested parties include, but are not limited to, the governments of Hungary and Uzbekistan. The EU is looking for strategic hedges against the military threat from Russia and the economic strength of China. The countries of Central Asia are also looking to tilt (at least to an extent) away from Russia and China through what the government of Kazakhstan calls a 'multi-vector' foreign policy.⁶⁰ Hungary's engagement with Uzbekistan serves both sides.⁶¹ OTP's (so far) very successful acquisition of Ipoteka is an important part of this.



Hungarian Parliament Building (Shutterstock)

References

¹Ipoteka Bank, “How Ipoteka bank OTP Group Became the Most Profitable Bank in the Country in Q1 2026” <https://www.ipotekabank.uz/en/blog/layf/how-ipoteka-bank-otp-group-became-the-most-profitable-bank-in-the-country-in-q1-2026/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²OTP Bank Plc, “Summary of the first quarter 2026 results”, 11. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20261Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³OTP Group, “Lezárult a tranzakció, az OTP bank belépett a közép-ázsiai régióba” <https://www.otpbank.hu/portal/hu/hirek/lezarult-a-tranzakcio-az-otp-bank-belepett-a-kozep-azsiai-regioba> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴For a discussion of frontier and emerging markets, please refer to the box 1

⁵World Bank Group, “Uzbekistan” <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/uzbekistan#tab-economy> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁶Viktória Endrődi-Kovács - Péter Goreczky: “Magyar vállalatok külföldi tőkeberuházásai: helyzetkép és a továbblépés lehetőségei” [Outward Foreign Direct Investments of Hungarian Companies: Their Situation and the Opportunities for Further Progress] *Külügyi Szemle* no. 3. (2020) <https://doi.org/10.47707/KulugyiSzemle.2020.3.07> (Downloaded: 2026.07.06)

⁷Rene Stulz, . Globalization, Corporate Finance, and the Cost of Capital. *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, no. 1. (2022) 8-23. 10.1111/jacf.12484.

⁸Marc Auboin, Lisa Dicaprio: “Why Do Trade Finance Gaps Persist: And Does It Matter For Trade And Development?” *WTO and Asian Development Bank Institute Working Paper ERSD-2017-01* https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/ersd201701_e.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁹For an introduction in English, see Gabriela Greilinger, “Hungary’s Eastern Opening Policy as a Long-Term Political-Economic Strategy” *Fokus*, no. 4. (2023) <https://www.aies.at/download/2023/AIES-Fokus-2023-04.pdf> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹⁰Gergely Brückner, “Százmilliárdos bukta lett a keleti nyitás mintaprojektjéből, mára csak rossz és még rosszabb opciói vannak a magyar államnak” *Telex* 2026.05.05. <https://telex.hu/gazdasag/2026/05/06/indonezia-utdij-veszteseg-eximbank-kkm-szijjarto-peter>

¹¹Éva Várhegyi, “Versenypolitika és versenyképesség. Az OTP mint nemzeti bajnok” [Policy of Competition and Competitiveness. OTP as a National Champion] *Külgazdaság* no. 7 (2011), 56-78. https://kulgazdasag.eu/api/uploads/5_varhegyi_eva_97c943ed91.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹²see the contemporary list at OTP Bank Plc, “Summary of the first nine months 2023 results”, 11. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20233Q_e_final.pdf, (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹³OTP Group, “OTP Group Was Ranked No. 1 in The Banker’s CEE Top 100 Banks for the Third Consecutive Year” 2025.12.08 <https://www.otpgroup.info/news/otp-group-the-banker-awards> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹⁴Akhmet Yassawi *University Eurasian Research Institute*, “Understanding The Overlap of Hungary’s “Eastern Opening” and Cooperation of Turkic States” <https://www.eurasian-research.org/publication/understanding-the-overlap-of-hungarys-eastern-opening-and-cooperation-of-turkic-states/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹⁵Endrődi-Kovács - Goreczky 2020

¹⁶Ágnes Bernek: *Közép- és Kelet-Európa a 21. század geopolitikai/geoökonómiai stratégiáiban* [Central and Eastern Europe in the Geopolitical/Geo-economic Strategies of the 21st Century] Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó 2021.

