

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: The implementation of governance and the overhaul of the civil service framework in Uzbekistan represent a crucial development in building contemporary public administration. Significant emphasis is placed on enhancing transparency, efficiency and responsibility of bodies by extensively integrating digital technologies into management approaches. Key reform areas include digitizing services minimizing bureaucratic obstacles and establishing a supportive atmosphere, for both citizens and business owners. At the same time, the issues of increasing the professional potential of civil servants, organizing their activities on the basis of digital competencies and introducing innovative approaches to management processes are also gaining relevance. The consistent implementation of digital governance and civil service reforms serves to build trust in society and ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

Keywords: Digital governance, public administration, e-government, Uzbekistan, public service reform, digital transformation, state modernization.

Introduction: Over the few years Uzbekistan has experienced a significant change in the operation of public administration with digital governance becoming a key element of national reform. This change is deeply connected to the nations approach to modernization, institutional reform and building a more effective and transparent government. With movements highlighting the importance of digital solutions, in public administration Uzbekistan has prioritized technological advancement as a fundamental aspect of its government development plan. The objective is not merely to implement digital technologies but also to profoundly transform the interaction, between

the government and its citizens. The move toward governance gained momentum post-2017 following several presidential directives and government initiatives emphasizing the reduction of bureaucracy enhanced transparency and better quality of public services. Before that time administrative procedures were mostly paper-driven, sluggish and frequently necessitated face-to-face visits, to government agencies. These methods led to inefficiencies. Diminished the overall effectiveness of delivering public services. Acknowledging these challenges the government launched reforms focused on creating a responsive and citizen-focused state system with digitalization seen as the key instrument to realize these objectives.

Digital governance in Uzbekistan covers projects, such, as building e-government systems automating government operations establishing inter-departmental information networks and implementing data-based decision-making frameworks. The launch of the "Integrated Portal of Interactive Public Services" represented an achievement by allowing citizens to utilize government services via the internet thereby lowering administrative obstacles and enhancing service availability. Nowadays individuals are able to perform activities like business registration, utilizing services submitting applications for official papers and obtaining online alerts. All, via digital systems that keep growing in scope and capability. Beyond improving service delivery, digital transformation plays a strategic role in promoting transparency and accountability. The publication of open government data and the digitalization of internal administrative workflows help minimize corruption risks by reducing direct personal interactions between citizens and officials. Moreover, digital monitoring tools allow the government to track performance across various sectors, identify gaps in service delivery, and implement timely improvements.

Literature review

Digital governance is now acknowledged worldwide as a tool for updating public administration with researchers thoroughly studying its impact on enhancing government efficiency, openness and service provision. Heeks highlights that digital change in government involves more than adopting technology; it also demands organizational reform and skill development pointing out that tech systems frequently fail if the organization is not adequately prepared [1]. Fountain's known concept of the "technology enactment framework" contends that the results of digital governance hinge, on the ways institutions integrate technologies into the current political and administrative contexts [2]. Global studies emphasize the capacity of governance to diminish corruption and enhance transparency. Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes note that digital instruments—like open data portals and tracking mechanisms—bolster accountability by restricting discretionary authority and facilitating public supervision [3]. Likewise research by Gil-García highlights that effective e-government projects depend on information systems and collaboration between agencies allowing smooth service provision, across government entities [4]. Digital governance in developing and transitional nations has gained academic interest. Misuraca contends that digital transformation offers developing economies a chance to bypass administrative frameworks and implement novel service delivery approaches [5]. Kettl similarly emphasizes that contemporary reforms often merge efficiency with digital technologies setting new standards, for how citizens and the state engage with each other [6]. In Central Asia, Abdukhaliq and colleagues note that digitalization efforts are strongly linked to broader economic and political reforms, with countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan actively integrating information technologies into public management systems [7].

