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ICV (Poland) = 6.630
PIF (India) = 1.940
IBI (India) = 4.260
OAJI (USA) = 0.350

SOI: [1.1/TAS](https://doi.org/10.15863/TAS) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](https://doi.org/10.15863/TAS)

International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2019 Issue: 10 Volume: 78

Published: 11.10.2019 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



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REFORMS AND MODERNIZATION OF CIVIL SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

Abstract: Reforming the civil service is important in improving governance, service delivery, economic policy and public financial management. This paper aims to provide an overview of the legal reform processes occurring in the field of civil service, and of recent developments and challenges related to the process of reforms that have occurred in Uzbekistan.

The key goal of the article is to study and suggest the approaches to reforming the system of government in Uzbekistan, to enhance its transparency and establish civil service in decision-making process.

In extra, analyzed national laws and outlined the institutional measures that provide the establishment of a civil service system in Uzbekistan. I will give brief information how to identify the challenges faced by the government and civil service institutions on the way to increasing the efficiency of public services.

Points for Practitioners

This part of the paper was useful for the general picture of civil service reforms in Uzbekistan. This paper includes changes that have occurred in the state for a period of 3 years.

Key words: New face of civil service, reforms in Uzbekistan, strategy of actions, civil service, civil servants, administrative reforms.

Language: English

Citation: Yuldasheva, F. U. (2019). Reforms and modernization of civil service of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 10 (78), 107-111.

Soi: <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-10-78-16> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2019.10.78.16>

Scopus ASCC: 3308. 3321.

Introduction

Modernizing the public administration and the civil service is important to develop governance capacities that could support the whole set of reforms necessary to ensure and protect citizens' rights, to create better opportunities for business and to improve the quality of life of citizens. The capacities of administrations have been and still are a high policy issue and a political condition for social and economic development in a globalized world. This is why civil service reform is being considered one of the most important general reforms in almost the countries, mainly those that are facing basic structural development challenges.

Since last year, the Government has been engaged in rapid reforms, predominantly in order to ensure law and order, protect fundamental human

rights and freedoms and create positive investment climate. The reforms taken place in 2017 can be considered historical and a "breakthrough" for Uzbekistan.

As in February 2017 the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev approved the national Strategy of Actions on further development of the country for the next five years, which undermines fundamental changes in the field of public administration system, ensuring rule of law and reforming judicial and legal system, liberalization of economy, social development, and ensuring security and constructive foreign policy[1]. The ultimate goal of all reforms and changes is the creation of a strong democratic state and justice society, where "human interests above all".

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Today, the government of Uzbekistan is functioning based on the principle “the people must not serve the government bodies, rather the government bodies must serve to the people”[2].

In this regard, it is hard to estimate the role of the professional civil service system. The abovementioned Strategy of Actions specifically aims to reform the system of public administration and civil service through decentralization of public administration, raising the level of professionalism, material and social security of civil servants.

During realization of this strategy have been achieved significant results in implementation of standards of the Constitution. Over this period more than 30 laws were adopted and over 750 bylaws which will serve as ensuring supremacy of the Constitution. More than 1,150 draft legal documents, including the Action Strategy itself and government programs for its implementation were discussed at Single portal of interactive state services.

As reported in overview of World bank’s in Uzbekistan: “The Strategy, to be implemented over five years, is guided by an annual state program. The country’s reform momentum has also created new opportunities for regional cooperation in Central Asia, including in energy, transport, water, and economic connectivity. The Government has made rapid progress on implementing an impressive number of policy changes in a short period of time by initiating public service, judicial, educational, and tax systems reforms; liberalizing the foreign exchange regime followed by price liberalization measures; strengthening the independence of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan (CBU); simplifying the visa regime; improving the investment climate and business environment; initiating important reforms in the agricultural sector; scaling up anticorruption efforts; and opening a dialogue between the Government and the citizens of Uzbekistan [3].

Nowadays, there are many normative legal acts, which regulate the civil service system and activity of the civil servants in Uzbekistan. For example, labor relations are regulated by the Labor Code of Uzbekistan, the laws “On the basics of public administration”, “On court”, “On State Customs service”, “On State tax service”, “On Internal Affairs Bodies”, “On prosecutor office”, “On administrative procedures”, “On local government”, “On transparency of activity of bodies of state power and governance”, “On Combating Corruption”, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the approval of typical rules of ethical behavior of workers of public administration bodies and executive authorities on places’ and ext. [4]. All state ministries and the bodies which has been equalized to them has their own charters, which are also main normative act which regulates the activity of civil servant.