¹⁷Zoltán Egeresi, “Hungary’s Opening Towards the Turkic World” *Avrasya Dünyası* no. 6 (2020) 48-54, 49.

¹⁸Mamuka Tsereteli, “The Economic Modernization of Uzbekistan” *Central Asia - Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Silk Road Papers*, 2018, 9. <https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2018-04-Tsereteli-Uzbekistan.pdf> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

¹⁹Vladimir Popov, “Economic Miracle Of Post-Soviet Space: Why Uzbekistan Managed To Achieve What No Other Post Soviet State Achieved” *MPRA*, 2013, 1. https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/48723/1/MPRA_paper_48723.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²⁰Jeromin Zettelmeyer, “The Uzbek Growth Puzzle” *IMF Working Papers*, September 1998, 1. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/wp98133.pdf> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²¹International Monetary Fund, “Uzbekistan Background Paper and Statistical Appendix” 1994, <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/1995/023/article-A001-en.xml> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²²Tsereteli 2018, 32.

²³Tsereteli 2018, 52.

²⁴Tsereteli 2018, 29.

²⁵World Bank Group, “Toward a Prosperous and Inclusive Future. The Second Systematic Country Diagnostic for Uzbekistan” *World Bank Group* 2022.04., 10. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/933471650320792872/pdf/Toward-a-Prosperous-and-Inclusive-Future-The-Second-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-for-Uzbekistan.pdf> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²⁶Beata Fojczik, “OTP Bank revives Uzbekistan M&A plans as Russia, Ukraine ops stabilize” *S&P Global* 2022.11.11 <https://www.spglobal.com/market-intelligence/en/news-insights/articles/2022/11/otp-bank-revives-uzbekistan-m-a-plans-as-russia-ukraine-ops-stabilize-72990692> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²⁷Communication of OTP Group to the author, 2026.06.05

²⁸Elena Druzhinina, “Uzbekistan-Based Ipoteka Bank JSCM Ratings Affirmed At 'BB-/B' On Acquisition By Hungarian OTP Bank PLC; Outlook Stable” 2023.06.15., <https://www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/regulatory/article/-/view/type/HTML/id/3002477> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

²⁹Ibid. confirmed by communication of OTP Group to the author, 2026.06.09

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Viktor Nagy, “Miért vett bankot Közép-Ázsiában az OTP?” (Why did OTP Buy a Bank in Central Asia?) *Portfolio* 2024.05.13, <https://www.portfolio.hu/bank/20240513/miert-vett-kozep-azsiaban-bankot-az-otp-685661> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³²Druzhinina 2023, <https://www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/regulatory/article/-/view/type/HTML/id/3148880> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³³OTP Bank Plc “Summary of the full-year 2023 results” 4. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/240307_OTP_20234Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁴Viktor Nagy, “Miért vett bankot Közép-Ázsiában az OTP?” (Why did OTP Buy a Bank in Central Asia?) *Portfolio* 2024.05.13, <https://www.portfolio.hu/bank/20240513/miert-vett-kozep-azsiaban-bankot-az-otp-685661> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁵OTP Bank Plc “Half-year Financial Report. First half 2024 result” 5.https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20242Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁶OTP Bank Plc “Summary of the first nine months 2024 results” 6,12. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20243Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁷OTP Bank Plc “Summary of the first nine months 2024 results” 6. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20243Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁸Druzhinina 2023, <https://www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/regulatory/article/-/view/type/HTML/id/3148880> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

³⁹OTP Bank Plc, “Summary of the first quarter 2025 results” https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20251Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁰Vadim Erzikov, “Ipoteka Bank Raises \$400 Mln Through Eurobonds” *Kurziv*, <https://uz.kursiv.media/en/2025-10-14/ipoteka-bank-raises-400-mln-through-eurobonds/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴¹Annette Ess, “Ipoteka Bank JSCM Upgraded To 'BB' On Strengthening Capitalization; Outlook Stable” https://www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/regulatory/article/-/view/typis_also_reflected_ine/HTML/id/3563362 (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴²Fitch Ratings, “Fitch Upgrades Uzbekistan to 'BB'; Outlook Stable” <https://www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-upgrades-uzbekistan-to-bb-outlook-stable-26-06-2025> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴³“Joint stock commercial mortgage bank "Ipoteka-bank"and its subsidiaries Consolidated Financial Statements and Independent Auditors' Report” 39. https://www.ipotekabank.uz/upload/docs/FS_ipoteka%20Bank_2025_final.pdf

