DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING INNOVATIVE SERVICES TO THE MARKET BASED ON THE REGIONAL GREEN BRAND (THE CASE OF BUKHARA REGION)

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Abstract. *The article develops a strategy for promoting innovative services to the market on the basis of the regional green brand, using the Bukhara region of Uzbekistan as a case. The concept of green-brand-based service promotion is clarified, and a portfolio of innovative services capable of capitalising on the region's green brand is systematised across five sectors: sustainable tourism, smart hospitality, green agro-services, renewable-energy services and digital brand infrastructure. Drawing on the segmentation–targeting–positioning (STP) logic, the diffusion-of-innovations theory and the extended green marketing mix, the study proposes a four-stage promotion strategy — brand foundation, service–brand alignment, market entry and scaling — supported by a system of implementation mechanisms and performance indicators. The findings show that a credible regional green brand reduces market-entry barriers for innovative services by lowering perceived risk, shortening the adoption cycle and creating an umbrella effect of trust; at the same time, promotion that outpaces real sustainability performance exposes the region to greenwashing risks. Practical recommendations are formulated for regional authorities, tourism organisations and innovative service providers.*

Key words: *green brand, place branding, innovative services, promotion strategy, green marketing, sustainable tourism, diffusion of innovations, STP model, Bukhara region, regional development.*

In the global economy, the service sector has become the principal arena of innovation-driven competition, and the environmental reputation of a territory has emerged as a distinct market asset. Consumers increasingly select destinations, hospitality providers and even everyday services on the basis of sustainability signals, while investors screen regional projects through ESG criteria. Under these conditions, a regional green brand — a system of stable associations linking a territory with environmental responsibility, resource stewardship and sustainable lifestyles — performs a double function: it differentiates the territory itself, and it serves as a trust-transfer mechanism that can accelerate the market acceptance of individual services originating from that territory. The question of how exactly a regional green brand can be converted into a promotion engine for innovative services remains, however, insufficiently elaborated in both place-branding and service-marketing literature.

For Uzbekistan this question has direct policy relevance. The "Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy and the national programme of transition to a green economy set targets for renewable energy, resource efficiency, ecological tourism and the promotion of national products and services in international markets. The Bukhara region occupies a distinctive position within this agenda: it combines a world-famous cultural destination brand (the historic centre of Bukhara is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List), unique desert and wetland ecosystems, expanding solar and wind energy projects, and a growing ecosystem of tourism and digital start-ups. Previous research has shown that the region possesses a substantial green brand potential structured across natural-ecological, historical-cultural, agro-industrial, energy and institutional components, but that this potential is capitalised only fragmentarily. The logical next step — and the research gap addressed in this article — is the design of a strategy that deliberately uses the regional green brand as a platform for bringing innovative services to the market.

Three research streams converge in the problem under study. The first is place branding. S. Anholt's concept of competitive identity and P. Kotler's marketing-of-places approach establish that territories compete for tourists, investors and residents much as firms compete for customers, and that a strong territorial brand generates an umbrella effect for products and services associated with the place. M. Kavaratzis's communication framework further specifies that a place brand emerges from the interplay of primary communications (what the place actually does), secondary communications (deliberate marketing) and tertiary communications (word of mouth and media); a credible green brand therefore cannot be built by promotion alone.

The second stream is green and sustainability marketing. Studies by K. Peattie, J. Ottman and subsequent authors demonstrate that environmental positioning influences consumer choice most strongly when green attributes are bundled with functional value rather than substituted for it, and that the perceived credibility of green claims is the decisive moderator of their market effect. The literature on greenwashing warns that exaggerated claims produce consumer scepticism that spills over onto honest providers — a systemic risk for any territory-wide green platform. The third stream is innovation adoption. E. Rogers's diffusion-of-innovations theory identifies relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability as the attributes governing adoption speed, while research on service innovation stresses the role of trust in reducing the perceived risk of intangible offerings. Territorial brands, as institutionalised carriers of trust, can therefore be theorised as accelerators of service-innovation diffusion — a proposition that this article operationalises in strategic terms.

With regard to Uzbekistan, existing publications examine ecological tourism development, the green economy transition and ESG-oriented regional governance, and individual assessments of the Bukhara region's green brand potential have been undertaken. However, no study has yet translated the region's green brand assets into an operational promotion strategy for innovative services. The present article addresses this gap.

