Современная наука и инновации. 2025. №3. С.171-177
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

Modern Science and Innovations. 2025;(3):171-177
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Научная статья
УДК 322, 327
https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.18

Особенности развития электронного правительства в Азербайджанской Республике

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*** Автор, ответственный за переписку**

Аннотация. Введение. *В статье анализируется современное развитие электронного правительства в Азербайджанской Республике. Электронное правительство предоставляет гражданам и организациям разнообразные услуги государственных органов в интерактивном формате, используя инновационные технологии. Содержание услуг остается прежним, но форма их предоставления становится совершенно новой.* ***Результаты и обсуждение.*** *Электронное правительство, заменяющее классическую форму государственного управления, обеспечивает онлайн-коммуникацию между правительственными структурами и гражданами (G2C), государственными организациями и частными организациями (G2B) и самими государственными организациями (G2G) эффективным, прозрачным и дешевым способом без барьеров и ограничений во времени и пространстве.* ***Заключение.*** *В работе авторами отмечается, что Азербайджанская Республика ориентировалась на опыт других государств уже внедривших систему электронного правительства, прежде всего США, Великобритания, Япония и др. Совершенствование системы в Азербайджане частично основывалось на использовании их опыта.*

Ключевые слова: Азербайджанская Республика, государственная политика, информационное общество, электронное правительство.

Для цитирования: *Золоева З. Т., Койбаев Б. Г. Особенности развития электронного правительства в Азербайджанской Республике // Современная наука и инновации. 2025. №3. С. 171-177. https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.18*

Research article

Features of the development of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan

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Abstract. Introduction. *The article analyzes the current development of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan. E-government provides citizens and organizations with a variety of government services in an interactive format using innovative technologies. The content of the services remains the same, but the form of their provision is becoming completely new.* ***Results and discussion.*** *E-government, replacing the classical form of government, provides online communication between government agencies and citizens (G2C), government organizations and private organizations (G2B) and government organizations themselves (G2G) in an efficient, transparent and cheap way without barriers and limitations in time and space.* ***Conclusion.****The authors note that the Republic of Azerbaijan was guided by the experience of other states that have already implemented an e-government system, primarily the United States, Great Britain, Japan, etc. The improvement of the system in Azerbaijan was partly based on the use of their experience.*

Keywords: Republic of Azerbaijan, state policy, information society, electronic government.

For citation *Zoloeva ZT., Koybaev BG. Features of the development of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Modern Science and Innovations. 2025;(3):171-177. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.18*

Introduction. The e-government system has been implemented in Azerbaijan since the second decade of the 21st century. It is noteworthy that the development of the e-government system in the Republic of Azerbaijan is proceeding relatively rapidly. According to the biennial ranking compiled by the United Nations, Azerbaijan has risen nine places in the two years from 2022 to 2024, ranking 74th among 193 countries. [9].

The country scored 0.7607 points on a 1-point scale, the highest score in Azerbaijan's history. This allowed the country to enter the "Very High EGDI" category for the first time, which includes leading countries in terms of e-government development.

Materials and methods of research. The empirical basis of the work was formed by political and legal documents. In particular, the " State Program for the Development of Communications and Information Technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2010-2012 (Electronic Azerbaijan)"; "National Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Development of the Information Society for 2014-2020"; "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socioeconomic Development", etc.

This work used both theoretical and empirical research methods, such as: observation, comparison, analysis, synthesis, abstraction and others.

Research results. With the development of information and communication technologies, particularly the internet, the creation of information and its instantaneous transmission and reception to any point in the world is now a reality and is considered the pinnacle of modern efficiency. At the same time, it is an undeniable fact that the internet has become a modern and magnificent treasure trove of unlimited information sources.

In the initial phase of e-government development, most countries focused their attention on the technological aspect of governance [1, p. 165].

It should be noted that by the time the policy aimed at transitioning to e-government began to be implemented, laws had already been adopted in Azerbaijan that created the conditions for its development, which demonstrates readiness to create an e-government.

Of particular note is the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Access to Information," which establishes an information authority, something many countries with developed e-government systems have not done. Furthermore, the following laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan are also important: "On Electronic Signatures and Electronic Documents," "On Electronic Commerce," and "On Telecommunications."