After adopting law “On civil service” planning unify procedure of merit-base recruitment of civil servants, procedure of roster formation and roster management in National and local government bodies, procedure of HR management.

At the present the legislative body with ministries prepared the draft law “On civil service”. In the framework of implementation of the Strategy Action, it has been planned to adopt a law on civil service. This law will serve to unify the system of civil servant. The developed law will introduce the concept of meritocracy - the principle of management, according to which leading posts should be occupied by the most capable people, regardless of their social origin and financial prosperity.

The draft law is intended to regulate the legal status of civil servants, basic principles of organization and operation of the civil service system, formation of the cadre of civil servants, issues of competitive recruitment, passage, evaluation of activities, dismissal from service, mechanisms for material and non-material encouragement of conscientious service, including social and pensions for state employees, as well as issues of official ethics and counteracting corruption.

In particular, a separate state agency was created - the State Services Agency with territorial units, which is responsible offering state services in this area. This will ensure the complexity and consistency of ongoing reforms, increase the responsibility of authorized bodies and organizations for the quality provision of public services. Thus, the formation of a clear organizational and institutional basis for the management of the sphere of rendering public services to the population is ensured. The provision of contactless interaction with civil servants will allow to receive state services promptly without corruption risk for the population, significantly facilitate the everyday life of citizens, eliminate cases of bureaucracy and red tape. Systematically from 2018-2020 years over 109 public services will cover functions Centers of public services. Otherwise, 96 types of state services provides by national on-line platform public services (www.gov.uz)

The State Program on the implementation above-mentioned strategy provides for the development and adoption of a regulatory legal framework to improve the material and social security of public official’s. It include:

- improving unified wage of employees of the government and administration;
- cost efficiency ratio incentive measures for officials of state administration;
- considering the system for establishment of extra supplements to official salaries of civil officers who have qualifying period of service in state bodies;
- raising the public housing fund for civil servants [5].

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I would like to emphasize your attention to an important reform, which is starting now. In September 8, 2017 the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a Decree "On the approval of the concept of administrative reform in the Republic of Uzbekistan".

The concept is aimed at the introduction of an effective and transparent public administration system that provides reliable protection of citizens' rights and freedoms, and enhances the country's competitiveness in the international arena and defines six main directions for radical reform of the state system of Uzbekistan:

1. Improvement of the institutional, organizational, and legal framework of the executive authorities' activities;

2. Specification of tasks (functions, powers), mechanisms for their implementation and responsibilities of executive bodies, improvement of coordination and interaction processes;

3. Further reduction of administrative influence on economic sectors and expansion of market management mechanisms;

4. Improving the mechanisms of the vertical management system and interaction of executive authorities;

5. Introduction of modern forms of strategic planning, innovative ideas, developments and technologies in the system of public administration;

6. The formation of an effective system of professional civil service, the introduction of effective mechanisms to combat corruption in the system of executive authorities.[6] To achieve these goals, it is planned to ensure transparency and openness of the civil service, introduction of new mechanisms for establishing an open dialogue with the public, raising productivity of public servants with introduction of a modern system of payment for their labor and social security.[7]

Within the framework of the concept, it is planned to review the activities of more than 100 bodies of state and economic management. The decree formed a commission for the implementation of the concept and working groups for critical examination and preparation of proposals on reforming of the public administration system.

On February 2, 2017 the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption" and on March 14, 2017 the Decree "On Measures for Further Improvement of the System of Crime Prevention and Combating Crime" were adopted [8].

The law settles to the main vectors of the state policy in countering corruption:

- raising legal awareness and legal culture of people, formation of social intolerance to corruption;
- implementation of measures to prevent corruption in all areas;
- timely detection and suppression of corruption offenses, elimination of their

consequences, causes and conditions that contribute to them, as well as ensuring the principle of inevitability of punishment for corruption offenses.

The laws illustrate measures to prevent in government affairs. These include: ensuring transparency and accountability of government bodies, parliamentary and public control, implementation of evaluation systems of executives, as well as competitive selection system, and promotion on the basis of openness and impartiality. The legal status of government employees shall be defined, their social protection, financial support and promotion shall be guaranteed.

Acceptance of the special State program on anti-corruption which meets the modern requirements testifies to new steps of Uzbekistan on suppression such widespread in the world to a type of crime and organically is entered in provisions of the Istanbul plan for the anti-corruption policy of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Adoption of such document Uzbekistan showed strong political will and took an important step to harmonization of the national legal system with the international anti-corruption standards, removed reforms in the sphere of ensuring the rights of the person of new level.