The analysis allows the promotion mechanism to be specified as a chain of trust transfer: the regional green brand accumulates reputational capital from verifiable sustainability performance (protected ecosystems, renewable energy, certified products, responsible governance); this capital is transferred to individual services through visible brand alignment (labelling, co-branding, shared platforms and standards); the transfer lowers the perceived risk and search costs of adopting an unfamiliar service, thereby improving three of Rogers's five adoption attributes — relative advantage (added reputational value), compatibility (fit with the values of sustainability-oriented consumers) and observability (visibility within a recognised brand ecosystem). Two boundary conditions of the mechanism were identified: first, the direction of transfer is reciprocal, so a service failure or a false green claim damages the shared brand (the free-rider and greenwashing problem); second, the transfer is effective only for services whose actual attributes are consistent with the brand promise, which makes service–brand alignment a mandatory stage of the strategy rather than an optional one.

The portfolio of innovative services capitalising on the green brand of the Bukhara region. Based on the structural components of the region's green brand potential, five groups of innovative services were systematised (Table 1).

Table 1

Portfolio of innovative services based on the green brand of the Bukhara region

Service group	Examples of innovative services	Green brand component capitalised
Sustainable tourism services	Desert and ornithological eco-tours with digital route navigation; carbon-conscious travel packages; community-based tourism in oasis villages; AR/VR interpretation of heritage sites reducing physical load on monuments	Natural-ecological and historical-cultural components
Smart green hospitality	Energy- and water-efficient guest houses with smart metering; zero-waste hotel services; green certification and booking transparency services	Energy and institutional components
Green agro-services	Organic farm-to-table supply services for hotels and restaurants; agritourism experience services; traceability services for craft products made from local eco-materials	Agro-industrial component
Renewable-energy services	Solar-power solutions for tourism facilities and rural households; energy-audit and	Energy component

	consulting services for SMEs; electric mobility services for the historic centre	
Digital brand infrastructure services	A unified digital platform of the regional green brand; eco-labelling and verification services; data services monitoring visitor flows and ecosystem load	Institutional component (cross-cutting)

The portfolio analysis shows that the five groups are complementary rather than parallel: digital brand infrastructure services perform a system-forming function, since labelling, verification and platform services create the visibility and credibility on which the market promotion of the other four groups depends.

The stage-based promotion strategy. Integrating the trust-transfer mechanism, the STP logic and the green marketing mix, a four-stage strategy for promoting innovative services on the basis of the regional green brand was designed (Table 2).

Table 2

Stage-based strategy for promoting innovative services based on the regional green brand

Stage	**Content of the stage**	**Key instruments**	**Expected outcome**
Stage 1. Brand foundation	Codification of the green brand platform: values, visual identity, verification standards; launch of the regional eco-label and digital platform	Brand book; certification regulations; stakeholder agreement between authorities, business and universities	A credible, verifiable brand platform open to service providers
Stage 2. Service–brand alignment	Audit of candidate services against brand standards; adaptation of service processes; admission of compliant services to the label and platform	Sustainability audit; staff training; co-branding agreements	A portfolio of services whose real attributes match the brand promise
Stage 3. Market entry	Segment-specific positioning and launch of aligned services on domestic and international markets	STP-based targeting (responsible travellers, ESG-oriented partners, diaspora and regional markets); content marketing;	First adopter segments captured; reference cases accumulated

		participation in sustainable tourism fairs; pilot pricing	
Stage 4. Scaling and feedback	Extension to early-majority segments; export of service models to other districts; continuous monitoring of brand health and ecosystem load	Loyalty programmes; partnership networks; KPI monitoring; anti-greenwashing control	Sustained growth of service sales without degradation of the brand's ecological base

Implementation mechanisms and performance indicators. The strategy is supported by four groups of implementation mechanisms: institutional (a regional green brand council coordinating authorities, service providers, universities and civil society; admission and exclusion rules for the eco-label), financial (preferential access of certified providers to green financing lines and tourism development funds; co-financing of certification costs for small businesses), educational (university modules on green service marketing; retraining programmes for hospitality staff; incubation support for green service start-ups), and communicational (a unified content strategy; international market representation; crisis-communication protocols for greenwashing incidents). Performance measurement is proposed at three levels: brand level (aided and unaided recognition of the regional green brand in target markets; share of positive sustainability-related mentions), service level (number of certified services; sales dynamics of certified services; customer satisfaction and repeat-purchase rates), and territorial level (average length of tourist stay; share of green energy in tourism facilities; indicators of ecosystem condition in visited areas). The three-level system prevents a one-sided evaluation in which commercial success masks ecological degradation.

Target segments and positioning of the promoted services. Within Stage 3 of the strategy, the STP analysis identified four priority segments for the initial market entry of green-brand-aligned services (Table 3). The positioning core common to all segments is formulated as follows: "authentic services of a living oasis culture, verified by the regional green standard". This formulation deliberately couples the region's established cultural identity with the verification promise, converting the historical narrative of resource-saving oasis civilisation into a contemporary market claim.