In addition, the Decree of the President of Azerbaijan dated August 25, 2008 No. 3003 “On the creation of a centralized system of information support for executive authorities” [5] was of great importance for the development of electronic government in the republic.

This Decree envisaged the phased implementation of e-government through pilot projects and standard solutions, as well as preparing society for the innovations. As part of the implementation of this Decree, major projects were implemented, aimed at providing most regions of the country with high-speed internet access, thereby expanding the range of services for government agencies and residents [10, p. 9].

The most important document aimed at the formation of e-government in Azerbaijan was the "National Strategy for the Development of Information and Communication Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2003-2012)" of February 17, 2003. The main goal of this political document was the formation of an information society, increasing the efficiency of government agencies and meeting the needs of citizens.

The National Strategy established the formation and development of e-government as one of the state's key areas of activity. Furthermore, the Strategy outlined the key tasks to be carried out in the process of implementing e-government development.

The following programs were of no small importance for the development of electronic government in the country: “State Program for the Development of Communications and Information Technologies for 2005-2008” (“Electronic Azerbaijan”), “State Program for the Development of Communications and Information Technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2010-2012 (Electronic Azerbaijan)”.

Thus, the State Program for the Development of Communications and Information Technology in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2010-2012 (Electronic Azerbaijan) was implemented in four key areas: the development of telecommunications and postal services; the introduction of ICT in government agencies and local government; the transition to an information society; and the enhancement of export potential and competitiveness. The state program included the expansion of the information society, the Internet, the implementation of e-government, the introduction of electronic digital signatures, and other measures.

Of no small importance for the solution of this issue was also the “National Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2014-2020” dated April 2, 2014, No. 359. In accordance with subsection 10.2.4, the document gave instructions to create a unified electronic information system for citizens’ appeals to local executive bodies and to approve (apply) the “Rules for the use of a unified electronic information system for citizens’ appeals to local executive bodies” [6].

According to the Development Concept “Azerbaijan - 2020: A Look into the Future”, the main strategic goal is to achieve sustainable economic growth, high social well-being, effective public administration and active participation of civil society in the life of the country [3].

Citizens' requests to all local executive authorities are processed online through the created system, and the process is centrally monitored. Services provided on the portal cover the responsibilities of various agencies, including ministries, committees, commissions, departments, services, administrations, and newly established public legal entities. Furthermore, the operator of the "Electronic Government" portal, in collaboration with executive authorities, has worked to electronicize a number of social services and identified the most relevant services for citizens.

One of the key successes of the reforms carried out in Azerbaijan was the creation of the State Agency for Public Service Delivery and Social Innovations under the President of Azerbaijan (SAPPSI), established in July 2012. This agency coordinates the work of the Azerbaijan Service and Evaluation Network The Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN) , which was established as an integral part of public administration reforms, employs advanced management principles and has led to fundamental changes in public service delivery in the country.

ASAN Service Centers are one-stop shops for public services. They bring together representatives of 11 government organizations and 30 private companies, providing over 300 services through public-private partnerships. These centers also provide support services, including banking, insurance, legal, translation, and other services.

There are five ASAN Service centers in the capital, Baku, 15 centers in the regions, and seven more are planned to open in the near future. Citizens can find information about the centers and available services on the official ASAN Service website (www.asan.gov.az), on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, or through the 108 call center and the ASAN Service mobile app [2, pp. 116–137].

In addition, before visiting the center, you can make an appointment through the website, mobile app, or call center using the integrated electronic queuing system.

Regarding service delivery, relevant government agencies are encouraged to submit proposals for which of their services could be transferred to ASAN Service centers within the framework of interagency cooperation. To ensure more efficient and convenient access for citizens, they are often tasked with working with relevant ministries and proposing proposals to simplify service delivery procedures, including reducing or eliminating the need for documents that may be considered redundant and reducing service delivery time.

According to Decree No. 1885 of the President of Azerbaijan dated March 14, 2018, "On the Development of Electronic Government and Measures Related to the Transition to Digital Government," the "Electronic Government Development Center" was established. It is also responsible for promoting services among the population and serves as a coordinating body in the field of management, integration, and effective use of state information resources and systems.