⁴⁴In early 2025, 6,3% market share was reported. see OTP Group, “Ipoteka Bank OTP Group Demonstrates Steady Growth: Q1 2025 Financial Results Published” https://www.ipotekabank.uz/en/blog/news/finance_results/ (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁵OTP Bank Plc, “Summary of the first nine months 2025 results” 31. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20253Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁶Ipoteka Bank, “What Do a Bank's Financial Results Mean. Key Metrics Explained Using the Example of Ipoteka bank OTP Group” <https://www.ipotekabank.uz/en/blog/layf/chto-oznachayut-finansovye-rezultaty-banka/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁷World Bank Group, “Toward a Prosperous and Inclusive Future. The Second Systematic Country Diagnostic for Uzbekistan” *World Bank Group* 2022.04. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/933471650320792872/pdf/Toward-a-Prosperous-and-Inclusive-Future-The-Second-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-for-Uzbekistan.pdf> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁸*Uzbekistan Daily*, “Uzbekistan Aims to Produce Up to One Million Passenger Cars by 2030” <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/uzbekistan-aims-to-produce-up-to-one-million-passenger-cars-by-2030/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁴⁹*Daryo*, “Uzbekistan's passenger car production rises to 457,883 units in 2025” <https://daryo.uz/en/2026/01/26/uzbekistans-passenger-car-production-rises-to-457883-units-in-2025/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁵⁰*Frank*, “Sales of new cars in Uzbekistan increased by 5.2% in 2025” <https://frank.uz/en/news-en/sales-of-new-cars-in-uzbekistan-increased-by-5-2-in-2025/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁵¹OTP Bank Plc. “Summary of the first quarter 2026 results” 28. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20261Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁵²See data at OTP Bank Plc “Half-year Financial Report. First half 2024 result” 5. https://www.otpgroup.info/static/sw/file/OTP_20242Q_e_final.pdf (Downloaded: 2026.05.27) and OTP Bank Plc. “Summary of the first quarter 2026 results” 28.

⁵³The Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan. “Information on major indicators of commercial banks as of June 1, 2026” <https://cbu.uz/en/statistics/bankstats/4058453/> (Downloaded: 2026.07.15)

⁵⁴See corresponding data at: The Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://cbu.uz/en/statistics/paysistem/3874158/> also <https://cbu.uz/en/statistics/paysistem/1222302/> (Downloaded: 2026.05.27)

⁵⁵Ambassador József Rózsa, “Üzbegisztán és Magyarország kapcsolatai a keleti nyitás tükrében” [The Relations of Hungary and Uzbekistan in the light of Eastern Opening] in Levente Horváth (ed.): *Keleti Nyitás* 15. [Eastern Opening 15]. Budapest 2025, 139-145, 141.

⁵⁶Own calculations based on data from U.S. Daily Treasure Rates, Daily Treasure Rate Archives and data pages of the Uzbekistani sovereign bonds auctioned on 2023.10.12 and 2026.04.13 under the respective tickers BG82 and KY66 from the database of the London Stock Exchange.

⁵⁷Uzbek Investment Fund, Fund Portfolio (Downloaded 2026.07.08)

⁵⁸White&Case, “White & Case advises on UzNIF's landmark IPO and dual LSE and TSE listing” <https://www.whitecase.com/news/press-release/white-case-advises-uznifs-landmark-ipo-and-dual-lse-and-tse-listing>

⁵⁹*Financial Times*, “Uzbekistan's London IPO brings frontier markets closer to home” 2026.05.05. (Downloaded 2026.07.08)

⁶⁰Nurbolat Nyshanbayev, Kairat Bekov, Zhulduz Baizakova, and Alipbayev Amangeldy, “The Republic of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy” *New Perspectives* no. 1, (2025), 43-63.

⁶¹Further reading: Dávid Bíró: “What Hungary's Elections Mean for the Organization of Turkic States” *Trends Group*, <https://trendsgroup.org/insight/what-hungarys-elections-mean-for-the-organization-of-turkic-states/> (Downloaded: 2026.07.08).