Table 3

Priority target segments for the market entry of green-brand-based innovative services

Segment	**Profile and needs**	**Priority service groups**	**Key promotion channels**
Responsible	Experienced tourists	Sustainable	Sustaina

international travellers	seeking authentic, low-impact experiences; sensitive to certification and transparency	tourism; smart green hospitality	ble travel platforms; content marketing; international fairs
Domestic and regional weekend tourists	Families and young professionals from Uzbekistan and neighbouring countries; price-sensitive but experience-oriented	Agritourism; eco-tours; electric mobility	Social media; national tourism campaigns; partnerships with carriers
ESG-oriented business partners	Tour operators, hotel chains and investors applying sustainability screening	Digital brand infrastructure; renewable-energy services; certified hospitality	B2B presentations; ESG reporting; trade missions
Local businesses and households	SMEs and rural households seeking cost reduction and market access	Energy-audit and solar solutions; traceability and labelling services	Regional support programmes; mahalla-level outreach; demonstration projects

The segment analysis indicates a deliberate dual-market logic: externally oriented segments (responsible travellers, ESG partners) generate reputational and export effects, while internally oriented segments (domestic tourists, local businesses) secure the volume base and social legitimacy of the strategy. Balanced targeting of both circuits protects the strategy from the volatility of international tourist flows.

The findings extend the place-branding literature in three respects. First, the proposed trust-transfer mechanism specifies how the umbrella effect described by Anholt and Kotler operates for innovative services in particular: the regional brand functions as a substitute for the missing market history of a new service, compensating for the intangibility and untestability that normally slow service-innovation adoption. This links place branding directly to Rogers's adoption attributes and suggests that, for regions, brand building is not only an image activity but an innovation-policy instrument.

Second, the case of Bukhara demonstrates the strategic value of sequencing. A region with a strong cultural brand faces the temptation to launch green-labelled services immediately, borrowing credibility from the existing destination image. The analysis shows why this shortcut is dangerous: without the foundation and alignment stages, the gap between promise and performance generates greenwashing accusations that damage both the green initiative and the underlying cultural brand. The four-stage architecture therefore deliberately places verification infrastructure before market communication — a sequencing principle that distinguishes the proposed strategy from conventional promotion campaigns.

Third, the results highlight the system-forming role of digital infrastructure. In the conditions of a developing market, where independent certification bodies and consumer-protection mechanisms for green claims are still emerging, a regional digital platform combining labelling, verification and booking functions substitutes for missing market institutions. This finding is consistent with recent research on smart tourism destinations, but adds an institutional interpretation: the platform is not merely a marketing channel but a governance device that enforces brand standards.

Certain limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The strategy has been substantiated theoretically and configured for the conditions of one region; its empirical validation — through pilot implementation, measurement of adoption dynamics among target segments and longitudinal monitoring of brand health — remains a task for future research. Furthermore, the water-scarcity constraints of the region impose absolute ecological limits on the scaling stage: growth targets for service sales must be subordinated to carrying-capacity assessments, which requires the integration of ecological monitoring data into the strategy's KPI system. Finally, the transferability of the strategy to regions without a strong pre-existing destination brand requires separate investigation, since the trust-transfer mechanism presupposes an initial stock of reputational capital.

The study substantiates the following conclusions:

1. A regional green brand operates as a trust-transfer mechanism that accelerates the market adoption of innovative services by lowering perceived risk and improving the adoption attributes of relative advantage, compatibility and observability. The mechanism is reciprocal and credibility-dependent: it functions only when the actual attributes of promoted services are consistent with the brand promise.

2. The green brand of the Bukhara region can be capitalised by a complementary portfolio of innovative services in five groups — sustainable tourism, smart green hospitality, green agro-services, renewable-energy services and digital brand infrastructure services — with the digital infrastructure group performing a system-forming function of visibility and verification.

3. The promotion of these services is most effectively organised as a four-stage strategy — brand foundation, service–brand alignment, market entry, and scaling with feedback — supported by institutional, financial, educational and communicational mechanisms and evaluated through a three-level indicator system covering brand, service and territorial outcomes. The deliberate placement of verification before communication constitutes the strategy's core design principle and its main safeguard against greenwashing.

The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the proposed strategy in the development of regional programmes for tourism, innovation and green economy development in the Bukhara region, as well as in the design of support measures for innovative service providers. Future research will focus on the pilot implementation of the strategy, the quantitative measurement of the trust-transfer effect among target consumer segments, and the adaptation of the strategy to other regions of Uzbekistan.

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