The center's core activities include providing electronic services, issuing electronic visas, and implementing digital payment systems. To improve service quality and user satisfaction, the center studies international best practices and implements innovations.

The Center for the Development of Electronic Government facilitates the exchange of information between government agencies' information systems and provides services through the Electronic Government portal. Work is also underway to improve the portal within the framework of a new model, which includes a unified electronic account. The Center for the Development of Electronic Services also implements comprehensive measures, including government-to-business (G2B) and business-to-government (B2G) electronic services [8].

Between 2019 and 2020, the number of my-Gov portal users increased tenfold. The portal offers 700 e-services and has accepted over 500,000 registrations for these services. To simplify access to various portals, a universal authorization system called "ASAN Login" was developed. It solved a number of problems associated with remembering multiple logins and passwords and registering only with a mobile phone number. "ASAN Login" eliminates the need to remember multiple logins and passwords, thereby reducing the risk of personal information leakage.

The ASAN pay platform was developed to promptly update the population on the need to pay state taxes and fees, including their electronic payment, as well as to create electronic protocols for government agencies.

The ASAN Bridge information exchange system facilitates the synchronization and efficient, reliable, and secure exchange of data between various government information services. The ASAN Visa project, launched by the E-Government Development Center, aims to simplify the visa process for foreigners and stateless persons wishing to visit Azerbaijan. This system offers the option of applying for a visa online through the www.evisa.gov.az portal and issuing visas upon arrival at the country's international airports [2, pp. 116-137].

Innovative technologies in the public service system are a key focus of the Azerbaijani government's modernization strategy. In 2013, the Innovation Center was established, becoming a leader in developing the country's innovative infrastructure.

The Center aims to make innovation accessible to all citizens of Azerbaijan and makes a significant contribution to the integration of innovative approaches into the provision of public services, the introduction of new business models in the private and public sectors, the development of information systems, and support for start-ups.

Thus, since the establishment of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2012, Azerbaijan's public service system has been transformed. ASAN centers, a global example, brought together public and private entities in partnership, focusing on the needs of the population. The transition to 24/7 service has simplified access to services through digital platforms. Azerbaijan's innovation policy and support for startups have contributed to economic development, private sector growth, and improved well-being.

As a result of the subsequent development of both the information sphere and public administration, a rethinking of public administration has occurred.

Since 2011, Azerbaijan has joined the countries implementing the concept of open government.

The Decree "On Measures Related to the Development of Electronic Government and the Transition to Digital Government" notes that, in order to provide services to citizens in a transparent, efficient, and resource-saving manner, it is necessary to fully convert government services to electronic form, conduct an analytical analysis of government information resources, and create opportunities for the use of the results by the state and private sector. To ensure the formation, management, and mutual integration of government information resources and systems, it is necessary to apply a unified approach and standards in this area and accelerate the transition to digital government. The Decree also stipulates that the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan is taking measures to improve the existing communications infrastructure to accelerate the transition to digital government [7].

In our opinion, the existing policies and regulations concerning e-government and e-services contain a number of shortcomings. We believe that, to achieve the desired results in this area, improving legislation should be a top priority.

Electronic government services are a key element of the digital economy and contribute to the reduction of the shadow economy in Azerbaijan. Since 2012, the country has been actively developing e-government, thanks to a system developed by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. The success of e-government depends largely on factors such as political will, the development of the information society, the level of ICT development, and the education of the population [4].

Conclusions. Thus, modern global development trends in the field of e-government are associated with the development and implementation of the concept of "digital government," with an emphasis on the use of digital data instead of paper documents in the core processes of government agencies.

Overall, the development of the e-government system in the Republic of Azerbaijan is consistent with international practice. The state has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate consistent support for expanding the scope of e-government.

Effective implementation of e-government and modernization of the civil service must be carried out synchronously and in an interconnected manner, based on common principles and concepts.

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Конфликт интересов: авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Статья поступила в редакцию 01.08.2025;
одобрена после рецензирования 13.09.2025;
принята к публикации 01.10.2025

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Conflict of interest: the authors declare no conflicts of interests.

The article was received by the editorial office on 01.08.2025;
approved after review on 13.09.2025;
accepted for publication on 01.10.2025