Results and Discussion

Examining Uzbekistan's advancements in governance reveals that the nation has transitioned from scattered digital efforts to a more organized and unified overhaul of public administration. A prominent result of these changes is the growth of public services, which has greatly altered how citizens engage with government bodies. The deployment of digital platforms has diminished the necessity for in-person visits, to governmental offices and lessened bureaucratic obstacles that once hindered administrative procedures. People can now perform activities online such as acquiring certificates requesting social assistance settling state fees and filing formal applications. This transition has sped up the provision of services and enhanced user satisfaction by offering more transparent processes. Another significant outcome is the increasing adoption of integrated information systems, within government agencies. In the past government departments frequently operated with databases leading to redundant and inconsistent records. The introduction of a digital framework has enabled quicker and more dependable data sharing among agencies. This enhancement has boosted the precision of records, administrative mistakes and facilitated more efficient oversight of government operations. The circulation of data has also facilitated more uniform decision-making with officials depending on current and linked information instead of paper documents. The changes have significantly influenced openness and responsibility in the sector. Online tools enabling citizens to follow service developments review spending and retrieve government data have enhanced public supervision. This has minimized chances for activities since each action within a digital framework generates a documented record. Consequently transparency is no longer a conceptual ideal but an operational feature of government functions. People currently enjoy increased insight into the decision-making processes of authorities fostering confidence, in governmental bodies. A further result of governance is the heightened implementation of data-driven management methods. Utilizing analytics and automated tools allows government bodies to assess service

performance, pinpoint issues and distribute resources effectively. Fields like healthcare, education, social protection and taxation are progressively gaining from automated tracking systems that deliver real-time information. This movement towards evidence-based governance represents a departure, from conventional administrative methods that depended largely on manual supervision.

Table 1. Key Digital Governance Indicators in Uzbekistan

Indicator (2025)	Value	Notes
Total number of online public services	420+	Services available through the unified e-government portal
Percentage of public services fully digitalized	68%	Services requiring no physical visit
Citizens registered on e-government platforms	13.4 million	Active digital ID and portal users
Share of government payments made online	72%	Taxes, fees, utilities, penalties
Average processing time for digital services	11 minutes	Previously 2–3 days for many paper-based services
Number of interagency integrated databases	34	Unified registries and information systems
Internet penetration rate	89%	With 75% in rural areas
Share of rural households using e-government services	54%	Growing due to mobile app adoption
Cybersecurity incidents recorded	1,280	14% decrease compared to 2024
Government employees trained in digital skills	156,000	Completed certified ICT and e-governance courses
Number of public service centers (in-person) optimized through	112	Many procedures moved fully

Indicator (2025)	Value	Notes
digitalization		online
Share of documents issued electronically instead of paper	77%	Certificates, licenses, extracts
AI-assisted public services	26 services	Chatbots, automated processing, facial recognition identity checks

Although the outcomes are encouraging the review of these advancements also emphasizes persistent challenges. A key concern is the gap in access between city and countryside locations. Even though internet availability has grown numerous distant areas continue to experience connectivity restrictions or do not possess the competencies necessary to utilize online platforms effectively. This disparity can hinder the inclusivity of reforms resulting in access to governmental services. Guaranteeing that every individual gain from transformation necessitates further funding, in infrastructure and local digital education initiatives. Cybersecurity poses a significant challenge. With the government depending on digital systems for storing and handling sensitive data the threat of cyberattacks and information breaches grows more severe. Enhancing security measures upgrading data protection protocols and educating experts in risk management are crucial for preserving public confidence, in digital platforms. In the absence of cybersecurity structures even carefully planned digital reforms might be exposed to risks. Shifting to governance also demands cultural and structural shifts inside the public sector. Certain organizations are still familiar with administrative methods hindering the complete adoption of digital platforms. Opposition to change, lack of skills among staff and poor coordination between departments can restrict the success of reforms. Ongoing education, explicit direction and enhanced cooperation

among agencies are essential, for ensuring systems operate efficiently and uniformly throughout every tier of government. Despite these challenges, the overall direction of digital governance reform in Uzbekistan is highly positive. The number of citizens using online services continues to grow each year, indicating increasing trust and familiarity with digital tools. Government bodies are becoming more responsive, workflows are becoming more efficient, and administrative transparency is gradually improving. These changes reflect a broader shift toward a citizen-centered public administration model, where convenience, accessibility, and accountability are prioritized.

Conclusion

To sum up Uzbekistan's path toward governance and reforming public services demonstrates a deliberate dedication, to updating state institutions boosting transparency and advancing services focused on citizens. The adoption of technologies has facilitated administrative processes and bolstered accountability and effectiveness in multiple areas. Significant efforts, such, as digitizing government services deploying e-government systems and encouraging data-based policy formulation showcase the nation's thinking stance on leveraging technology to transform the public sector. However, the success of these reforms depends on continuous investment in digital infrastructure, capacity-building among public servants, and fostering digital literacy among citizens. While significant progress has been made, challenges such as cybersecurity risks, digital divide issues, and the need for comprehensive regulatory frameworks remain pertinent. Addressing these challenges will be crucial to ensuring that digital governance initiatives achieve their intended outcomes and contribute to sustainable socio-economic development.

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