Furthermore, the announcement 2019 - the Year of Active Investments and Social Development meets an effective personnel policy in Uzbekistan. In adopted special state programs, issues of public administration, civil service, civil servants occupy a prominent place.

On 3 October, 2019 was adopted Decree of President Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the personnel policy and the system of state civil service in the Republic of Uzbekistan". The decree defines the priority areas for improving and reforming the state civil service:

- applying of the principle of meritocracy;
- implementing of a "career model" of the civil service;
- creating the system of acceptance to the civil service on the basis of open independent competitive selection
- introduction of a unified system of remuneration for civil servants
- the formation of an effective and professionally trained personnel reserve at the national, republican, regional levels,
- introduction of modern information and communication technologies
- the introduction of an effective system of social guarantees, as well as motivation for state civil servants.[9]

Moreover, with initiation of President was developed Agency of the Development of Civil service under the President. The Agency of the Development of Civil service (ADCS) is responsible for designing and implementing a variety of public personnel policies including recruitment, human

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resource development, remuneration, welfare affecting public officials.

A special place in this reform has the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It has identified the strategic competencies of the leaders, who will become the catalyst for economic reforms in Uzbekistan.

First, in order for reforms to give a positive result, leaders must change first of all. Time itself requires managers and specialists of all levels to organize their activities on the basis of critical analysis, strict discipline, personal responsibility.

Secondly, the introduction of modern, rational management is a key condition for the fulfilment of the tasks set, as well as the extensive use of modern management methods in public administration.

Thirdly, based on foreign experience, a phased transition to the principles of "smart" management.

Fourth, such competence as the ability of strategic analysis, planning and forecasting acquires great importance.

And finally, the fifth. The task was to form a unified personnel policy aimed at attracting qualified specialists to the civil service.

Separately, the issue of professional development of civil servants will be resolved.

Recently, the Academy of Public Administration has undergone, without exaggeration, fundamental changes. Suffice to say that it created new divisions - the Institute for the Study of Youth Problems and the Training of Promising Personnel, and 5 (five) regional academic branches.

Each future leader must have a personal strategy and an individual self-development plan; understand the relationship between forecasting, strategizing and planning; have the knowledge and skills to develop a mission, vision, strategy; to monitor, motivate and control the strategy of your organization to achieve high goals and indicators.

In this regard, the Academy provides students with skills and knowledge in the field of strategic management planning through the study of such disciplines as: strategic management and thinking, project management, systems analysis in management and decision-making basics, regional economics and regional development bases.

The first steps have already begun by the government. In my opinion, by government must do several things in way of modernizing civil service of Uzbekistan. Firstly, there is a time of adopting a law, which will regulate the relationships in civil service. Secondly, the newly formed Agency of the Development of Civil service must differentiate the list of civil servants from other employers and draw

up a classifier of posts in the civil service. For example, it can be divide by specific of civil service into related groups like:

- By levels of government:
Republican civil servants
Civil servants at the local level;
- According to the branches of state power:
employers of legislative;
employers executive power;
employees of judiciary;
other higher government bodies.
- By type of civil service.
state civil servant;
special civil servant;
military servant.

- According to the terms of service:
civil servants working on the basis of a labour contract.
contractual civil service positions.

Thirdly, after list of classification the civil servants into groups government must review pay system of officials.

Fourthly, create merit-based system and define its principles.

Finally, Government must provide good and healthy working process in civil service. Guarantee equal opportunity, strong employee rights to rest and qualified medical services; change the process of dismissal and retirement, so it ensures the government can retain its best and most in-demand talent rather than following an outdated reduction-in-force process. Such a civil service system would improve the ability of the government body's and organizations to recruit and retain brightest talent.

Summarizing the above, the reforms, which are carried out in Uzbekistan, directed to formation of the modern democratic state where it will be provided an adequate standard of living for the people and stable economic growth. Moreover, the government supports a course towards effective democratization of public administration and reliable protection of human rights and interests, ensuring strict control over the observance of constitutional norms on independence of judiciary, increase in level of access for citizens to justice, promoting greater transparency and increasing the responsibility of state bodies. In the sphere of civil service, the primary task are to ensure civil servants such condition for work that will motivate, discipline, stimulate, promote professional and creative realization, to educate moral values and ethical principles of performance. This will increase the responsibility and effectiveness of civil service.

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